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memo

to: Josh Morse, Public Buildings Commissioner, City of Newton

from: Dan Chen

date: July 1, 2022

project name & number: Newton Center for Active Living, BH+A project no. 3399.00

subject: Site Plan Review Submission

cc:

The current Senior Center, built in 1938 as the Newtonville Branch Library, is undersized and no longer serves the needs of Newton's senior residents. Being a former library, it was not an ideal space being primarily two reading rooms with high windowsills and the first-floor 6 feet above adjacent outside entry grades. Useability and accessibility, two of the most important criteria for a senior center, are both compromised.

Upon narrowing the site selection to 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville and through a comprehensive feasibility study comparing two options, a new building construction was selected over renovating existing library building with an addition. This new facility will replace the current building which no longer serves the aging population in Newton.

The proposed new building is approximately 32,000 gross sf on three floors. The new facility consists of public function spaces on the first floor, a multi-function gymnasium and activity focused spaces on the second floor and a walking track and fitness and game room with a roof deck on the third floor. The building is served by (1) elevator and (3) sets of stairs and the west stair will provide access to the roof. The building support spaces will include general storage. All restroom facilities in the building are individual rooms.

Site Access, Traffic and Parking

There are thirty-one (31) onsite surface parking spaces accessed through a one-way drive aisle from Walnut Place and exiting to Highland Avenue. The one-way access provides ease of access and parking. The remaining site is designed with landscaping, trees, fence, and paved terraces with outdoor seating. An active curbside pickup and drop-off is along Highland Avenue. A traffic Impact Assessment completed as part of this Site Plan Review submission indicated that minimal impact to traffic from this proposed building.

First Floor

The first floor accommodates the most public functions of the new Senior Center with direct access to the exterior. A 2-story height Lobby, Reception, Lounge and a library serve as the public face of the senior center. The welcome/information desk is readily visible from the atrium lobby. The lounge and library are envisioned with comfortable chairs and tables. As the main socializing hub of the first floor, it is intended to promote casual conversation and a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere..

The two large multi-function rooms are intended to host an array of public functions and activities. These two rooms can be separated to host (2) smaller groups independently or open-up into one large, flexible space to

host larger events. A stage is provided to host performances. The adjacent kitchen contains commercial equipment that can service the (2) multi-function spaces. The terrace directly outside provides added opportunities for outdoor activities.

Second Floor

This floor contains the activity focused programs: Gymnasium, Art Room, Classrooms, Activity room and the Senior Service offices. The gymnasium is a multi-functioned space for indoor exercises or activities. This space can host two court games simultaneously with a divider curtain or other large group activities such as zumba or tai chi.

Third Floor

The top floor is to house the more intense physical activities: walking track above the gym, a game room for billiards or ping pong and a fitness room. A small lounge directly outside the fitness provides additional opportunity for conversation.

Roof Deck

An outdoor roof deck is provided at this floor that connects directly to the exterior above Walnut Street. The roof deck can host an array of social activity with outdoor seating, gardening or become extension space outside of the fitness room.

Building Exterior Materials

The exterior material of the new building will primarily be brick, stone, metal panel, high density siding, wood soffit and glass. The tall window bays are designed along the façade facing Highland Avenue and Walnut Street. The top of the building will be composed of sloping equipment screens and a membrane roof. Solar arrays are to be incorporated on the roof.

Ornamental Panels and Railings

The ornamental panels, ornate railings and the horizontal cornice are all designed to bring a sense of scale to the exterior face of the new senior center. The use of bricks, stones, wood are all intended to create a building that will fit into the Newtonville neighborhood rich with buildings in scales, materials and textures.

Stained Glass and Cupola

Notable existing senior center elements are planned to be integrated into the new building design through an on-going historical mitigation plan. One example restored and reinstall (2) Charles Connick Studio stained glass panels integrated into the proposed building facade. A cupola skylight is part of the building roof design and is inspired by the original 1938 library building cupola design.

Building Engineering and Life Safety

The proposed senior center will use an all-electrified system without the use of fossil fuels. Building Heating, Cooling and Ventilation will be through an electrified VRF heat pump system with an Energy Recover Ventilation. The new senior center will be fully accessible through the use of an elevator. Storm and Domestic Water, Sewer, and electrical utilities are planned to connect through Highland Avenue. An onsite infiltration system is designed to collect surface water and building runoff before discharging to the city infrastructure. A stormwater calculation that established the run-off capacity is completed and included as part of this Site Plan Review submission.

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Life safety system will comprise of automatic sprinkler and standpipe system with emergency power generation capabilities. The building includes fully addressable fire alarm and notification devices.

Energy Conservation and Green House Gas/Embodied Carbon Reduction

The proposed senior center will maximize energy conservation primarily through enhanced insulation, air infiltration, and high energy efficiency system. The project is also planning on onsite power generation through roof PV arrays. Base line building energy modeling is established so that comparative systems can be analyzed for maximum building energy use efficiency.

Preliminary Life Cycle Analysis of the proposed building design is established and will be on-going as the building design advances with further analysis to reduce embodied carbon building footprint.