

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 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 9:30AM.

It was noted that the COA meeting agenda is full for this evening and NewCAL is not included.

With regard to the DRC meeting last Wednesday, 11/18, the DRC recognizes the historic value of the existing building although also recognizes inherent challenges. The general consensus was a

new building would better meet the particular needs of the user group for this particular project. The goal of the DRC meeting was for the Committee to start thinking about building mass, height and siting, particular with regard to abutter adjacency, as well as parking and green space. The project will need to take into account integration with the Newtonville business district, to create connection with, and ease of access to, Newtonville amenities.

Highlights from DRC meeting feedback:

- Discussion was primarily between two new options: A 4-story bar building and an L-shaped 4-story/3-story building. There was a slight lean towards the L-shaped design as this layout may offer more opportunity for design innovation.
- Engagement with direct abutters was discussed. Abutters have attended community meetings to date and are aware and informed of the project. There will be more pointed communication with abutters as the design develops and the direction is more focused. It was noted that it is important for the neighbors to have an opportunity to express any concerns and ask questions, outside of a public meeting. It is important to meet with direct neighbors sooner rather than later to confirm that the neighbor's desires align with what the DRC believes the neighbors want.
- Another design option to consider may be a 4-story portion on the corner of Highland and Walnut with two 3-story wings stepping down on both sides. BH+A will explore this option.
- The allocation of green space shall be studied to determine which is better suited: green space as a buffer, with the building set back from Walnut Street or alternatively, more concentrated green space on the corner or as a courtyard. A suggestion was made for the building to push to the northeast and maximize green space to the south. This would provide an opportunity to replicate the current garden, at the south side. The garden could serve a dual function as a community space, perhaps connected to the café.
- Parking vs. green space need to be reviewed to determine level of importance.
- Drop off area (covered) needs to be incorporated.

Going forward, it was noted that all presentations should begin with an overview of milestones achieved since the meeting prior with that particular audience. It is important to remind folks about the journey and where the project is in the process.

It was discussed that the next community update meeting should be scheduled in January, after meeting with Newton Historic on 12/17/20. Pending confirmation of the 1/20/21 PF/PS City Council meeting, a community update meeting will be scheduled, which will likely be 1/14/21.

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

- 11/24/20 Council on Aging meeting
- ~~01/14/21~~ NewCAL Community Update (to be confirmed)
- 12/08/20 Working Group 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.