

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2019					
Date: Newton City Hall - Room 204					
Time: 9:30 AM					
Attendees:					
Alex Valcarce	<i>Public Buildings Dept.</i>	---	Linda Walsh	<i>Public Health Dept.</i>	---
Amanda Berman	<i>Planning Department</i>	---	Maureen Lemieux	<i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	---
Barney Heath	<i>Planning Department</i>	Y	Nancy Scammon	<i>Parks & Rec Dept.</i>	Y
Bea Goldsmith	<i>Community Member</i>	Y	Norm Meltz	<i>Working Group</i>	Y
Bob DeRubeis	<i>Parks & Rec Dept.</i>	---	Rachel Sherman	<i>Working Group</i>	---
Brooke Lipsitt	<i>Community Member</i>	Y	Richard Rasala	<i>Community Member</i>	Y
Carol Schein	<i>Community Member</i>	Y	Sandra Butzel	<i>Community Member</i>	---
Cheryl Lappin	<i>City Councilor</i>	Y	Seth Bai	<i>Veteran's Services</i>	---
Deb Youngblood	<i>Health/Human Services</i>	---	Sue Rasala	<i>Community Member</i>	Y
Gabriel Holbrow	<i>Planning Department</i>	---	Susan Albright	<i>City Councilor</i>	Y
Jack Neville	<i>Parks & Rec Dept.</i>	Y	Thomas Rooney	<i>Public Buildings Dept.</i>	---
Jayne Colino	<i>Senior Services Dir.</i>	Y	Zachery LeMel	<i>Planning Department</i>	---
Jini Fairley	<i>Working Group</i>	Y	Tom Murphy	<i>NV5</i>	---
John Rice	<i>City Councilor</i>	Y	Melissa Gagnon	<i>NV5</i>	Y
Jonathan Yeo	<i>Working Group</i>	Y	Joel Bargmann	<i>BH+A</i>	---
Josh Morse	<i>Public Buildings Dept.</i>	Y	James Bruneau	<i>BH+A</i>	Y

Josh Morse opened up the meeting at 9:30AM.

The intent of this meeting was to review the overall process to date and to discuss ways to improve as the project moves forward into 2020. Streamlining the process will enable the Working Group to make recommendations to the Mayor with suggestions for Community re-engagement the and how to move the project forward. The team will be studying City owned, non-park, sites on the 2nd tier list. Although the NewCAL program is solid, compromises may be able to made at more challenging sites with regard to parking, green space and the gym.

The list of 60+ 2nd tier sites shall be broken down into two lists: viable and not viable. The Albemarle site will be off the table pending the WG vote and recommendation to the Mayor. There could be ripple effects if the Ed Center is pursued. The City will continue to evaluate the Newton Center Triangle as well as a handful of other properties with regard to the NewCAL program. The list of 145 City owned sites is posted on the project website, under “Sites.”

Per the Parks and Rec department, all park sites would also need to be removed from the list of possible sites. A WG member noted that although there are many precedents where parks/wooded areas became sites for new senior centers, this is not something that the City of Newton is going to pursue.

Currently the project budget is \$16.5M so sites need to be evaluated with cost in mind.

It was recommended to publicly state the following prior to the 1/16/20 Community meeting:
 A) the Albemarle site is off the table, B) a decentralized model is not being pursued, C) the Community will be invited to use the Center after hours and D) the new Center will need to be larger than the current facility, to accommodate more people comfortably. This will be a building for the future, which will need to be right-sized for the program.

After hours dominant users will likely be non-senior community members who are physically large enough to use the facility. All employees will need to CORI checked.

It was discussed that perhaps WG meetings should transition to WG/EBC meetings in the evening. The format would be similar to School Committee meetings, with public comment at the beginning and the end.

There is a misconception about the term “elderly.” Elderly is a physical state, not an age.

A Senior Center advocacy group may be forming.

It was suggested that a project schedule be developed with established milestones.

A decision tree matrix will be developed for the 2nd tier sites, with weighting factors. Time and cost would be criteria. Six (6) sites would be appropriate for the matrix. Next steps for the WG include reviewing site selection criteria for the following: 150 Jackson Road, Ed Center, West Newton Armory, Crafts Street DPW, Elliot Street DPW and Senior Center (current).

It was asked whether it would be feasible to build a new Lincoln Eliot School on the current site? If so, Aquinas could serve as a swing space and NewCAL could be at 150 Jackson Road.

The next Working Group meeting is on Tuesday, January 7, at 9:30AM.