

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
Attendees:					
Working Group		Present	City Staff		Present
Sandra Butzel	<i>Community Member</i>	---	Jonathan Yeo	<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>	---
Bea Goldsmith	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Seth Bai	<i>Veteran's Services</i>	---
Brooke Lipsitt	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Devra Bailin	<i>Planning</i>	---
Norm Meltz	<i>COA Member</i>	√	Amanda Berman	<i>Planning</i>	---
Jack Neville	<i>P&R Commission</i>	---	Ellen Ishkanian	<i>Mayor's Office</i>	---
Richard Rasala	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Zachery LeMel	<i>Planning</i>	---
Sue Rasala	<i>COA Member</i>	√	Thomas Rooney	<i>Public Buildings</i>	√
John Rice	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Rachel Sherman	<i>City IT</i>	---
Susan Albright	<i>City Councilor</i>	√	Linda Walsh	<i>Public Health</i>	---
Nicole Banks	<i>P&R Commissioner</i>	---	Deb Youngblood	<i>Health/Human Services</i>	---
Jayne Colino	<i>Senior Services Dir.</i>	√			
Jini Fairley	<i>ADA Coordinator</i>	---	Consultants		
Barney Heath	<i>Planning Director</i>	---	Tom Murphy	<i>NV5</i>	---
Maureen Lemieux	<i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	---	Melissa Gagnon	<i>NV5</i>	√
Josh Morse	<i>Public Buildings Comm.</i>	√	Joel Bargmann	<i>BH+A</i>	√
Nancy Scammon	<i>P&R Department</i>	√	James Bruneau	<i>BH+A</i>	√
Alex Valcarce	<i>Public Buildings</i>	√	Dan Chen	<i>BH+A</i>	√

Alex Valcarce opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:35AM.

The intent of this meeting was to review the draft presentation for the upcoming NHC meeting next Thursday, 12/17. Whereas the allotted time to present has been reduced to 10 minutes, the NHC presentation itself has been significantly pared down. The plan is to distribute supplemental

information as separate files. Since the last WG meeting on 11/24, BH+A has developed another add/reno option which essentially places the new addition at the existing main floor level, 6' above grade. With this scenario, first floor programming would be contiguous across both the existing building and the new. In addition, BH+A also created another new construction option. These two newly developed options will be presented to the DRC on 12/16/20, as well as to the NHC on 12/17/20 and at the Community update meeting in January (date TBD). New options were presented and discussed as noted below.

Option F – Existing Level Entry (3-story)

Discussion points previously noted in response to addition + renovation options were evaluated and incorporated into this alternate scheme. Highlights of this new scheme are:

- Front end of existing building is retained along Walnut Street.
- The existing front door would be the main entrance, accessible by stairs or by ramp, with a small interior elevator for access to the basement or first floor.
- The addition main level would be raised 6' to be level with the existing building. This would yield approximately 13,000SF of programming area on the main level.
- Essentially all programming is on the first two levels of the facility, with exception of the track and outside deck at the third floor.
- Two large rooms flanking the main entry lobby could be programmed as a game room or for fitness.
- Whereas fill is not structural and it would need to be removed or stabilized, parking can be lowered, at a minimum of 4' below grade.
- A strong relationship would be created from the second floor to the first floor below.
- Option to enter the building directly from the parking garage, via an elevator.

Comments:

- It was noted that the way the existing building is used is quite nice and having the building be essentially two stories is a big benefit.
- A strong visual and physical connection of the game room to the lobby could be created, as part of an interactive space.
- The basement lobby would be secure to prevent public access to other areas in the basement.

- It would be preferred for Administrative functions to be closer to the reception area.
- Could cardio fitness switch with admin for better visibility?
- Incorporating light monitors will be studied.
- The main entrance at Walnut Street will need to be studied. There are ways to massage the treatment of grades and ramps with the natural landscape.
- Perhaps the ramp could be modified to be a long one-way ramp running alongside the main facade (game room), going directly into the main lobby.
- Could drop off be at the corner of Highland Ave and Walnut Street, closer to ramp entry?
- A ramp is preferred over an elevator, whereas ramps do not break down and elevator lobbies can be subject to temperature and can be cold/hot.
- Traffic flow and the vehicular ramp will need to be refined. If vehicular exit is at Highland Ave, a flat landing will be required at the exit.
- 96" clear height is required for an accessible van in the parking area.
- One-way traffic pattern is preferred over two-way.
- Concern was expressed that working with the existing building could compromise accessibility as well as the building code.
- The existing tall windows, which face Walnut Street, are 12' above grade. Whether or not the windows can be extended to be lower will be studied in terms of historical impact.
- More visibility to the outside is preferred.
- Concern about small capacity of elevators. Larger capacity would be preferred.

Option E1 – New L-Shaped Building (4-story)

Discussion points previously noted in response to the L-shaped new construction option were evaluated and incorporated into this alternate scheme. Highlights of this new scheme are:

- A landscaped plaza is created at the corner of Highland Ave and Walnut Street.
- A large (20,000SF) third floor deck would overlook Walnut Street. The large outdoor program area could serve as a transition between the new facility and Walnut Place, as the building steps back from Walnut Street.
- In this option, all entrances and parking are at grade.

Comments:

- A green buffer can be added at the parking area.
- Entering at grade is a primary advantage of a new building.
- Other than two entrances being at grade, are there additional advantages to building new?

General Points to Note:

- Three senior centers BH+A is currently working on are all two story facilities: Scituate, Falmouth and Chatham.
- Design options will be equalized with regard to the number and size of elevators, toilet rooms, HCP parking spaces, etc.
- The required number of accessible parking spaces shown needs to be modified. Four (4) HCP spaces should be shown, near the entrance, with one for a van. In the L-shaped scheme, accessible spaces should be at the covered parking area.
- A total of 21' width is required for two (2) 8' wide HCP spaces with 5' space in between.

Additional Upcoming Meetings (all online with remote participation via Zoom):

- 12/16/20 Design Review Committee meeting
- 12/17/20 Newton Historic Commission meeting
- 12/22/20 Working Group meeting

Melissa G shall coordinate with Alex and Jayne and distribute Zoom info for all meetings noted, as it becomes available.

NV5 shall send out notices to the WG of any additional upcoming meetings relative to this project.