

E-mails received in the Clerk's Office on Tuesday, September 5, 2006 Regarding Newton North High School Site Plan

----- Forwarded message follows -----

From: "Lucia Dolan" <luciadolan@rcn.com>
To: <dolson@newtonma.gov>, <NewtonParents@yahoogroups.com>
Subject: **Newton North Funding**
Date sent: **Sun, 3 Sep 2006 12:23:06 -0400**

Tuesday night there will be a vote on funding for the new NNHS. This vote will have a huge impact on our schools' and city's budget.

We don't have the money to maintain our art and music programs, reduce class size, hire elementary school math specialists, or even maintain a trash can in the Newton Centre playground. How do we have money for a new high school? Many other city buildings are in as great of disrepair (including my kid's school Brown) with no plans for renovation.

The city will tell you the money for a new NNHS comes from a different pot than class size, curriculum, etc. Perhaps the money is divided into different pots, but it all comes from the same source - our taxes.

Funding a new NNHS will impact all of our city's services, environmental, social, etc. I don't see where the money is going to come from, housing growth is dropped, State revenues are down, Federal funds won't increase during a war. The whole discussion seems rushed. Some Aldermen and School Committee members say non-experts shouldn't question the process. But the expert advice the city receives is from groups with a financial interest in building a NNHS.

Even outside of funding, there seem to be many outstanding questions (see below). The biggest one in my mind is why do we need a new, larger NNHS for fewer students - especially when a renovation was good enough two years ago?

If you too are concerned about the NNHS funding issue - contact the Alderman. Send David Olson, the City Clerk, an e-mail dolson@newtonma.gov and he'll forward it on to the Alderman.

Sincerely - Lucia

Lisle Baker, President, Amy Mah Sangiolo, Vice-President
Newton Board of Aldermen, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459 August 29, 2006

Re: Newton North High School project

Memorandum

We, the undersigned citizens of Newton urge you to reject the site plan of Newton North High School named 5B that was designed by Gund Partnership, and request an alternative new site plan. It is our considered opinion that the plan currently under your examination has the following faults:

1. The proposed building creates a barrier between Lowell Avenue and Walnut Street. Thus, the already tight site is further divided into two unequal parts separating social and athletic activities within the site. This new spatial organization is worse than the existing one.
 2. The East entry with the main lobby receives visitors while the North entry with the secondary lobby receives students and faculty. This creates a functional contradiction generated by the site plan.
 3. All vehicles that enter from the busiest Walnut Street must turn around and exit through the same bottleneck that requires a traffic light for the sake of the visitors' entry.
 4. The bus loop is not accommodated within the site and must use residential streets that already experience heavy traffic.
 5. The footprint of the proposed smaller school is much larger than the footprint of the existing larger school and is very complicated. The perimeter of the building's first floor contains 49 turns while the perimeter of the upper floors contains 38 turns and don't line up with the first floor. This also increases the cost of construction, the cost of life cycle, and the walking distance between classes well beyond the recommended maximum of 5 minutes.
- Also, this creates another problem: removal of a basement in order to reduce the cost of construction.
7. The large glazed walls and roofs of the main lobby and cafeteria are facing south and west which makes them extremely energy inefficient. Because of the greenhouse effect and the high heat transmission through the glass these areas must be cooled in the summer and heated in the winter to a much greater degree than an average building.
 8. The new football stadium is located in a depression that creates drainage problems and contradicts Newton Zoning Ordinance Sec. 30-23 (e): "Avoidance of major topographical changes; tree and soil removal shall be minimized and any topographic changes shall be in keeping with the appearance of neighboring developed areas."
 9. The design team completely ignored the idea of opening up Laundry Brook, creating natural retaining ponds and thus reducing the number of concrete dry wells.
 10. During the past year the projected cost of the project went up from \$104.5 million to \$165 million which put the entire project in jeopardy. The design team blamed this increase on the international energy market but forgot to mention the extremely inefficient architectural design.

The Project Manager of Turner Construction Co. whose job is to advise the architect and the city on the cost of construction did nothing to curtail this unprecedented escalation.

11. Newton Design Review Committee members listened to the harsh criticism from the community and expressed their own serious concerns with the site plan. They requested alternate designs from the architect, never received them but suddenly approved the design under the strong political pressure from the administration.

12. During the past 12 months the architect did not produce a viable alternative site plan but at the same time created the Schematic Design drawings based on the conceptual drawings that were not yet approved by the Board of Aldermen thus ignoring the Site Plan approval process. The said Schematic Design drawings could be used to produce more precise cost estimation but the cost is still quoted from \$135 to \$165 million.

13. Building Department Commissioner Nicholas Parnell ordered the architect to proceed with the Design Development phase of the project prior to the site design approval thus violating the procedure specified in Newton Zoning Ordinance. If the Board rejects the current site plan the architect would have to re-design the site plan, the drainage plan, floor plans, elevations, sections, details and, potentially, the scope of the project itself.

14. The project has never had an approved Architectural Program. The School Committee issued academic specifications but then changed them several times without a public discussion. For example, the underground parking garage was removed from the scope of project without participation of Design Review Committee and prior to its deliberations. The highly questionable decision to demolish the existing football stadium and build a new one has been criticized by most of the public but is still in the scope of the project.

15. We must advise you that the greatest amount of money can be saved or wasted during the conceptual stage of a project, especially a large one such as NNHS. Therefore, the design of the site plan is crucial to the success of this project.

Respectfully submitted,
Name Address Signature

Lisle Baker, President, Amy Mah Sangiolo, Vice-President
Newton Board of Aldermen, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459 August 29, 2006

----- End of forwarded message -----

----- Forwarded message follows -----

Date sent: **Sun, 3 Sep 2006 10:08:04 -0700 (PDT)**
From: **"Gennady A." <genusa@yahoo.com>**
Subject: **Newton North High School project**
To: **dolson@newtonma.gov**

Dear Aldermen,

I urge you to vote NO on the site plan of Newton North High School named 5B. I would sign this memorandum. Memorandum

We, the undersigned citizens of Newton urge you to reject the site plan of Newton North High School named 5B that was designed by Gund Partnership, and request an alternative new site plan. It is our considered opinion that the plan currently under your examination has the following faults:

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15. We must advise you that the greatest amount of money can be saved or wasted during the conceptual stage of a project, especially a large one such as NNHS. Therefore, the design of the site plan is crucial to the success of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Gennady Agranovich
18 Henshaw Street, Newton, MA 02465

----- End of forwarded message -----

----- Forwarded message follows -----

Date sent: Sun, 3 Sep 2006 13:12:58 -0700 (PDT)
From: Michelle Ciurea <michelleciurea@yahoo.com>
Subject: NNHS: please forward to Mayor and Aldermen
To: dolson@newtonma.gov

To the Mayor and Aldermen:

I am the parent of two elementary school-aged children in Newton, who moved to Newton for the schools. I am writing to express my support for those who are questioning the building plans for NNHS, and proposing we re-evaluate the most basic principles: whether we really need a new building at all, and if so, are we really getting the most for our money with the current design.

A few years ago, when the price tag was much smaller, I supported the idea of a new school rather than a renovation. As the cost estimates have ballooned, my support for the rebuild has faltered - there is a limit, after all, to what ANYTHING is worth, and we passed mine quite a few millions ago.

I am very disturbed by the attitude that we must press ahead and damn the torpedoes. When the world changes, you must change with it, and that includes accepting that some things you would like, you cannot have. Or else you get a more modest version. Why can surrounding towns build new schools, apparently good ones, for much less money? I have to think it's because they have better leadership.

My family can hardly afford to live here as it is. Additionally, I am dissatisfied with some important aspects of the curriculum e.g. math and science. I am appalled at the poor maintenance of city infrastructure. And now I see our elected officials determined to take us down a foolhardy path, spending an unconscionable amount of money for NNHS, with the best rationale available being that it's to avoid spending even more later?!?!? huh? How does THAT make sense?

Circumstances have changed dramatically since we as a community decided we wanted a rebuild. Let's stop this runaway train and do the sensible thing: the changed circumstances demand that we start again from basic principles, and scrutinize our choices carefully in view of the new cost environment. Sure, it's a royal pain and we all groan at the thought, and we hate to see all that effort have to be repeated, but it's the responsible thing to do. Let's re-consider a renovation. And if we decide to rebuild anyway, let's do a modest one that we can actually afford.

In conclusion, a \$170 million rebuild does NOT have my support! And I do plan to vote according to how this issue is handled by you, our elected officials.

Thanks for your attention - Michelle Ciurea

----- End of forwarded message -----

----- Forwarded message follows -----

From: **"Stephen Seiler" <sseiler@windpar.com>**
To: **<dolson@newtonma.gov>**
Subject: **RE Newton North**
Date sent: **Tue, 5 Sep 2006 08:57:02 -0400**

Dear Mr. Olson

Please pass on to the Board of Alderman the following message:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

Re Newton North

I am irretrievably opposed to the building of a new school for Newton North. I believe the process has been manipulated by insiders with a political agenda different from the wishes of the people of Newton. Moreover, in my view the process has not be undertaken in a manner that anyone could be satisfied has been correct and professional. Blaming a 50% increase in constriction costs on the rise in energy costs is ludicrous. How dumb to you think people are?

The sense I get from my neighbors is that that there is a huge frustration building up. I have heard the possibility of a recall being motioned. Although I had not though of it before, I must say I find the possibility attractive. Remember the example of Gov Davis of Ca. who handily won election less than two years before being dumped on the political trash heap by an angry electorate.

Steve Seiler

38 Devon Road

Newton, MA 02459

----- End of forwarded message -----

----- Forwarded message follows -----

Date sent: **Tue, 5 Sep 2006 09:37:58 -0700 (PDT)**
From: **Melissa Lea <mlea321@yahoo.com>**
Subject: **NNHS design**
To: **dolson@newtonma.gov**

September 5, 2006

Lisle Baker, President, Amy Mah Sangiolo, Vice-President
Newton Board of Aldermen, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459

Re: Newton North High School project

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Respectfully submitted, Melissa Lea

Melissa Lea

8 Devon Road
Newton, MA 02459

(t) 617.244.4278

(f) 617.795.0743

mlea321@yahoo.com

Do you Yahoo!?Get on board. You're invited to try the new Yahoo! Mail.

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