


Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

Community Meeting					
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022					
Location: Zoom webinar					
Time: 6:30PM					
Attendees – City Staff and Consultant Team:					
Josh Morse	<i>Public Buildings Dept.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joel Bargmann	<i>BH+A</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alex Valcarce	<i>Public Buildings Dept.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Chen	<i>BH+A</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Melissa Gagnon	<i>NV5</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Murphy	<i>NV5</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Alex Valcarce, the City of Newton Deputy Commissioner (Public Buildings Department), opened the Community meeting at 6:34PM. There were 33 participants in attendance. The following participating groups and individuals were represented: Public Buildings Department, NewCAL Working Group, Council on Aging (COA) Advisory Board, Commission on Disability, BH+A (architects) and NV5 (Owner’s Project Manager).

Participants were offered the option to be promoted to panelists (full participants) or remain as attendees. Panelists would have the option to speak verbally by raising a virtual hand. All participants (panelists or attendees) could submit comments and questions in writing through the chat and Q&A features which would be read following the presentation and verbal comments. Questions can also be emailed directly to newcal@newtonma.gov.

The meeting was recorded and is posted on the project website: [2022 0915 NewCAL Community Meeting Video](#).

The presentation is posted on the project website: [2022 0915 NewCAL Community Meeting Presentation](#).

Alex Valcarce opened the meeting at 6:05PM. The presentation was predominantly focused on design developments which have occurred since the last Community meeting in July when the focus was primarily on the Site Plan Approval process. The project is in the design development phase, with wood framing being explored as the building structure (in lieu of steel and concrete), in tandem with floor plan alignments and MEP coordination refinements.

DESIGN PROGRESS UPDATE

Dan Chen of BH+A provided an overview of design progress in comparison with drawings presented for Site Plan Approval back in July. An overview was provided beginning with building orientation as well as

the overall program and exterior elevations. The site plan has remained unchanged since Site Plan Approval.

It was noted that the proposed building is at the current senior center at 345 Walnut Street, at the corner lot bordered by Highland Avenue, Walnut Street and Walnut Place. Primary pedestrian access is at the main entry, located at the corner of Highland Avenue and Walnut Street. Vehicular access/parking and drop off is beneath the building, with one-way access via Walnut Place and one-way egress to Highland Avenue.

Building programming is organized as follows:

- First floor - Most public programming areas - lounge, library, and (2) large multi-function spaces plus reception, administration, and a commercial kitchen.
- Second floor - Multi-function gym, conference room, activity rooms, art room, and senior services administration spaces.
- Third floor - Game room, fitness room, walking track suspended above the gymnasium, lounge area with direct access to an outdoor deck.

FLOOR PLANS

First Floor

- Restrooms, which are all single stall, are consolidated into one block, allowing walls to vertically align on all three (3) floors.
- Restroom consolidation offers a more open lobby/lounge area, creating a visual and physical connection from the entry lobby through to the majority of the programs on the first floor.
- Main vestibule and reception area/desk have been refined to have direct visibility upon entry.
- Egress stair at south side changed direction to function as more of a communicating stair from the third floor to the dining area, rather than to the kitchen. Vertical circulation at the main communicating stair and elevator has not changed from the previous presentation.

Second Floor

- Storage capacity was studied, resulting in additional storage:
 - Two (2) rooms on the west side and a larger storage area on the east side
 - Art room increased in size with a kiln room (w/shelving/storage) and a larger storage room
- Senior Services program area has been refined, per collaboration with Jayne Colino and staff
- Restrooms (single stall) are consolidated into one block, allowing walls to vertically align on all three (3) floors.

- The gymnasium divider curtain will extend from inner rail to inner rail at the continuous walking track (as opposed to wall to wall); this will help facilitate connection between the gym and storage areas, behind the curtain.

Third Floor

- Gymnasium entry doors shifted closer to the lounge area, creating more open space near the walking track and allowing the storage room doors to be tucked around the corner and not be directly off the track.
- Storage areas have increased for the Fitness Room and Game Room.
- Cupola remains centered in the center bay, which will provide natural daylighting from above to the third-floor main corridor and lounge areas.
- Large lounge area has direct access to an outdoor roof deck which is approximately 50% under shade. The deck is continuous with no obstructions/columns which could separate function.
- Furniture for the deck and lounge area will be studied.

Roof Plan

- The optimum location on the roof is being studied for placement of mechanical equipment.
- The plan for the PV arrays is to be mounted on top of the high roof at the gym. Panel layout is being studied.

ELEVATIONS

Rendered elevations and perspectives were presented relative to building organization, programming and material and articulation development.

West Elevation

- Two (2) vertical volumes provide the necessary storage for the gymnasium.
- The elevation is primarily brick with a stone base; the staircase is integrated into the overall building design, as opposed to an appendage.
- Grille work on the first floor is for the future connection to the parcel at 47 Walnut Place.

East Elevation (Walnut Street)

- The cupola is integrated into the pyramidal roof, centered on the center bay of the building.
- The canopy marks the main entrance and provides a protective shield from inclement weather.
- Historic elements are incorporated, including wrought iron decorative ornamental railings, decorative metal panels and the two (2) Connick Studio stained glass panels which are currently

shown at the lounge windows, facing east. Optimum locations for panel placement is being reviewed and refined. Primary materials are brick, stone and glass windows.

North Elevation (Highland Avenue)

- Gymnasium volume with walking track above
- One-way exit to Highland Avenue below
- The staircase is integrated into the overall building design, as opposed to an appendage. The corner of the stairwell is visually opened with glazing, to provide some volume relief.
- Masonry articulation has been developed at the gymnasium.

South Elevation (Walnut Place)

- Outdoor terrace at the first floor, with direct access from the activity and dining areas.

PUBLIC COMMENT – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: What is the intent of the large squares articulated within the masonry on the elevations?

A: The square pattering is to introduce some articulation to help breakdown the vastness of the brick façades. The design consists of the same brick on the elevation with a stone border. The bricks within the square are slightly recessed, providing some interest with a shadow line relief.

It was suggested the squares could be utilized for the display of public art, perhaps to showcase rotating displays with various artist’s works. There was discussion about planning ahead and building eye hooks into the corners of the masonry squares to be display ready.

Q: What is the plan for exercise equipment in the fitness room?

A: The desire for equipment will be further evaluated as the building opening approaches.

Q: What are the benefits of changing to wood frame construction?

A: The building structure is being changed to wood frame construction primarily for the consideration of sustainability; steel and concrete inherently have a considerably higher carbon footprint. It was noted that some of the larger spans will need to be studied further, as light frame wood construction has some inherent limitations for larger spans. Options to be evaluated will include a laminated beam, wood truss or perhaps a steel beam which may be required at specific locations.

Q: What is the status of the lawsuit?

A: The lawsuit is still pending, and the City legal department will handle it. The project is moving forward.

The next NewCAL Community meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 6:30PM (via Zoom). If you haven't already registered, you can do so by clicking the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FL3f6SKISUuPeLDdMoMokg

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Prepared by: Melissa Gagnon, NV5 [End of 09/15/22 Meeting Minutes]