

Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 9, 2009
Meeting Notes

Aldermen and Committee Members Present: Mayor David B. Cohen, Michael Kruse, Alderman Steve Linsky, Alderman Marcia Johnson, Alderman Leonard Gentile, Jeanne White, Laura Naylor, Sarah Ecker, Jim Robertson, Steve Shufro, School Committee Member Reenie Murphy, Captain Howard Mintz, NNHS Principal Jennifer Price, Jim Robertson.

The Agenda items included:

- ***Introduction/Comments from Mayor:***

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

The Mayor commented that the demolition of the old high school building would begin after it was closed for the end of the 2009-2010 school year and as soon as furniture, fixtures and other necessary items were moved to the new building. At that time, testing would begin to check for asbestos. It is expected that the demolition will take approximately one year. The building will be taken down piece-by-piece so that materials can be recycled; the building will not be imploded. When the demolition is complete the land will be converted to sports fields as shown on the approved site plan.

- ***Construction Updates/Progress on Floor Pouring, Progress of Exterior Walls***

Tripp Elmore with Turner Construction gave a construction update stating that work is continuing vigorously. Updates were reviewed based on the web posting dated June 6, 2009. Highlights included the relocation of the temporary fire access drive so that access would be off Hull Street, near the existing athletic complex. The relocated access drive would be gated and locked. The construction fence will be pushed closer to the school to allow the access drive to be built but moved back into place before school starts in this fall.

Reenie Murphy commented that the athletic field entrances/exits will remain open as they are currently. It was suggested that an e-mail and flyer be sent to the Hull Street neighbors with specific information. Public Buildings Commissioner Nick Parnell said that he would post a notice on the NNHS website.

Tripp Elmore also mentioned that National Grid would be working on Hull Street to upgrade a conversion station underground on the high school side of the roadway, under the existing sidewalk. Nick Parnell added that there would be metal plates covering the work areas for public safety.

Jennifer Price asked if there would be any work underway this summer on or along Elm Road, near the high school entrance. Nick Parnell said "No!"

Tripp Elmore commented that the concrete pours are continuing. Areas that will be worked on through the summer are the large theatre, large gym, competition gym and the pool. He mentioned that Dimeo is 90% complete on the total cement pours for the project. Waivers to the City's Noise Ordinance will be requested, as needed, if it is anticipated that the work

might go beyond the allowed time. Progress continues on the installation of the exterior bricks by the masons; most recently in the area of the theatre wing. Dimeo expects to have the exterior (siding) work completed by early September 2009. The windows are being installed. Metal panels are expected to be installed in all unbricked areas of the building façade as soon as they will arrive in August.

Nick Parnell and Tripp Elmore reviewed the approved Landscape Plan for the project. They stated that goal is to preserve as many existing trees on the site as possible. It is expected that the landscaping will be complete from the stadium area east to Walnut Street by July 2010. Commissioner Parnell said that he would post the approved plan on the NNHS website.

Alderman Johnson asked that the construction managers follow up with abutter Beverly Spencer regarding all trees that are expected to be removed along Hull Street. She also asked about the plan was for maintaining the new plantings. Nick Parnell said he would check on whether or not an irrigation system would be installed.

An abutter from Kimball Terrace asked that Commissioner Parnell consider adding evergreen vegetation along that edge of the school property to create more of a visual barrier from the bus drop-off area. Nick commented that the existing chain-link fence on Hull Street will remain with new plantings to be added on the inside of the fence.

Alderman Gentile asked Committee members if money was not an issue, if they would prefer artificial turf in place of sod for the soccer field proposed for the front lawn facing Walnut Street. The general consensus of the attending members was that they would prefer the sod.

- ***Other Updates***

NNHS Principal, Jennifer Price, was asked if there would be any changes to the Tiger Permitting program. The answer was “No!” although she expects that the program would change for the 2010-2011 school year. She stated that the lottery for 2009-2010 was planned for the week of June 15, 2009. She also commented that some teachers had been receiving nasty notes left on their cars with no signatures and, therefore, she was unable to get in touch with these people. She makes every effort to address problems and concerns. Principal Price said that in the future she would bring them to the attention of the Committee members who were neighborhood representatives and may ask for their help.

Principal Price requested further discussion, at a later meeting, regarding the available parking for the new high school prior to the old building being demolished and the new Lowell Street parking lot being complete (scheduled for Phase 2). It was suggested that this item be reviewed with City Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel for discussion at the September 15 meeting.

Jim Robertson requested that there be a special meeting to review the parking plan with neighbors. Principal Price suggested it be a consideration to continue the Tiger Permit Program after the construction is complete.

Steve Shufro and Jim Robertson asked about the fence height around the ticket area of the stadium and the soccer field area. Commissioner Parnell said he would check into it and get back to them.

An abutter on Lowell Avenue reported that she recently had a fire at her house due to cigarettes being improperly disposed of on her property; possibly by students. Principal Price commented that because the incident happened off school property, it was out of her control and authority. The abutter commented that a police report was taken at the time of the incident, but she did not receive any follow-up. Captain Mintz was asked to check in to the matter and follow with her.

An abutter at Kimball Terrace requested that a police cruiser be posted again on their street in the fall during the first week of school to help with the flow of traffic in the drop-off area.

Mayor Cohen adjourned the meeting at 8:05p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, at 6:30 p.m.