

## KIPP touts Lynn plan

By Thor Jourgensen  
May 25, 2010

LYNN - Everything is on track," said KIPP Academy Principal Josh Zoia Monday in describing the charter school's plan to obtain a Highlands site for its middle and high school complex.

Zoia said school representatives hope to buy the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 507 land at 90 High Rock Ave. by late summer or early fall.

KIPP wants to build a middle and high school on the land with a cafeteria and library connecting the two buildings. The state Inspector General has given KIPP approval to hire a design and construction manager for the \$20 million project.

KIPP sought the approval so that it could begin design work on the Highlands school comparatively early in the project development process compared to similar school projects. IG's spokesman Jack McCarthy said the approval establishes a project development process aimed at producing a thorough design that will require few alterations once KIPP seeks out construction contractors.

"It's for complex projects," McCarthy said.

An architect hired by KIPP will present initial plans for the project Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in Post 507.

Since no state school building assistance money will be made available to pay for the project, the school has started assembling financing including \$250,000 in planning money from the Marblehead-based Lynch Foundation. Tax credits combined with bank borrowing will help pay for the project.

"We're making good progress toward our capital campaign," Zoia said, adding school representatives hope to complete fund-raising efforts by December.

KIPP and Post 507 officers in March confirmed a purchase agreement to have the school buy the post site for \$1.35 million.

The Post has 300 members who set their sights earlier this year on buying the Hells Angels Salem Chapter building at 19 Fayette St. Post Quartermaster George Robertson on Monday said 507's search for a new site involves "several different places."

"We still are not sure where we are going," said Robertson, adding the post hopes to select a new location within a month.

KIPP currently educates 320 fifth-through eighth-graders at Holy Family Church on Bessom Street. Plans for its new location call for 520 students to start school in the new complex in 2012 with more added each year.

The school will gradually expand its middle school classes from three per grade to four and add high school classes with the middle school fully operational by 2015. The expansion will continue through 2018 with 750 students projected to attend the Highlands school by that date.

KIPP opened in Holy Family Church in 2004 with an 80-student fifth grade and Zoia said the school is committed to strengthening its Lynn ties. Many KIPP students live in the Highlands and the school plans to offer its evening programs, including adult English language literacy and computer classes, in its new facility.

In addition to bringing construction jobs in Lynn, Zoia said KIPP will have 100 teachers working in its new building once expansion plans are complete.