

Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 15, 2009
Meeting Notes

Aldermen and Committee Members Present: Mayor David B. Cohen, Michael Kruse, Jeanne White, Laura Naylor, Sarah Ecker, Jim Robertson, Steve Shufro, School Committee Member Reenie Murphy, Captain Howard Mintz, NNHS Principal Jennifer Price, Arnie Bauchner, Beverly Spencer, Alderman Susan Albright.

The Agenda items included:

- ***Introduction/Comments from Mayor:***
Mayor Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- ***Construction Updates:***

Asbestos:

Tripp Elmore with Turner Construction commented that initial testing on the “old” building has begun. They have found non-friable asbestos material between the block back-up and vapor barrier walls. In addition, it was found that the steel beams were sprayed with friable asbestos material and some of it fell down between the brick and block wall and will need to be removed during the demolition phase. He anticipates more testing to be done and noted that they are in the process of drafting a plan for the additional “controlled” testing.

Utilities

With the exception of the temporary poles, utility work on Elm Road is complete. The temporary poles will be removed when there is no longer a need for temporary electrical service in the specific area. Abutter, Terry Morris, asked what was in the conduit on Elm Road. Public Buildings Commissioner, Nick Parnell commented that it held pipes for drainage, sewage, domestic water, gas and electric. Terry also questioned the use of temporary poles in the area of Lowell Avenue and Elm Road. It was mentioned that all temporary utility poles would be removed at the completion of the project.

Although unrelated to the high school project, National Grid completed their upgrades in the area of Hull Street and Lowell Avenue.

Progress on Floor Pouring, Progress of Exterior Walls

Tripp Elmore provided updates based on the website posting dated September 11, 2009. He commented that the large concrete pours are now complete. Since there are only small pours left, Dimeo does not expect the work to go beyond 5:00 p.m., or require a waiver of the City’s Noise Ordinance. Progress continues on the installation of the exterior bricks by the masons, which is now 98% complete. The windows are being installed. Tripp expects the building to be weather tight within the next 3-4 weeks.

Landscaping

Nick Parnell and Tripp Elmore reviewed the Landscape Plan for the project as shown on the website with posting dated August 12, 2009. There were numerous questions on the height of the fence in various areas. Nick offered to add the fence height or a key (to the posted plan) that indicates the fence height. Tripp mentioned that a low, 4ft fence would be placed

along the baseball fields with two 20 ft backstops. The hillside of the multi-purpose stadium will include a 6ft fence along that edge of the site, and from the bleachers to the back of the new school building the fence will be 8ft in height. The soccer field (east edge of site) will have 10ft drops at both field ends with a 4ft fence along Walnut Street. The tennis courts will have a 10ft fence around the entire perimeter. The nursery school play area will have a 4ft fence. Committee member, Jim Robertson, inquired if there had been a consideration for the soccer balls and baseballs going over the 4ft fence and into Walnut Street or Lowell Avenue. Tripp and Nick commented that the sports designers working with the architects made the decisions on the fence height for the plan. Additional concern was raised about this possibility. Mayor Cohen asked Nick to follow-up with the architect on the fence heights for each area.

Nick mentioned that he thought the 6ft chain link fence that is currently in place on Hull Street would be removed. Certain abutters and Committee members commented that this existing fence was unsightly and should either be replaced or removed. The Mayor asked Nick to look into installing a new fence on Hull Street, to compliment the proposed landscaping and provide security as needed. Nick agreed to check with the landscape architect regarding the fence design and plantings along Hull Street, in the area of the stadium. This item will be discussed further at the next NNHS Liaison Committee meeting.

Kimball Terrace abutter, John Peterson, asked if fencing would be added running along the north edge of the site (and along Elm Road) at Kimball Terrace. Kimball Terrace neighbors have safety concerns due to the number of busses traveling along Elm Road. Terry Morris asked why the fence in the north end zone of the football field was so high and questioned the purpose of the fence. Terry also asked about the old 4ft fence dividing the school grounds from Elm Road (located between the old Elm Road and the new Elm Road, between Blithedale Street & Kimball Terrace), and noticed that no new fence was shown on the current plan. Nick said that this issue would be clarified at the next NNHS Liaison Committee meeting.

Lowell Avenue abutter, Ardell Baker, asked how the kids get into the school ground through the 4ft fence. Nick commented that there are openings along the fence line. She also asked if there was going to be landscaping in the parking lot area that faces her property, as Lowell Avenue abutters have endured the bus drop-off area (with no landscaping) along Elm Road. Again, this issue would be clarified at the next NNHS Liaison Committee meeting.

An abutter on Blithedale Street asked about the total budget for site landscaping and expressed concern that cost overruns might reduce the landscaping budget. Nick commented that the budgeted amount is within the Dimeo Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) and he would update members at the next NNHS Liaison Committee meeting.

Committee member, Jim Robertson, asked whether, and if so where, irrigation systems would be installed. Tripp pointed out the areas as noted in the Landscaping Plan. All agreed that proper maintenance is important.

Committee member, Laura Naylor, asked what would be needed to finalize any planting of new trees on school property that would be paid for by abutters. Other abutters expressed interest in this possibility, but asked who would be responsible for on-going maintenance. The Mayor suggested that Nick arrange a meeting between interested neighbors and the project design team, including Brad Dore, Dore & Whittier Architects, and our Landscape Architect (Horiuchi and Solien).

Abutter, John Joyce, asked what the schedule was for the completion of the tennis courts. Tripp commented that the area would be graded in 2009 and ready (most likely) for tennis in mid-summer 2010. John also commented that the grading has been noisy in the past. Tripp said that since the loam pile has been removed, there should be no more activity until next spring.

School Committee member, Reeney Murphy, asked when the eastside middle field would be completed. Tripp said that it would be one of the last things to be completed, with sod laid sometime between April and May 2010.

Abutter, Terry Morris, asked when the football field would be completed. Tripp commented that it is being rough graded at present and should be complete within a month. Installation of the perimeter drain system (for the synthetic field) will follow, and the artificial turf should be laid in spring 2010.

An abutter asked if there is a planting plan listing the specific types of trees and plantings. Nick said it should be posted on the City's NNHS construction website. Nick said that he would also post a full set of landscaping plans in the NNHS Library (in addition to the City's website).

Committee member, Beverly Spencer, asked if additional plantings could be planted along the Hull Street stairway. Nick said that he would be sure to get it done.

An abutter asked about the testing schedule for the school building's emergency generator and asked about sound attenuation for any testing. Nick said he would check into this issue.

- ***Other Updates***

The Mayor asked for any comments on how the Tiger Permit parking is working so far this school year. The comments were positive.

Abutters along Kimball Terrace and Blithedale Street commented that the students were congregating and smoking in their areas. Principal Jennifer Price asked that they contact the school at 617- 559-6200 to notify the administration of any violations of the smoking ban. Jennifer commented that if the students were trespassing onto private property she would suggest either talking to the students directly or calling the Newton Police, as her staff does not have jurisdiction on private property. Jennifer also commented that she had requested two additional trash receptacles be placed on Blithedale Street and Kimball Terrace.

Abutter, Nick Iselin, requested special consideration for an additional resident pass due to the fact that his driveway is located in the front yard. Beverly Spencer offered to allow him use of her pass. The Mayor asked Captain Howard Mintz to look into the matter to see if this could be done.

Committee member, Jim Robertson, asked how long the Tiger Permit program would last. Principal Price commented that the existing program would last until the new Lowell Avenue parking lot was completed. She also indicated that she would like to continue to use a variation of the program long-term after the construction is completed. She referred to it as a “thoughtful parking allocation”.

Mayor Cohen adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, at 6:30 p.m.