

Paterno calls report 'faulty'

Resident takes aim at criticism of high school plan

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BOALSBURG -- During a meeting Monday that lasted well into the late night hours, David Paterno told school board members the report that flayed his plan was based on inaccuracies.

"You made faulty assumptions," he said. "And you missed the chance to work with us on it."

Board members, just before 11 p.m., reiterated their reasons for supporting their \$97.6 million plan and decided not to hold a work session to discuss Paterno's plan, as he requested.

"I found it very helpful to receive and study the report submitted by David Paterno and his committee," said Robert Hendrickson, a board member. "This is again an excellent opportunity to review our decision on the high school in light of the suggestions and criterion contained in the Paterno plan."

Paterno's two-building plan emerged as a board agenda item about two weeks ago. That's when Paterno shared his "Sensible Solution" plan, which called for an estimated \$62 to \$67 million renovation and expansion of State High in its current layout.

In response to his presentation, school administrators, L. Robert Kimball & Associates and Poole Anderson Construction prepared a report that compared Paterno's plan to the board's current \$97.6 million plan. The report said Paterno's plan was "poorly organized" and would not save \$30 million. His plan did not, for example, address stormwater mitigation or include the costs associated with it, the report said.

Some members of Paterno's team -- including Eric Topp, a district resident who recently announced his intentions to run for a school board seat -- said the 30-page report makes many statements with no facts or figures to back them up. The report, for example, states that Paterno's plan will not save \$30 million. But those who drafted the report did not have the cost model Paterno used to reach his estimates, Paterno said.

Topp told the board he did not want to debate the report "line by line" but said Paterno's team was concerned about several key areas, including its language and "lack of professionalism and objectivity."

Dozens of residents came to the meeting and aired both concerns and support for Paterno's plan. But because public comment was limited to 30 minutes, several people walked away in frustration, unable to share their opinions.

At one point, Ron McGlaughlin, an attorney for State High Vision, spoke before the 30-minute limit and came forward with a request. He asked the board not to award any project-related

contracts before the election. If they grant his request, State High Vision will no longer take steps toward legal action, he said.

The opposition group has questioned the documents the school district sent to the state in order to be reimbursed about \$7 million of the project cost. Members of the group recently took their concerns to the state Education secretary, the highest-ranking educational official in the state.

Mike Storm, an Education Department spokesman, said the approval the district has received for the project still stands.

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