

Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Meeting Notes

Aldermen and Committee Members Present: Alderman Marcia Johnson, Alderman Stephen Linsky, Alderman Susan Albright, Captain Matt Cummings, Laura Naylor, Steve Shufro, Jeanne White, Beverly Spencer, Jim Robinson, and Heidi Black
Mayor Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

The Agenda items included:

• *Acoustical Testing*

Project Architect Brad Dore and Jen Hinckley from Acentech, Inc. (*acoustical consultant to design team*), commented that the design team engineered the building's mechanical systems so that they will comply with the City's Noise Ordinance. The baseline was taken by measuring noise levels over a 6-day period in July 2007. This long-term monitoring occurred at five locations, including four ground and one rooftop location, 24-hours per day. The focus is on the "quietest of the quiet" background noise. This represents a conservative estimate of the noise generated by existing mechanical equipment, insects, leaves, traffic, and every other noise, and is collected on a minute-by-minute basis. Based on this input, a baseline condition has been defined as 35 decibels.

The Noise Ordinance allows an increase of no more than 5 decibels, meaning that 40 decibels would be the upper limit.

Mr. Dore and Ms. Hinckley described the acoustical model, and the decibel level generated at various locations around the school property. Ms. Hinckley noted that while roof screens were never intended to be sound barriers, the layout of the rooftop systems is intended to minimize noise as much as possible. The design team focused on mitigating sound at the source, not with roof screens. In fact, the mechanical equipment was selected with noise in mind, which is not typical.

Ms. Hinckley went on to note that the sound energy that must be produced in order for a person with normal hearing to perceive an increase or decrease in 3 decibels. A difference of 10 decibels is perceived to be about twice as loud. So, while the difference between 35 and 45 decibels is perceived to be about twice as loud, the difference between 35 and 38 is barely audible.

In response to a question regarding who will be "on the hook" to make changes in the event that the sound models do not represent actual post-construction acoustical conditions, Mayor Cohen indicated that the best way to deal with the problem is to ensure that the work is done properly in the first place.

• *Construction Updates*

Public Building Commissioner Nick Parnell said that everything that could go wrong did go wrong over the summer. Work went late into the night on several occasions. Eight utilities had to go through Elm Road on a very condensed schedule. The work had to get done. Nick apologized for the extremely noisy conditions that neighbors had to endure. The City tried its

best to send notices to neighbors as soon as it was notified by Dimeo of the possibility of working late or an on- or off-site emergency.

Several neighbors expressed concern at the removal of a mature tree at the end of Blithedale Street. Nick Parnell and neighbor Terry Morris agreed to look into this situation further. Nick also mentioned that sewers backed up into residences on Kimball Terrace. He said that the City is continuing to examine the cause. Mayor Cohen suggested that residents file a claim for damages, and if it is found that the City is negligent, homeowners can recover expenses. However, sewer backups are not that uncommon in Newton.

The Mayor reminded residents to call Nick Parnell's office at 617-796-1600 with any complaint or concern regarding construction of the new high school. The Mayor will direct the Public Works Department customer service center (617-796-1000) to forward any call related to the Newton North High School construction to Nick Parnell's office.

Concrete pouring is continuing. Work on a very large pour recently lasted until 11:30 p.m., and the City received many complaints. The construction team implemented changes to ensure that this does not reoccur. The size of each pour has been greatly reduced, and the City has been in serious discussions with the concrete supplier (Aggregate) regarding getting trucks on-site early. Frank Allard, Dimeo Construction, noted that the following changes have been made related to concrete pours: (1) No more "split level" pours, and (2) Limiting the size of the pour. However, there are a lot of variables involved in the time it takes for concrete pours to be completed. It takes at least 5 hours for concrete to set, and as temperatures fall, it may take longer. Frank Allard also noted that work would continue every Saturday until further notice. Nick Parnell will notify residents in advance of any future concrete pour.

Neighbors and members asked questions about the construction site lighting. Frank Allard said that while it appears that there are a lot of lights, the exterior walls will begin to go up shortly, and the lighting should present less of an impact. Frank Allard insists that all site lighting stay on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to prevent injury in a dark corner during the day, and to protect trespassers at night. This is normal construction practice, and protects Dimeo from liability in the event of an accident.

- ***Other Items – Traffic concerns***

City ordinance limits vehicular traffic on Kimball Terrace to residents and service vehicles between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., school days, and limits vehicular traffic on Blithedale Street to residents and service vehicles between 7:00 a.m. and 10: p.m., on school days. Police Captain Cummings noted that violators could be ticketed for moving violations. An officer will be posted on an intermittent basis over the next 3-4 weeks.

A request for teacher parking to occur on the cul-de-sac portion of Kimball Terrace rather than in front of houses. The Mayor indicated that City Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel would look into this request.

The recently posted "No Parking" signs on the south side of Calvin Road has been an improvement.

- ***The next meeting will be on October 7 at 6:30 p.m.***