**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**ONTECH CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL**

**Wednesday, March 22, 2017**

**The meeting was held at:** King + King Architects, Syracuse

**PRESENT:**

Ellen Eagen, *President*

Stephen Kimatian, *Secretary-Treasurer*

John Stegeman, *Vice President*

Robert Gardino, *Trustee*

Victoria Giarratano, Trustee

William Sanford, *Trustee (via teleconference)*

Edward McLaughlin, *Foundation Representative*

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 pm.

**1. WELCOME TO THE BOARD MEETING**

The President, as Chair, convened the meeting by welcoming all guests and board members. Many members of the community were present. She thanked King + King for their hospitality to OnTECH and the community to be able to host the meeting at their offices. She explained that it was the intention of OnTECH to hold meetings at different locations in the community so to enhance the opportunity for as many city residents to attend meetings as possible. Today’s meeting, she explained, was being held at the offices of King + King Architects as they were developing the design of the school and were going to present their plans to date to the Board and community.

The Chair then asked each of the Board members to introduce themselves and make a few comments on their background and interest in being on the Board. She then pointed out the key design elements of OnTECH on project based learning with curriculum including agriculture, sustainable sciences and alternate power. She underscored that the school target population was at “risk students” with attention given to their social and emotional health.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PRIOR MEETING**

For the first order of business, the Chair asked for a vote on the minutes of the previous meeting, copies of which had been distributed to the Board prior to the meeting. A motion was made to accept the minutes as presented by Mr. Gardino. It was seconded by Mr. Stegeman. The Chair asked if there was any discussion. There being none, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes as presented.

**3. GOVERNANCE**

The next order of business was consideration of adoption of By-Laws and Code of Ethics for OnTECH by the Board. Copies of the documents had been distributed prior to the last meeting but additional time had been requested by the Board members in order to more completely review the documents. The Chair asked if all had the opportunity to review and received an affirmative response from the Board members. She then asked for a motion to adopt the By-Laws and the Code of Ethics as official documents for the OnTECH operations. A motion was made by Mr. Gardino to adopt the By-Laws and the Code of Ethics as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stegeman. The Chair asked if there was further discussion. There being none, the Board was asked to vote on the matter. The Board unanimously voted to approve and adopt both documents to govern school operations. The Chair stated that these documents would be sent to the New York State Education Department Charter School Office (NYSEDCSO).

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Chair stated that OnTECH was proceeding forward with the application for Charter School Funding under the federal CSP and this was being undertaken by the firm previously approved by the Board who are specialists in the budget and finance areas, CSBM.

**5. FACILITIES**

The Chair then explained to the Board and to the community members in attendance that a primary reason for having the Board meeting at King + King was to have their presentation of the progress made in developing ONTECH as part of the Onondaga Commons property and of the renovation of the 484 building which would be the home of OnTECH.

Ms. Eagen first asked Ed Riley of Brine Wells to present the overall scope of the project. Mr. Riley said that several steps had been taken to develop the Onondaga Commons site and of the 484 Building which would be the home of OnTECH. He said the site was owned by Mr. Martin Yenawine who was very much supported of the direction being taken with respect to the property. He said there were several dimensions to the development of the property. The primary one was to have a strategy that encompassed all of the Onondaga Commons properties to insure that the development of the school and the other buildings on the property would be integrated effectively with respect to each other.

He explained that one of the first considerations was the connectivity of the property to the street entrances and exits and the flow of traffic within the Commons. The company charged with the development of the landscape plan was Environmental Design & Research – Landscape Architects. Mr. Steven Breitzka was the representative for the firm presenting their findings.

Projected on a large screen was a layout plan view of Onondaga Commons, including the 484 Building which would house OnTECH. Mr. Breitzka said that a primary question that his company asks in working on a project as the Onondaga Commons is what does it feel like to an individual entering the property. He pointed out the entrances and exits to the property. He identified the different tenants that would probably be located on the premises. The campus included a building which would be a work train development program of Onondaga Community College. One building would house a Day Care program. A building previously used by the AAA needed renovation to be compliant with ADA regulations. There was also space for outdoor gardens and green areas.

Mr. Breitzka explained the process for determining the required number of parking spaces and where they would be situated. There were to be transition lines for pedestrian guides and small parking areas as well. He also identified the location of the present Boys & Girls Club just north of the Commons and the surrounding streets bordering the Commons.

Mr. McLaughlin interjected that as a member of the facilities committee he was looking into the feasibility of developing a relationship with the Boys & Girls Club which would allow use of their facilities by the OnTECH students.

Sharon Owens, a guest, community member, and the executive director of the Southwest Community Center said that the real issues in the vicinity arise after dark.

Ms. Owens pointed out there was a problem with traffic back up at the main entrance into the Commons, particularly at heavy traffic times of the day. Mr. Gardino mentioned the fact that Seymour Elementary is located just off Shonnard Street adjacent to the Commons property and when school lets out there is a line-up of buses on the street making passage way difficult. Ed Nolan-Wright, a guest, who also owns a property adjacent to the Commons, emphasized the back- up that occurs on West Onondaga Street.

Ed Riley responded to the concerns by stating the traffic engineers of the city will review the total master plan and have the authority to reconfigure the entrances and exits to accommodate the most efficient traffic flow. The critical times would particularly be in morning and evening drive times. Ms. Eagen stated that the OnTECH schedule of a 10:00 AM start time would be an advantage to the traffic patterns. Since there is less traffic on the west side of the property, he said the chances are the engineers will look to force traffic onto Slocum Street. He further stated there would be a whole process of permits and public hearings on the ultimately traffic flow design.

Mr. Tim Rudd, a community member, guest, and community member, questioned what the best flow would be for drop off by parents at the building intended to house a Day Care Center. Mr. Gardino asked whether the OCC work train program started at the same time as OnTECH’s opening in August of 2018.

A question was also raised on the mode of student transportation. Ms. Eagen replied that students would have the availability to use Centro buses, also could be dropped off, ride a bike and some might be able to walk.

The Chair then stated the next subject to be presented was the exterior and interior design of the OnTECH building. She said the school was particularly glad to become part of the Near Westside Neighborhood and thanked Sam Rowser, Executive Director of On Point for College, who was also in attendance, for his convening a meeting with Ms. Owen and others for OnTECH to gain input from the community. Ms. Owen said OnTECH would be a shot in the arm to the neighborhood and was glad the school had selected the Commons site.

Shannon Brennan of King + King presented the progress of the OnTECH architectural design. She underscored that the plans at this stage were not final but still in the process of development. The layout of the interior of the school was projected on the screen for all to view. Ms. Brennan pointed out the classrooms, administrative areas, laboratories, cafeteria and kitchen area. She emphasized the desire to gain as much natural light as possible as studies show that it enhances the learning environment. The second floor section of the building planned several small areas for individual instruction and for students to engage in smaller environments as well as a reading room. Sharon Owen agreed it was important to have quiet areas where students could de-escalate.

Mr. Gardino asked about the green roof and Pete King explained what was being done with it. Mr. Rudd stated he felt there was a need for walls to insure the undisturbed delivery of instruction. Board Trustee, John Stegeman, replied that OnTECH was looking to achieve a balance of flexibility in using space that could be reconfigured based upon the educational delivery at that moment.

Mr. Gardino also inquired about the design and placement of a possible monument sign to mention OnTECH near the entrance to the school property.

In response to the make-up of the student body, Ms. Eagen explained that the school population is governed by a lottery if the number of applicants exceeds the available spaces. Ms. Owen said she was concerned that the targeted student body would not be achieved through that procedure. Mr. Stegeman explained that the school would be marketed in such way that its core objectives and mission would be evident to parents, which would in turn appeal to the targeted students. Mr. Rudd asked how would the school keep enrollment at the number desired if some students dropped out. Ms. Eagen explained that under the State guidelines, the school is able to backfill those opening.

Mr. Peter King then spoke about the air quality of the school saying that recent studies showed the great importance that the indoor environment had on the attentiveness and learning abilities of the students. He demonstrated the quality of oxygen in the air by using the monitoring station in the atrium of the present Board meeting.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Chair thanked the guests, community members, and the Board members for attending and for their input to the discussion for the development of OnTECH.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.