

District launches campaign seeking support for new EPHS

“Public engagement” effort aims for backing of city, state referenda items on November ballot

Post Staff

The final push to gain voter approval for the proposed new East Providence High School began during an approximately 45 minute presentation at a July 31 meeting of the School Committee then started in earnest with the launch of a self-described three-month public information and engagement campaign by the district administration.

Voters will be asked on November 6 to approve both a city bond item providing the \$189.5 million price tag for the new EPHS as well as a state-wide bond item, which would allow the state to borrow \$250 million to be dispersed to districts for construction.

Representatives from the three parties involved in the proposal explained the effort to the committee including Bill Bryan, the senior project manager from Gilbane Building Co. for the Construction Manager at Risk; Sam Bradner of the Peregrine Group serving the district as the “Owner’s Project Manager”; and Chris Horan, of the public relations firm Horan Communications.

Mr. Horan was the lead for much of the discussion on the subject, explaining the PR strategy for the project and later issuing a press release noting the effort “is to promote awareness about the proposed construction of a new East Providence High School.

The campaign, according to the press material, is designed to “educate residents about the November 6 referendum vote for a \$189.5 million bond to finance the project.”

The effort is being conducted under the slogan, “Pride in Our Schools, Commitment

to Our Community” for which a logo has been created.

The release stated the campaign will include: Visibility activities at community events across the city, beginning with an information booth at “The Looft” Arts Festival on Saturday, Aug. 11, from 11 a.m.- 6 p.m., Crescent Park; Two community forums open the public, with presentations and opportunities for questions and comments: Tuesday, September 18 and Monday, October 15, both 6-8 p.m. in the high school auditorium; A series of information sessions for every school in the district and other community groups; A website, epbuildingcommittee.com, to serve as a digital hub of information about the project (in development); Facebook and Twitter accounts, providing ongoing news and announcements about campaign activities; Periodic e-mail updates to families, staff, and community members; And a suite of print and digital informational materials, in English and other languages, including fact sheets and answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), distributed across the city.

Superintendent Kathryn Crowley was quoted in the press release, saying, “This project represents a tremendous opportunity to invest in our students, our schools, and the future of East Providence,” said “We’re excited to launch this campaign to inform the entire community about the unique chance we have to receive the State funding needed to replace our outdated high school building with a brand new facility.”

The campaign material noted the Rhode Island Department of Education has granted preliminary approval of the city’s application to replace the existing EPHS and Career and Technical Center with a new, “state-of-the-art



The logo created as part of the public relations campaign being conducted by the district to gain support for the construction of a new East Providence High School.

comprehensive high school.” And under the state’s new School Construction Program, initiated by RIDE with the backing of the General Assembly and governor to renovate and replace public schools in disrepair across Rhode Island, East Providence has an opportunity to receive as much as 74 percent state reimbursement for the project if certain measures are met, above the 54 percent it would gain for a generally approved design.

The building timeline was also included in the promo material, reiterating the new EPHS and accompanying athletics facilities would be built on the existing site, with an anticipated opening in the fall of 2021, followed by demolition of the old buildings.

The new EPHS design features “flexible classroom spaces for collaborative teaching and learning.” If built, the new building would

also allow for an expanded CTC curriculum, including new and expanded specialties in automotive technology, culinary arts, forensic science, graphic communications, marine biology, and more.

The promotional campaign, as well, highlights the new athletics facilities will include a football field for the high school bringing the sport to campus from Pierce Stadium.

The complex design also includes a regulation size track as well as soccer, baseball, softball and lacrosse fields. The existing turf field owned and operated by the Bayside FC youth soccer organization would be replaced as part of the plan.

In addition, a new gymnasium would include three basketball courts, plus an indoor walking track with emphasis on its availability to the public.

Registration deadline for primary election voters approaches

Must file by August 13

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Who needs a clever headline when you’ve