

**PLANNING BOARD  
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST**

**MINUTES**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**February 23, 2023, 7:30 PM**

**Public Announcement of Meeting:**

Chair Hayden opened the meeting at 7:30 pm with the following announcement:

This Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings law.

Notices of this meeting were sent to the Record and Star-Ledger on February 21, 2023. In addition, copies of notices were posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal building and filed in the office of the Municipal clerk on the aforementioned, date.

**Roll Call**

Mr. Alevrontas-present

Mayor Bernstein-present

Ms. Jodi Brenner-absent

Councilwoman Fox-present

Ms. Hayden-present

Mr. Keane-absent

Mr. Parlamis-absent

Mr. Rifkind-absent

Mayor Schooler-absent

Mr. Tabacchi-present

Mr. Verp-present

**Board's Professional Staff Present:**

Ms. Gloria Oh, Board Attorney representative

**Applicant's Professional Staff Present:**

Mr. Stephen Moldt, Project Manager

**Salute to the Flag**

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:**

Demarest School District – Middle School Gymnasium Addition  
568 Piermont Road (Lot .01, Block 72) Demarest, NJ 07627

**Chair Hayden** opened the meeting stating this is a courtesy review, the role of the Board this is strictly to make recommendations. The school does not need approval from the Planning Board. The Board will not be voting on this Site Plan. The focus will be on whether the plan complies with our Master Plan. Particularly as it pertains to the Land Use element.

**Mr. Stephen Moldt, Project Manager** will be presenting the site plans for the Demarest Middle School Gymnasium Addition. **The Chief Civil & Environmental Engineer, Mr. Robert E. Walsh, PE, PP-** had a personal emergency and will not be in attendance this evening.

**Ms. Gloria Oh – Board Attorney**, represented **Mr. Douglas Bern** in his absence – 120 Sylvan Avenue #202 – Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 and at this time, she swore in **Mr. Moldt, Project Manager** before offering his testimony and presentation. **Mr. Moldt** stated he is employed by EI Associates – Architects & Engineers, PA. Located at 8 Ridgedale Avenue – Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927. **Mr. Moldt** reiterated that **Mr. Walsh** could not attend this evening's presentation, and if there are questions that are not answered he will request those questions in writing, and have them answered.

The endeavor of the district is to construct a full-size gym. The current gym is undersized. It has

staging at one end, which will continue to be used; the current gym will also serve as an all-purpose room. There will be a connector arm hallway, a new nurse's office, some storage, and two public bathrooms. The second floor will have a Wellness Center. The new building will be to the North of the existing building.

- Perpendicular parking will add 12 parking spaces. Bringing the total to 36 parking spaces. Being able to park on the basketball courts for special events could add 10 additional spaces. Referencing sheet C-03: This is due to the way the building will be situated.
- The curb of the parking lot will be adjusted for a better turn around radius for emergency vehicles upon exiting.
- A fire lane will be developed, which would be paved for access to the back of the building. This would allow use of the basketball courts for additional parking for events at the school. This will require a heavier than normal asphalt layer, most likely six inches of asphalt.
- As much green space as possible will be left for the soccer practice.
- Referencing sheet C-05: Drainage enhancements will be made near the building and along the parking lot by adding drywells. There are inlets along this area, and water that comes across the grass will be picked up before it hits the courts. He pointed to wells that would control the sheet flow towards the building.
- The proposed storm management system complies with the Borough and State mandated standards.
- Mr. Moldt stated he will apply to the County Soil Conservation as a standard practice.
- The school is not located in a flood plain. There is decent drainage across most of the property.
- There is an emergency vehicle circulation plan.
- There is a retaining wall due to the slope. The top of the wall is three feet five inches. The retaining wall is needed so soil will not build up against the building, which could cause mold.
- Testing was done for all sized emergency vehicles in this area; access to the back of the building was designed to accommodate a full-size fire truck.
- C-01 identifies the existing building conditions. Mr. Moldt showed the sidewalk at the existing exit, and the angled parking spaces. He explained that in the new plan they were able to widen the parking area due to the new orientation of the gymnasium. He explained that the current handicapped parking area and door will be very similar once construction is finished.
- A question was asked as to the importance of the finished floor elevations and the proposed gym area. Response: there will be minimum changes made, due to drainage. The area was raised slightly to avoid water overflow, like the surface water that was experienced with Hurricane Ida. There will be about a two foot increase above the existing level. The current measurement at the door is 60.74 which is basically the same level as the interior floor, and the new level will be 62.75 – which is roughly two to three feet difference.
- Wellness center is located upstairs.
- Referring to sheet C-02: the drainage plan: shows the roof leaders which will funnel water down and continue underground.
- Total square footage to be added as impervious coverage will be about 13,000 square feet.
- A question was asked if the Fire Department has approved the basketball area for additional parking spaces. Response: The Fire Department has not yet commented on the plans
- A discussion ensued that a no left turn sign needs to be added to the exit. Mr. Moldt agreed.
- Referencing sheet, A-101: the first-floor plan, which includes the entrance, the offices, the main office, the principal's office, and the main hallway. Off to the side is where the connector hallway leads to the new gym. There is a ramp that elevates from 60.25 to 62.75. This will be

like the existing handicapped entrance. **Mayor Bernstein** asked if the steepness of the ramp is negotiable for a wheelchair. **Mr. Moldt** stated that it was to code. He then pointed out a new storage room, a nurse's office, which has a toilet room and a two-bay bed area.

- A question was raised regarding locker rooms with no toilet facilities. **Mr. Moldt** explained that off the main lobby are boys' and girls' bathrooms. There is a mechanical room, storage and drinking fountains/ bottle fillers in the main lobby. He explained that the changing rooms were designed to be minimal and did not require additional plumbing so as to remain cost effective. Players would have to walk across the court to a water fountain, or a bathroom. It was discussed that there are not enough bathroom spaces for a potential crowd during an event.
- It was noted that a 225-occupant capacity offering only four bathrooms seemed inadequate. A suggestion was made to move the bleachers; Mr. Moldt replied every possible design option was looked at, but it was paramount to keep the bleachers centered. It was discussed that the lobby was very large. It was explained that most gymnasium lobbies are large for crowd control, entering and leaving events.
- Also discussed: four exits in the gymnasium, using a special translucent material to block the sun for active basketball players facing the sun.
- The hallway and Wellness center was discussed concerning the bridge entry and the need for a second area of egress in case of a fire. This is where a wheelchair bound student could sit safely in an exterior room outside of the Wellness Center, until an emergency aid could rescue them from the stairwell.
- The Wellness Center is a place where students with stress or anxiety, or Covid related worries could relax. There would be a teacher on staff with counseling skills who could offer one on one attention.
- HVAC units are on the roof. There is an area where future solar panels could be installed on the roof.
- The exterior of the building will have metal wall panels to differentiate parts of the building, and to blend in the old areas. The brick and block will be matched as closely as possible and accent stone will be added. The façade will appear more modern, and the proposed building is slightly lower in height than the existing building. The roofs will be flat or slightly pitched to the drains.
- Standard gymnasium lighting, emergency lighting and LED energy conscious lighting will be used; like recess lighting, but more modern. They will hang from the ceiling in certain areas with visible exposed duct work. It was discussed that the lights will remain on permanently for security reasons. If police officers enter in the evening, they would have to have good visibility. This is a residential area so lighting on the north side will be carefully considered. There will be landscaping screening. Trees will remain on the parking lot side, but they cannot put too much screening on that side as it is imperative the Police can see into the parking area when driving by. The four corners of the gymnasium would be lit up at night. The exterior doors of the building will have standard school exit doors and are locked from the outside. The idea of sensor cards is something that is being explored, as well as having a Knox box, which holds keys for the Fire department.
- The bidding process should begin around March 10th, and then three to four weeks after, they would like to collect bids. At this time, supplies will be ordered (Materials and steel) and preliminary site work can begin. The goal toward completion is approximately 14 months or just at the beginning of the 2024 school year. If leads times become an issue, the construction could bleed into October or November of 2024, however, at that point all the work would be on the interior and the parking lot would already be completed

A question was asked if there are plans to be rent the gym. Response: the new gym will be for the schools' students only, and that the intent is not to rent the facilities.

**At this time a motion was made to Open the Meeting to the Public**

**Motion:** Councilwoman Fox

**Seconded:** Mr. Tabacchi

**Dr. Garbaccio** - 584 Piermont Road: Asked how far the building will be set back from the road after it is constructed. **Mr. Moldt** responded that the building will be 30-32 feet from the road.

**At this time a motion was made to Close the Meeting to the Public**

**Motion:** Councilwoman Fox

**Seconded:** Mayor Bernstein

**Mr. Moldt** was asked to explain the funding involved with the project. He stated that he's not familiar with the whole mechanism of the funding – although the Demarest School District would utilize a method similar to that was used for the County Road School addition. He explained that a portion of the funding comes out of a capital reserve – which allows them to do a lease purchase. This method allows the opportunity to obtain a lower financing rate and the opportunity to avoid a referendum – which can add to the overall cost. It was stated that a referendum can always be voted down.

**Chair Hayden** stated that a list of questions will be sent to Mr. Moldt for the engineer to respond to.

**Motion to Adjourn the meeting:** Councilwoman Fox

**Seconded:** Mr. Tabacchi

**All in favor:** Alevrontas Bernstein Fox Hayden Tabacchi Verp

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,

*Teresa Ferrentino*

Teresa Ferrentino

Board Secretary