

## **Questions Raised by Aldermen regarding the Newton North Site Plan for August 23, 2006 Committee of the Whole Meeting**

### **Alderman Albright**

Clearly the designer wants the building toward the middle of the site. All the other options with the building at the periphery were discarded. Is there (was there) consideration given to a building in the middle of the site - with the football stadium left in place (stands in the hill) that could provide an entrance from Lowell Ave (a back entrance .. if you will) and still provide all the program elements? This might have involved stacking the gym elements - that's ok with me. Please describe these options.

Construction Manager at Risk - What other cities and towns have brought the CM at Risk on during the early design phase - can we hear from them about their reactions?

How do you price out the pre contract work of the CM at Risk? Is it based on the cost of the building?

Mayor is asking for a little over 1 million for CM - how is this money allocated? Monthly? if so for how many months?

Who is looking out for the best interests on Newton - the CM wants to keep costs down - based on what standards? The project manager probably wants to keep costs down - based on his comment that he keeps reminding the architect that this is a public high school. So - who is looking for a quality project - while keeping costs down? Who is setting the standards?

What role does Design Review play in the coming months?

If the athletic facilities were stacked instead of sprawled across the site, could we pull the facility back from the Hull and Elm Rd borders? Would we be able to create an entrance of Lowell? I want to be clear that I am NOT against a main entrance on Walnut St., I am only against so much traffic on Walnut St. The main entrance could be a dramatic pedestrian entrance with vehicular access from another side(s). Please explain why at-grade entrances to all athletic facilities trumps traffic congestion and safety in Newton. I am not convinced by the one story argument "hiding" the school. The school will be a gigantic sprawling building - it will be gigantic, but less sprawling if we could stack the athletic facilities. Please respond to this in a way other than - the athletic director wanted it that way.

### **Alderman Vance**

Of all the issues and alternatives that were considered, was cost a factor in making choices? Did the design team consider costs, and did the team choose the less costly alternatives?

In developing the basic building design for Newton North, did you make any cost estimates of alternative building configurations that compared, for example, the estimated costs of building your proposed design with the estimated costs of building a more standard rectangular, more compact, somewhat higher building that would cover less of the land area on the site? If so, what were the results of those comparisons? If not, why did you not do such comparisons in view of the city's oft-expressed concern with minimizing the cost of the new building?

**Alderman Linsky**

Aldermen Linsky would like a full scale drawing of option 5C.

He would like to see the elevations from Lowell Avenue.

**Alderman Samuelson**

Would an all-purpose field at grade enhance pedestrian access to the site?

Was any thought given in designing the building to discourage people from driving onto the site?

**Alderman Coletti**

Can we see a breakdown of the programmatic elements and how they fit the site plan?  
Can we see the square footage for each of the major programmatic elements and their estimated cost?

Are the Community Programs on the 1<sup>st</sup> and second floors, while the students are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and fourth?

**Alderman Danberg**

Would like the field house at Newton North included in the assessment requested by Alderman Coletti.

**Alderman Fischman**

Would like a report from the City Engineer on what the pluses are of moving the entrance from 4A to 5B?

What are the implications of Option 5B on Hull Street? What will be the impact on the trees and landscape?

**Alderman Gentile**

Would like to know if the design is substantially driving up the cost of the building?

Requests that the cost estimator from Rider Hunt be at the meeting. He would like someone there to answer financial questions.

Would like to have a 3D presentation of the site to be able to see how the building fits the site.

### **Alderman Sangiolo**

Has requested that the Project Manager be at the Meeting.

### **Alderman Johnson**

Two questions for Gund:

1. If the School Cte./Dept were to make changes to the program, would that enable you to make changes to the design/siting? Assuming the answer is yes, what part(s) of the program would require changes in order for you to make the most dramatic changes to the design/siting?
2. Give me three definitive reasons why this is the best siting and design for the City of Newton and why I should buy it? Give me three reasons to get me and the City excited about this design rather than simply accepting it as the "best option." In general why is this GREAT for Newton?

### **Alderman Parker**

A) Questions About Cost – What are the cost implications of the site?

- i. Cost of excavating and constructing the proposed new north-south stadium
- ii. Cost of building the athletic building into the side of hull street (including excavation costs, costs of waterproofing, costs of construction, etc.)
- iii. Estimated annual cost of heating the proposed athletic building given its partial underground construction and additional contact with frozen ground
- iv. Cost of irregular walls, joints, intersections, and other portions of the school which do not meet at regular perpendicular corners (it may be hard to estimate the cost-impact of potential construction delays cost by these irregular angles, but a best-guess would be helpful)
- v. Cost of foundation work per square foot
- vi. Cost of adding basement (per square foot)
- vii. What other choices could be made to reduce the cost of the project without sacrificing functionality? (In accordance with the terms of the architect's contract, which requires them to keep to the original budget or propose alternatives that would lower costs back to that level if price estimates come in higher.) How can we control costs by making a simpler design, shy such a sprawled out, long building?

## B) Questions About Use of Space

- i. Square footage of unused space in site plan (including sloping area of depressed stadium)?
- ii. Area footprint could be reduced by siting building farther from abutting residences (running structures east-west), which would in turn allow higher building with same total usable square footage (and smaller or equal apparent size from abutting residences)?
- iii. Proposed square footage of non-permeable surface?
- iv. Amount of storage space without basement vs. with basement (and how do those numbers match up with the school's projected needs)?
- v. How will roof space be used (mechanical systems, roof garden, solar panels, etc.)?

## C) Questions about Traffic and Parking

- i. Can access points to site be reduced so that all traffic flows to the site from a parallel road to Elm St. (branching from Elm. near the ends), with access from both Lowell and Walnut, reducing the number of conflict points on Walnut (eliminating the need for a driveway near Trowbridge) and balancing the traffic flow to the site?
- ii. Can parking be made more contiguous to reduce the amount of driving required to find an empty space?
- iv. Can the main entrance be relocated to be near main parking lot?

## D) Other Questions:

- i. Baseball and Softball Fields: Can softball field be re-oriented correctly? Can baseball and softball fields be separated, so that they can be used simultaneously without risk of balls from one game injuring a player on the other field? Can overlapping practice field be moved, so that baseball field can have outfield fence?
- ii. Pedestrian Access: Can the site plan be revised to allow easy pedestrian movement to and from the school, as well as across the site?
- iii. Can the project be phased to allow the academic building to be built first, so that students could use it while (or before) the athletic buildings were being constructed?

Is there another way of looking at the design of the building? Can we have two significantly different designs for two real choices?