

## **D94/Komarek – Frequently Asked Questions Regarding our Building Needs & Plans to Address Them**

### **Why does Komarek need to do work on the buildings?**

Komarek's east building was constructed in 1936. The west building was built in 1955. The mechanicals have a life-span of 20 years, but are now nearing 50 years. The required health and safety, and building maintenance repairs will cost over \$12,000,000 and will be completed in the next ten years. The life safety items include: ADA accessibility in the east building, cracked and heaving asphalt, damaged concrete foundations, building envelope deterioration, egress (exit) violations, aged mechanical systems, roof and window leaks, and undersized electrical systems which do not allow multiple classrooms to use technology at the same time. The current state of the building impedes the education, health and safety of the students.

### **What does the building plan include? And what happens if Komarek's student population expands in the future?**

The overall master plan brings all core academic classrooms to the west side of the property with a single, safe and secure entrance. The design incorporates a more efficient circulation path throughout the building and allows for better supervision, additional breakout spaces, shorter travel distances, and a safer environment. Preschool would expand to allow for two classrooms (4 sections) in lieu of one classroom (two sections); and five additional flexible classrooms would be constructed to provide the flexibility for new programs, population expansion, or collaboration zones. These classrooms are projected to accommodate a potential of 150 to 200 new students. This plan would entail a full renovation of the 30,000 square foot west building, all floors, where every instructional space would be modernized to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, upgrades in technology, furniture, finishes, and new mechanical systems which would allow for air conditioning throughout. A 50,000 square foot addition to the west building would be built to support all the spaces that were previously housed in the east building, and a new gymnasium would be built on the east side of the property. This gymnasium would allow for the ability to lockdown the school for evening functions, and parking would be brought on site to minimize traffic throughout the neighborhood. Lastly, new protected green play spaces would be built around the property.

### **How long would the project take and what is the sequence of events?**

Construction would begin in the spring of 2020 with the commencement of the 50,000 square foot addition on the west end of the property. This work is expected to be completed the spring of 2021. Once complete, the student body would be transferred from the east building, to the west building, which would allow for the demolition of the east structure. From spring 2021 through to winter 2021, the gymnasium and connection to the west building are expected to be completed. Over the course of those

two summers, the full renovation of the existing west building would be phased in. Finally, all site work is projected to be completed in spring of 2022.

**How much does the project cost? How did you arrive at the figure?**

The cost to repair the buildings and meet life safety requirements is over \$12,000,000 in the next 10 years and is expected to climb to \$17,000,000 in the next 20 years. The Building Improvement Steering Committee (a group of community members) looked at everything from repairs and minor improvements to a complete teardown and rebuild. The solutions generated during this process ranged from \$20,000,000 to \$35,000,000. The original plan came in between \$25,000,000 and \$27,000,000. After receiving feedback via our Community Conversations and Community Forums, the revised plan was narrowed down to \$22,000,000.

**Has the District and Board explored State and Federal Construction Grants?**

Per Deb Vespa, the Illinois Board of Education Business Services Director, construction grants are not available. In fact, the State has not provided new appropriation for school construction in recent years. The last new appropriation was actually in 2010. As of today, unfunded and unentitled school construction applications date all the way back to the 2004 application cycle. She is also unaware of any federal construction grants.

The District explored construction grants at the federal level, but did not find any financial support for which the District qualified.

**How will this project be paid for? Will there be a tax increase to pay for it?**

Komarek District 94 does not currently have a tax levy on file for voter-approved bonds. If the voters approve this referendum, the District would add a new bond levy. This levy would create an increase in the amount of taxes each homeowner pays. To learn more about how the tax increase will impact your property, please see the tax calculator on our website. In addition, the District will host monthly Finance Open House for residents to drop-in and learn more about how the referendum would impact their taxes. The Finance Open House dates are:

**Monday, January 14, 2019 from 4 p.m.-7 p.m.**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2019 from 4 p.m.-7 p.m.**

**Monday, March 18, 2019 from 4 p.m.- 7 p.m.**

**How does a referendum work?**

At the December 11, 2018 School Board meeting, the Board voted 7-0 to place a ballot resolution on the April 2, 2019 ballot. The resolution must be filed with the Cook County Clerk. Once filed with the Clerk, the question will be officially on the April 2, 2019 ballot. If the April 2, 2019 vote results in a successful referendum, bonds would be sold in the

spring or early summer of 2019 and \$22,000,000 would be deposited into the District's Capital Projects Fund. Once the money is put in Capital Projects, the District can only spend it on the building project. The money cannot be used for any other purpose (i.e. paying teachers, buying a school bus, etc.) 85% of the \$22,000,000 must be spent within 3 years.

**What if the referendum doesn't pass? Don't we still have to take care of the health and safety issues?**

If the referendum does not pass, the District still needs to take care of the health and safety violations and building maintenance needs. In order to receive the funding necessary to complete this work, the District would need to ask for a referendum for approximately \$12,000,000 in spring of 2020. There would still be an increase in taxes to accommodate this smaller referendum amount.

This smaller referendum would cover the life safety items as well as the next ten years of building maintenance. This includes: roof replacement, asphalt repairs, windows, mechanical, lighting and flooring. The timeline for these repairs would be delayed from 2019 to 2021 due to fact that the next referendum would take place in spring of 2020.

Completing the scope needed within the life safety and maintenance needs of the District would only bring all elements up to code. This includes mechanical and electrical systems, flooring, roofing, leak repairs around windows and walls, ADA accessibility, and proper egress from the building. All functional spaces would remain where they are with no additional classroom and team spaces, small group instruction would continue to meet in the hallways, the staff workroom and accompanying equipment would remain in a hallway, and long travel distances between grade level spaces such as the cafeteria and library would still exist. There would be limited space in the gymnasium, and the sole preschool space would remain in the basement level. To complete the maintenance work 10 to 20 years out, the District would need to decrease its levy in the Education Fund in order to levy the maximum in the Building Fund. This option would take money from the classrooms.

**Will 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue be closed off? If so, how is that decided and what will the space be used for?**

In the plan, 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, from the alley north of the east building to 24<sup>th</sup> St, would be permanently closed. This is the same section that is currently closed off during school hours. One main reason the plan incorporates this change, is for student safety. Children consistently walk out into the street after school hours, forgetting that the street is open to traffic. There have been numerous cases when cars need to stop immediately to avoid making contact with a child. The North Riverside Village Board needs to approve the street closure. This vote would not occur until after the April 2, 2019 ballot vote takes

place. If the referendum passes, it is anticipated that the District will receive the votes necessary to utilize 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a green/play space for students. First and foremost, this is important for student safety. It is also imperative because we are eliminating blacktop space outside the west building. If the district does not receive Village Board votes to incorporate 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue into the plan, the already tight play space will become significantly smaller.

**Have you informed and involved the community in understanding the needs and possible plans?**

Over the past six months, a steering committee (made up of community members) has been evaluating the health and safety of the facility. This committee worked with two school board members, the District architect and superintendent to design numerous new plans that address some to all of Komarek's facility needs. The plans ranged from \$20,000,000 to a complete teardown and rebuild at \$35,000,000. The Komarek staff was also engaged in this process.

The District then brought in a community engagement company, M<sup>2</sup>, to gather additional feedback from the Komarek community. Based on data collected during these community conversations, the initial plan agreed upon by the steering community was reduced by over \$3,000,000. That is how we arrived at the \$22,000,000 plan presented during our community forums.

**If the referendum passes, will you/how will you keep the community up-to-date on the projects?**

We are committed to transparency throughout the process. We will continue to post information on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages, and discuss the current status of the project during public school board meetings. The superintendent will create brief highlight videos (posted to our website, Facebook and Twitter) after each school board meeting.

The district is also looking for volunteers to serve on a community task force. This committee will help oversee the entire process.

The superintendent will hold information drop-in sessions throughout the process. In addition, the superintendent encourages community members to reach out to him at [bganan@komarek94.org](mailto:bganan@komarek94.org) or (708) 447-8030 ext. 103 to answer questions and/or listen to feedback.

**How can I become more involved in this process?**

If the referendum passes, there will be a committee of parents and community members

coordinating information. If you would like to be part of this group or keep up-to-date on their efforts, please contact Melissa Obrock at [melissa.obrock@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.obrock@gmail.com) or Christian Rodriguez at [china\\_bolianaz22@hotmail.com](mailto:china_bolianaz22@hotmail.com) and they will make sure your name is forwarded to the correct person.