

Morris M. Bochner  
24 Laurelhurst Road  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

May 6, 2021

Jennine Nota-Masse-Superintendent  
Cranston School Department  
845 Park Avenue  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

My request is for the Office of Superintendent of the Cranston School Department to distribute this document upon receipt to the full membership of the Cranston School Committee of the Cranston School Department.

Re: Garden City School

Dear Cranston School Committee members.

As you are the governing body of the Cranston School Department, I have a few questions and concerns that I would like to bring to your attention for clarification and responses.

The question I have is, with full knowledge that the Garden City Elementary School was being fully renovated with an entire new complex, why would the Cranston School Committee authorize spending hundreds of thousands of dollars or more on, but not limited to, the following?

Installing new fire suppression system?

Installing new ceilings?

Installing new lighting?

Installing new gas burners?

Does the School Committee maintain oversight of the Cranston School Department?

Does the School Committee hold the Cranston School Department accountable for fiscal responsibility?

If necessary, why wasn't a waiver applied for the fire suppression system?

In closing, I would hope that the Cranston School Committee understands the ramifications and further waste of taxpayer funds and does not authorize the removal of ceiling tiles and lighting by employees for "stock" and place in storage!

I look forward to your responses in writing.

Sincerely,

Morris M. Bochner

C: The Honorable Mayor, Kenneth Hopkins

Morris M. Bochner  
24 Laurelhurst Road  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

May 11, 2021

Jennine Nota-Masse  
Superintendent of the Cranston Public Schools  
845 Park Avenue  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

Re: Garden City Elementary School

Good Morning Jennine,

There is a teacher who has been parking a grey pickup truck all year inside the designated play area either under the tree next to the modular classroom or next to the school building near a classroom exit door.

My concerns are.

If a student bangs into the vehicle/bumper while playing one could loose a tooth or get injured.

If the vehicle dislodged and started rolling a student/staff could get severely injures, and/or

If the vehicle caught fire there could be student/staff injuries.

I would appreciate if you could forward my concern to the appropriate personnel, as I am uncertain if it would be the Facility Director who is responsible for the building and grounds area, the Safety Coordinator who is responsible for the safety and code adherence, or the Building Principal who oversees the school staff.

Thanking you in advance,

Morris M. Bochner

Morris M. Bochner  
24 Laurelhurst Road  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

May 3, 2021

To the Honorable Mayor,  
Kenneth Hopkins  
City of Cranston  
869 Park Avenue  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

C:

To the Honorable Michael Traficante-City Wide Councilman  
To the Honorable Mathew Reilly-Ward 6 Councilman  
To the Honorable Daniel Wall-Ward 6 School Committeeman  
Jennine Nota-Masse-Superintendent of the Cranston Public Schools

Re: Garden City Elementary School

I appreciated the presentation on April 28, 2021 regarding the future of Garden City Elementary School. Unfortunately, and the conceptual drawings references on the websites and the lack of clarity leave me with more questions than answers.

These concerns are as a parent, a past administrative director of educational facilities and former owner of environmental services companies. I am well versed from collaborations with various construction projects educated by Mr. Ernest DiSaia- International Construction Management.

The intent of my letter is to make you aware, the Mayoral Administration, and the Cranston School Department aware of the concerns I have based upon my knowledge. It is my belief that these concerns would directly affect all occupants-students, staff, and guests of Garden City Elementary School, as well as the residents around the facility.

Although I am impressed with the glamorous designs of the new school, the design or lack of design overshadows critical necessities that will unnecessarily endanger our fellow Cranstonians.

This is a time to not swallow pride but to understand this is not a private development but a publicly funded project and the more input the more successful results, cost effectiveness and future sustainability. Below is a list of questions that I would like answers in writing. I also would recommend that these questions and answers be made available on the Cranston Public Schools-Construction Plan website so other concerned taxpayers can feel more confident that we are all involved in keeping our children, teachers, and administration safe.

## **CONTRACT LEGALITY**

Was there a formal request to the School Committee to proceed with bidding out the project?

Was approval documented?

Why would you provide a clause referencing “substantially complete” as it provides contractors the advantage?

Why would you not explain the specific expectations the school department wants by a specific determined date-ie; complete occupancy, mechanicals, interior, exterior, etc...?

## **INVESTMENT**

Were there any provisions for cost guarantee measures that could have been sought after in early 2020?

What was the initial project cost and now what is the final hard cost or is there none?

Why wasn't the abatement project put out to bid in January to have allowed bid evaluations, certification of necessary licensing/paperwork, State approval, vendor selection, and an on-time start date?

How can you hire an Environmental Services Company to develop an Abatement plan, submit a request to bid, evaluate results and quality vendors within 90 days?

What other parts of the project have not been prepared for bid solicitations?

## **STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY**

Is completed project guaranteed to be commissioned by Turner to ensure the integrity of mechanical/electrical/etc. installations?

Is the underground oil storage tank being removed? Is area being kept at existing height? Is the area of the underground storage tank being leveled to street height?

Is there an exterior room for storage of gas-powered equipment -lawnmower, trimmers, snowblower?

Are roofs designed with a pitch to allow water run off with exterior downspouts?

Are there interior drains for roof water that should be eliminated to avoid future unwarranted water intrusion, potential damage, and repair?

## **DESIGN RESOURCES INPUT**

Has law enforcement had opportunity to evaluate safety designs?

Has School Department licensed electricians had any design input?

Has School Department licensed plumbers had any design input?

Has School Department licensed HVAC technicians had any design input?

Have City Engineering overseen design and allowed input?

Did you incorporate the above licensed employees to provide insight to actual workings and minimize overwhelming and complicated computer-controlled devices that are prone to operational and calibration nightmares for school staff?

## **GYMNASIUM**

Are retractable basketball nets in gymnasium going to provide height adjustable for elementary?

Are there restroom facilities available in location of gymnasium separate from interior of school for security?

Is there handicap parking for gymnasium?

## **PARKING**

Why were there no provisions for parking spaces due to the doubling of the school student and staff population?

Why is there only a small new area with approximately 18 spaces being considered as a relief of the parking congestion?

Why would the City impose resident restricted street access and restricted width for fire safety access by increasing the daily vehicle street parking from thirty (30) vehicles to sixty (60) vehicles?

Why is there not a large parking area on Magazine Street that could accommodate a minimum of 25 vehicles being created instead of a drop off area for four (4) cars?

Why was there not a handicap parking area for visitors and staff in accordance with ADA code requirements in south island on Plantations Drive?

## **ENVIRONMENTAL**

Is there a clause in the project that no asbestos materials/lead paints are to be used, and *each contractor must sign-off* with a certified letter prior to completion of payment, and a letter of asbestos free/lead free become part of the AHERA plan to the State to eliminate any future inspections?

Are provisions being made for-pre-wiring and accessible panels in glass surfaces- to accommodate future ceiling fans, and air conditioners in classrooms to eliminate future retrofits-and piecemealing?

Is school being outfitted with central air conditioning?

## **HANDICAP**

Are the restroom facilities/water fountains, hand sanitation stations lower for the age group as there are no distinguishing ADA codes for adults or elementary students?

Are the interior doors able to accommodate or are extra operable panels needed due to the larger motorized wheelchairs/scooters (addressing student/staff/or guest accessibility)?

Is the ramping from Magazine Street for handicap accessibility and if so, are there level stops on the ramping for rest or continuous?

How are you handling restroom facilities for transgender staff or students?

## **MATERIALS**

Are carpet tiles being utilized instead of broadloom carpeting that would eliminate future carpet pulls and repairs?

Are there window shades being installed and do they extend 6" past sill height to prevent roll separation?

Are window shades fire rated?

Are contractors being held to provide a spreadsheet location list of fire extinguishers and filters with sizes?

Should top lites (glass above initial plates) be eliminated-maintenance concerns/overtime?

## **MATERIALS; Cont**

Is Formica being used as countertop materials that will deteriorate and cause repair necessities along with formaldehyde gassing or a one-piece solid composite?

Are handwashing sinks in all classrooms and are counter tops a one-piece with sink bowl fabricated out of same material?

Are composite materials being utilized for restroom partitions or Formica that will deteriorate or metal that will rust/corrode?

## **SAFETY**

Are there ballasts at entrances to prevent vehicle intrusion?

While entrance doors maybe bullet resistant/bullet proof are the large side glass panels just plate glass?

Why are classroom plates of glass/windows at ground level?

Is there a "red" panic button for ventilation shut off for biological contaminants as was required?

Is the hvac recovery area above drop ceilings a sealed duct system or are there ceiling hangers, ceiling tiles, able to accumulate dust/dirt?

Is the hvac recovery area above the drop ceiling covered by sprinklers?

Is there dual-purpose intrusion detection in each room that would minimize false alarms?

Are there glass breaks detectors as part of the burglar alarm protection system?

Why are exterior /plate glass window heights at ground level that would not protect occupants in an emergency and provide visual /security concerns?

Why do stairwell have total glass plates at lower levels that would sacrifice student security from exterior?

Why is there a pass-through underneath the walkway entrance that would entice students/animals to play in and hold standing water where mosquito like to dwell and carry potential diseases?

Are elevators meeting new fire code in order that they be used in evacuation as a closed air filtration system?

Are elevators being included in generator back-up?

Why are the classroom doors not being controlled by fire release magnets?

Would fire release magnets eliminate staff from forcing doors open with wood chucks or placing chairs in front or materials at top corners stressing the door closers resulting in hinge and closer repairs?

Are elevated hanging light fixtures being outfitted with secondary drop safety cables?

Is gymnasium lighting secured by face caging and drop safety cables?

Are fire sprinklers, exit signs and emergency light systems in gymnasium protected by face cage?

Where there appears to be a solid fenced in courtyard is there a direct rated access out of the area in case of fire, playtime, or evacuation?

Are under-stair storage areas covered by suppression system?

## **SECONDARY EMERGENCY POWER**

Have there been investigations for designating the School as evacuation site to obtain federal funds, and provide 100% power coverage?

Was co-generation investigated as a cost reduction and funds generator for power?

With its great location, was there any solar back-up being investigated?

## **EVACUATION**

Has the fire department been involved in determining evacuation safety zones?

Are structures being placed in existing playground areas that would impede snow removal for evacuation zones?

With emergency evacuation that must be adequate for 650 evacuees and the ballfield cannot be designated as it is inaccessible because cannot be plowed, can the hard top area be deemed sufficient?

## **GROUNDS**

Who will be maintain the exterior vegetation and student garden sites?

Is the retention ponding necessary as it poses a breeding ground for diseased mosquitos, wild animals, etc?.

Are sidewalks that are deteriorated from age and over 30 staff daily parking being replaced and new curbing?

## **SERVICE CONTRACTS**

Are service contracts being incorporated for fire suppression, mechanicals, generator, etc....?

While the above may be overwhelming for those currently involved these are some of the critical areas, I can find that need to be addressed prior to finalization. Taxpayer funded projects are always scrutinized after the project has been turned over and if this is a prototype for our future Cranston education facilities, there needs to be input from those who can provide their professional insights relative to the design.

This project is not for one's legacy, but it is a process to build on and reflect the integrity of the City elected Officials. As a former Director of Facilities these are questions that I would want answered prior to the start of the project.

As a concerned resident of Cranston, I would be happy to help you and the administration understand and resolve these concerns to ensure sustainability and the safety of the generations of Cranston residents who will use the Garden City Elementary School.

I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

Morris M. Bochner