

## SHS PROJECT – Tree Removal Public Meeting Minutes

**PROJECT:** Somerville High School  
**LOCATION:** SHS Gallery 81

**MEETING DATE:** June 8, 2017

**ATTENDEES:**

*See attached sign-in sheet*

**Meeting called to order at 5:04PM by City of Somerville Director of Capital Projects Rob King**

Introductions made by those present. Mr. King provided brief overview of the project history, including invitation to feasibility study by the MSBA, formation of a School Building Committee, City voter approval of project via November 2016 ballot, MSBA board approval of Schematic Design and subsequent invitation to Design Development phase. The proposed project is substantial at a cost of over \$200M and includes a significant sitework component. Mr. King provided a general overview of the existing site challenges as compared to the City's masterplan, including significant grade challenges associated with the building's location and steep slope at the rear of the site. The City has had a strong desire for community output throughout the process and continues to welcome community feedback via regularly scheduled public meetings. Areas outside of the project scope continue to be developed through the City's master planning efforts.

**A presentation was provided by Peter Lukacic of SMMA, Somerville HS project Landscape Architect.**

**Presentation is attached to these minutes:**

- SMMA provided an overview of the site plan. In the finished condition the front entry plaza will be used primarily for student drop-off/pick-up. The plaza will become more pedestrian friendly once the quantity of cars parked in front of the building has been reduced.
- The current plan includes a double row of trees along Highland Street.
- City Hall will be provided a new sense of presence with the removal of the westernmost 1929 academic wing. Creating new "visual corridor" connections between Highland Street and Gilman Square has been a priority through this process.
- SMMA provided an explanation of the High School project's limit of work and an overview of the tremendous grade differences on the hill.
- Existing tree locations were reviewed as mapped out on an aerial view of the site. This aerial view of existing trees was then superimposed onto the proposed site plan to identify impacts related to new structure or necessary grade changes. The obvious conflicts were explained in depth (i.e. conflicts with new building footprint), along with those less obvious (i.e. small, but necessary, grade changes).
- Trees proposed to be removed were identified, at least 100 trees must be removed, an exact number is not available yet as the project is still in design development. There are an additional 20 or more trees which are at risk of being in conflict at the front of the building as a result of the requirement to obtain ADA compliant grading.
- SMMA will provide an assessment of existing trees for both quality and health. The project team will save as many trees as possible, but some may not survive due to grade changes, adjacent utility cuts, etc. Rob King explained the differences between Design-Bid-Build and CM @ Risk procurement methods, with CM

methodology there may be opportunities to adapt/modify the plan during construction, this could save some trees that otherwise would be slated for removal had a lump sum form of contract been selected.

- A presentation of the plan for new trees were provided, some trees are canopy type, some area accent trees, some flowering trees, etc. The overall tree palette was presented.
- SMMA provided an overview of project phasing, lay down area will be in the rear during Phase 1 but during Phase 2 the playground area on the Highland Street side of the building will be needed to support construction activities.

**Upon conclusion of SMMA's presentation, questions and comments were solicited:**

Q: [R. Scott] Will the new trees specified be native species?

A: Yes, no foreign species will be specified. The design team noted a preference for Elms over Oaks.

Q: [R. King] Is there an option to purchase trees early through the CM?

A: Could be challenging, demand is outpacing supply right now and nurseries charge steep monthly rates for trees being held at their nurseries.

Q: [R. Scott] The City's new approach is to use smaller caliper trees, does that hold true for SHS?

A: Yes, generally 2" caliper is specified. V. Boukili added that smaller trees grow quicker and tend to be more healthy. SMMA noted the need to strike a balance between smaller caliper tree and ability to hold up to potential abuse in a school environment. T. Pierantozzi noted that trees need to withstand weight of being climbed on at a school, 3" caliper preferred.

Q: [M. Rossetti] In an early School Building Committee I asked for tree counts and was told the goal would be to have more trees at completion than there are existing.

A: The removal of wild trees along the Medford Street hill is necessary due to the steep grade and need for a retaining wall. The goal is still in place but has challenges associated. V. Boukili added that some existing trees are too close in proximity to others and are suffering as a result, planting too many trees merely for the sake of matching the existing count would not be beneficial for the long-term health of those trees.

Q: [V. Boukili] Can the trees which are existing to remain be groomed as part of the project?

A: Yes, if trees are existing to remain they will be protected and deep root fed, these are minor expenses for long-term tree health. T. Pierantozzi added that we need to be cognizant of budget reality & manage expectations. The school's education program is the priority. B. Rawson noted that the City has a good history of pulling third party funding in to support initiatives like this one.

**R. King asked if there were any additional questions or comments; hearing none, the meeting was concluded and adjourned at 5:33PM.**

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PMA Consultants LLC assumes, to the best of our knowledge, that the above content of these Meeting Minutes depict all that transpired during this Project meeting. All attendees are required to address by memo or via e-mail, any omissions, errors or inconsistencies in the reporting of these Meeting Minutes, to the writer, within two (2) business days of receipt of these Meeting Minutes.

**Prepared By:** PMA Consultants  
**Signed:** Chad Crittenden

**Date:** June 16, 2017

# MEETING SIGN IN SHEET



Project: Somerville HS Meeting: Tree Meeting

Date: 6/8/17

NAME / ROLE OR ORGANIZATION

EMAIL ADDRESS

- |    |                       |                    |                                |
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