

Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Meeting Notes

Aldermen and Committee Members Present: Alderman Stephen Linsky, Alderman Lenny Gentile, Alderman Marcia Johnson, School Committee Member – Reenie Murphy, NNHS Principal – Jennifer Price, Captain Matt Cummings, Sarah Ecker, Jim Robertson, Beverly Spencer, Jeanne White, Tom Krauss (filling in for Laura Naylor), Steve Shufro, Nikki Shearman

Mayor David B. Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:35p.m.

The Agenda items included:

Introduction from the Mayor/Construction Updates:

The Mayor announced that Dimeo Construction expects to erect the last piece of structural steel on or around December 5. He expects there will be a small ceremony to celebrate the event. All on the NNHS Liaison Committee e-mail distribution list will be notified via email when the exact date is known.

Pedestrian Safety – Crossing Walnut Street

Trip Elmore, Turner Construction, reviewed a graph of the traffic patterns including construction vehicles over a two-day period as identified by their consultant, Traffic Solutions. He summarized that the studies showed that trucks did not adversely impact the traffic during the peak hours of 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 to 6:00 p.m.

At the October meeting it was requested that the City consider using the police detail officer located at the construction site entrance to assist in crossing pedestrians on Walnut Street. City Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, noted that studies show that simply painting the crosswalk lines on a busy street like Walnut Street are not enough to increase pedestrian safety. He believes installing a traffic signal is the best solution, and hopes the details on how the signal functions can be worked out with the Board of Aldermen so that it could be installed in the Spring of 2009.

Alderman Gentile commented that the Public Safety & Transportation Committee is ready to review the traffic signal when the item is docketed. Mayor Cohen commented that the plans are currently being finalized by the firm Traffic Solutions and will be docketed as soon as they are ready.

Another suggestion made in order to increase pedestrian safety on Walnut Street was to increase the selective police enforcement to slow the speed of the cars. Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel commented that in his experience the speed limit signs are largely ignored but help with police enforcement should make a difference. He also noted that congestion and on street parking could help to slow the traffic. In his opinion, Walnut Street is not a good candidate for speed bumps as it is too busy a street. Tom Krauss asked about using the automated speed posting signs. Captain Cummings commented that there are only two mobile units in the City and they are heavily used.

Mayor Cohen asked that Clint continue to give thought to this problem. Clint said he would bring the traffic consultant's plan to the next NNHS Liaison Committee meeting on December 16. The Mayor said he and Nick Parnell would work on getting the traffic signal item docketed for action by the Board of Aldermen.

It was suggested that the Committee review current procedures for snow removal, emergency parking, etc. at the next Committee meeting.

Trip Elmore reviewed the progress at the construction site using a graph posted on the City's website on November 14. The placement of the structural steel should be completed in early December 2008. Concrete slabs will be poured through December 2008 and then again March through April 2009.

The sheathing of the exterior walls is continuing with "poly" inserts being installed in the window areas to assist in keeping the temperature of the interior as warm as possible. These inserts should also cut down on the visual affects of the lights. The auditorium, section D, will be draped with a curtain.

Other Items:

Several comments were made about the inability to find items on the NNHS web pages. Mayor Cohen commented that he and Mike Kruse were meeting with a consultant to discuss what changes could be made to improve the presentation of information on the website pages.

Beverly Spencer requested that the Mayor consider installing the new trees on the Hull Street side of the property as soon as possible to allow for additional screening from the construction site. The Mayor said he would walk the area and review it further at his Friday construction group meeting. Beverly also asked what was going to happen to the lights in the gym area over the winter. She asked if they would at least drape it with a curtain. Trip Elmore said they were discussing that possibility.

Someone also asked if the project was still on target for completion as scheduled. The answer was "Yes!" The new high school is expected to be completed on or before July 15, 2010.

Jim Robertson asked that the landscaping plan be updated on the City's website.

Mayor Cohen adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30 p.m.