

**Newton North High School Liaison Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 27, 2009**  
Meeting Notes

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

The Agenda items included:

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

Mayor Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Mayor began with a general comment about abutters who were interested in donating landscaping to the City property adjacent to them. He said that while the City would like to work with interested abutters it would not be able to guarantee the City would be able to maintain the donated landscaping. Abutters should be prepared to help with maintenance.

At the September 15 Committee meeting, the question was asked about the budgeted amount set aside for landscaping of the new NNHS site. The Mayor confirmed that \$480,000 has been set aside in a Board Order specifically for landscaping. This amount cannot be changed without a vote of the Board of Aldermen.

The Mayor commented that the construction of the new high school is currently on schedule for completion and under budget. Until further asbestos testing in the old high school is completed, a more definitive estimate for taking down the old building is unknown.

- ***Construction Updates:***

***Landscaping***

Brad Dore, Dore & Whittier Architects, made a general statement that before any decisions are made on additional landscaping in abutting areas, that Dimeo be allowed to plant all that has been purchased and budgeted and then look at what landscaping may still be needed. He felt this was a more cost-effective solution for all.

Brad also commented with regards to fencing as discussed with Nick Parnell at the September 15 meeting that decisions made about fencing and fencing heights went through a review process and has already been put out to bid. He further commented that to change plans at this time could cause a ripple affect with other budgeted items and overall timetable.

Committee member, Steve Shufro, asked what the 8ft fence on the north side of the stadium, Elm Rd/Blithedale St., is protecting? Dan Solien, Landscape Architects, Horiuchi and Solien, commented that the fence proposed to circle the field and would be black vinyl clad, as requested by the School's Athletic Department and designed to be high enough to keep lacrosse (and other sports) balls on the field. There are multiple entrances to the stadium with gates. NNHS Principal, Jennifer Price, commented that safety and security are the major reasons for the increase in fence height, as there have been previous incidents in which the school was sued due to a stray ball. It also provides a barrier for the balls and due to the

surface of the turf field they don't want people /kids walking on or vandalizing the expensive field. They surveyed other area schools and all had an 8ft fence or wanted it. Eleven of the 12 Bay State teams use for other games besides the high school activities that bring in more than 50,000 people per year.

Alderman Linsky asked about the baseball/softball backstops. He expressed concern about balls going over the fence and onto the street. Dan commented that the proposed backstops should stop the majority of the balls, but felt there was no fail-safe option. The design team did consider installing netting but choose not to recommend installation at this time. There was a concern that the nets are too intrusive to the public view. The Mayor commented that when the field is in play that the City could reconsider additional fencing in the future. Alderman Gentile agreed that the City should wait to see when the fields are in use. Dan commented that the backstop has a substantial overhang to catch the balls. There is an allowance of 30ft between the sideline and the sidewalk. He felt this was a substantial distance but could be monitored in the future. From the goal line to the side is also 30ft where cars parking in the parking lot adjacent to the fields are much more in play in the Lowell Street parking lot.

Dan Solien gave a general overview of all fencing heights as shown on the approved landscaping plan. Committee members Beverly Spencer and Sarah Ecker asked about the fencing plan on the Hull Street side. Dan commented that they will be taking down the existing fence and the current plan does not show it being replaced.

Abutter, Nick Iselin, Hull Street, commented that the with regards to the fence being completely removed that this could be dangerous in areas where the grade drops off. He asked what the grades would be on that side of the stadium. Dan commented that understood their concerns about the slope and they were also sensitive to the visual impact to the abutters. The approved plan proposes planting shade trees and small woodland plantings shrubs that would eventually grow into a wooded slope. The engineered (and filled) slope would have a 1 to 3 slope. Dan was confident when the area was completed that there would not be a problem.

Committee member, Beverly Spencer, asked about the plan for the area by the stairway. Dan commented that the area is not complete due to the current excavation in that area. When completed, it would be filled in and moderated to a gradual slope up to the school building.

Abutter, Ardell Baker, Lowell Avenue, asked about the landscaping plan for the parking lot on Lowell Avenue. Dan commented that there would be a 5ft hedge installed the length of the parking lot broken by entry points to screen parked cars from ground level view.

Alderman Johnson asked if there was a plan for maintenance and irrigation of the hedges. Dan explained that they selected a low maintenance yew that grows very slowly. Irrigation is only planned for the playing fields. However, the installation will be set up to allow them to be added in the future if needed. The contractor will be responsible to care for the plants until the project is accepted by the City. The plants are guaranteed for one year.

Committee member, Laura Naylor, inquired about the area behind the tennis courts on Walnut Street side outside the construction fence. She would like to plant in that area. Tripp Elmore thought work was still being done in that area but will check.

Abutter, Nick Iselin, commented that he felt the planting plan on Hull Street was a missed opportunity. Tripp commented that there would be hydro-seeding in the interim until the plantings are in place and take hold. Nick Iselin had concerns that it would not be maintained. Brad Dore asked that they let them execute the plan as approved as all plants are bought and paid for. The Mayor agreed that maintenance would continue to be an inherent issue as we go into the future.

***Progress on Floor Pouring, Progress of Exterior Walls***

Tripp Elmore provided updates based on the website posting dated October 16, 2009. He commented that the perimeter of the building is now 97% complete. The main entrance drive is roughed-in and will be worked on over the next few months. The white roof is being installed, which is the permanent roof, and is expected to be completed in 2-3 weeks. Air handlers on the roof will be turned on soon to heat the building for the winter. They are waiting on the install of the permanent electricity from NStar for the generators. Dimeo currently has two temporary generators on site running during the day. They hope to have the permanent ones installed in the next 2-3 weeks but are waiting for NSTAR, which is out of their control.

Mayor Cohen adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 1, at 6:30 p.m.