

Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 3, 2008
Meeting Notes

Aldermen and Committee Members Present: Alderman Marcia Johnson, Alderman Leonard Gentile, Sgt. James Norcross, Laura Naylor, Steve Shufro, Jim Robertson, Jeanne White, Nikki Shearman.

The Agenda items included:

Mayor Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

• ***Construction Updates/Foundation***

Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, commented that foundation work continues. The building permit to construct the new building was issued by the Inspectional Services Department on May 28, 2008. Steel has arrived and is currently being constructed. Asbestos removal is complete with the exception of Elm Road. It is possible for this work to be completed over the summer, as Dimeo will take control of Elm Road on June 12, 2008. Dimeo will move the construction fence to be adjacent to the sidewalks. The road will be repaved and reopened in the fall. Nick will get sketch to Steve Shufro to hand out to abutters. The portion of Elm Road from Lowell Avenue to the circle drive remain open.

Dimeo was authorized to request pricing for the exterior brick(s) to be used for the new high school. Samples were shown. Bids from all contractors for the project are due back on June 12, 2008 by 2:30 p.m. and will be opened at 3:00 p.m.

The Architectural Access Board (AAB) approved the waiver for the Hull Street stairs. Handicapped access from Hull Street will remain adjacent to the old tennis courts. An abutter inquired if there were any necessary sign-offs required by the Conservation Commission. Nick Parnell said he did not think so but would check.

• ***Noise***

With regards to the letter sent by Tom Krauss on this subject, the Mayor advised the Committee that he had received a response from Brad Dore, Dore & Whittier Architects, that the bid for the air handling units was just completed. They will now be building a model to test the acoustics and will follow-up with the Committee when the testing is complete and they have data to discuss. Alderman Johnson, also commented that the Public Safety and Transportation Committee would be discussing the current Noise Ordinance at a future meeting.

• ***Dirt Piles***

Currently one of the dirt piles is being used and is decreasing in size. The other was hydro-seeded and grass has begun to grow. Dimeo sent information on the dust reduction products like Geomatrix SS and Earthstop 500 Crystal to Commissioner David Naparstek at the Health Department for further review and comment. Dimeo is against using these products as they believe the products would not be effective and could cause site hazards, as the material become slippery when wet. Currently a water truck is being used to reduce the dust as much as possible.

The reduction products will be discussed at a future meeting once the Health Department comments are received.

• ***Neighborhood & Special Events Parking***

City Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, reported that during the last special event in April the City installed extra “tow zone area” temporary signs along the eight streets closest to the high school property. No major problems were reported so they will continue to do this as needed for special events. The City’s Traffic Council has an item on their agenda, which was docketed by the Ward 2 Aldermen to review winter parking issues. They are considering additional restrictions for that area during the months of December through March. Clint also mentioned that the Council would be reviewing the Tiger Permit program for use when school begins in the fall. He asked that any comments should be sent to him.

Jeanne White asked if there were any parking plans in place or being considered for the summer school parking. Clint said he would check with the Jennifer Price and Susan Ostrer and report back. There was also continued discussion on possible alternatives to resolve the problems with cars parked illegally on both sides of Calvin Road. The Mayor asked Clint to do further research on a possible permanent solution. The Calvin Road item is on the Traffic Council agenda for discussion at its meeting on Thursday, June 19, 2008 and abutters will be notified.

Steve Shufro and Jim Robertson reported bottleneaking issues at the intersections of Blithedale/Otis and Trowbridge/Walnut during the morning commute. They were asked by Sargent Norcross to call the Traffic Division of the Newton Police Department if they observe this again to report it when its happening and a Police car would be dispatched to the area(s) at that time.

Clint reported that the proposed removal of the traffic island on Walnut Street needs to go to the Board of Aldermen for approval and the design plans need to be completed. It is unlikely this will happen before 2009.

• ***Walnut Street Improvements for Bicycles***

Clint reported that he and the City Engineer, Lou Taverna, met with George Kirby, Bicycle & Pedestrian Task Force member, to discuss ways to improve the Walnut Street area and encourage bicyclists. Clint commented that the Department of Public Works is currently adding extra striping 4-5 feet off the curb on Walnut Street, between Beacon Street and the high school. He said that while there were compromises in parking in some areas, it would allow for additional safe passage of bicyclists. Clint also sited that the City would be installing new “Share the Road” signage in appropriate areas of Walnut Street.

Other Items

• Alderman Johnson questioned the impact the safety lighting on the construction site might have on abutters. Nick Parnell commented that the lighting packages were currently being worked out but this item could be discussed at a future meeting.

• ***The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 15, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.***