

The Patriot Ledger

Construction preparation to begin next month at Braintree's East Middle School.

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The Patriot Ledger

Posted Mar 26, 2018 at 11:13 PM

Preparations will begin next month for the East Middle School expansion project.

BRAINTREE – Preparations will begin during the April school vacation week for the East Middle School expansion project.

Fencing will go up around around the rear and on one side of the building to create work areas for the two-year construction project, which will begin as soon as the school year ends in June.

Representatives of the architect and project manager discussed the construction schedule during a school committee meeting Monday night. About 50 people attended the meeting, which was held at the school.

The \$83.1 million project will add new classrooms, a media center, gymnasium and parking area to the school. Solar panels will supply 30 percent of the building's power, and it will be made energy efficient. The additions are scheduled to be built during the first year of the project, while the present building will be renovated during the second year.

The project is part of a plan to expand the two middle schools to accommodate Grade 5 classes and free up space in the elementary schools.

Michael Carroll of Hill International, the project manager, said the plan is to do the major earthwork and steel work this summer, to minimize disruption to the students. Once the work moves inside the building, "It will be a lot quieter and less noticeable. The building buffers much of the noise".

He also said the project would adhere to the town by-law that construction work not begin before 7 a.m. Deliveries will also be scheduled so they don't interfere with arrival and dismissal times, and workers will park their vehicles inside the construction area.

Carroll said all workers on the project will undergo criminal background checks and wear photo identification while on the site. They will also complete a safety training program.

Some neighbors of the school expressed concerns about increased water runoff, with the grading changes for the new parking lot and athletic fields. Carroll outlined plans to improve the drainage system.

Mayor Joseph Sullivan said expansion of East is the largest school construction project in the town's history, dollarwise. He said they will work with neighbors to resolve any unanticipated problems created by the [project.

"We are going to be sensitive to your concerns as we work through this," the mayor said.