


## Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, January 19, 2020					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
<b>Attendees:</b>					
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&amp;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&amp;R Commissioner</i>	---	Deb Youngblood	<i>Health/Human Services</i>	---
Jayne Colino	<i>Senior Services Dir.</i>	---			
Jini Fairley	<i>ADA Coordinator</i>	√	<b>Consultants</b>		
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&amp;R Department</i>	√	James Bruneau	<i>BH+A</i>	√
Alex Valcarce	<i>Public Buildings</i>	√	Dan Chen	<i>BH+A</i>	---

Alex Valcarce (Newton Public Buildings) opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:30AM.

The intent of this meeting was to recap feedback received at recent presentations to the Community on 1/05 as well as to the City Council Public Facilities and Programs and Services Committees on 1/06/21.

BH+A is currently working on the following:

- Reviewing comments received at the recent aforementioned meeting presentations and incorporate revisions, as appropriate, into floor plan design
- Preparing preliminary cost estimates, as a critical component to evaluate the Add/Reno and New Construction design approaches. Pending review by Newton Public Buildings and NV5 to confirm assumptions made are correct, cost estimates will be shared with the Working Group.
- At a conceptual level, development of contextual exterior images for both options.

At the next Working Group meeting the plan is to review updates to floor plans, draft contextual exterior images as well as cost estimates, prior to the upcoming DRC meeting on 2/10/21.

Ultimately, the COA will need to vote on a preferred approach. To officially move forward with one of the two design approaches, the Mayor and City Council will need to know the opinion of the stakeholders, of which the COA is the primary user group.

#### Public Facilities and Programs and Services Review

A summary update was provided re: the Public facilities and Programs and Services 1/05/21 meeting. Committee members recognized recent design developments, particularly with regard to the addition/renovation option which raised the first floor of the addition to be at the same level as the main floor of the existing building. This significant revision creates close to 16,000SF of contiguous floor space on the first floor, while retaining the front portion of the existing building. Members acknowledged benefits of this option although financial implications will need to be understood prior to a decision being made. Challenges remain however with the add/reno option including massing being closer to direct abutters on Walnut Place, parking limitations and real and conceived access barriers.

The Working Group discussed the pros and cons of the two design approaches:

#### New building design approach

- A new building pulls away from the direct abutters which is better for neighbors.
- A new building will be closer to Walnut Street.
- Program layout works better for the senior user group.
- A new building would be more accessible with better flow, given needs of the senior population.
- A new building will have better flexibility for long term future needs, visitability and visibility.
- The new library is a fabulous building and fits in with the architecture of City Hall. A modern building can be designed with traditional features to fit in with the context of Newtonville.
- A new building will have through parking with entry on Walnut Place and exit on Highland Ave.

## Add/reno design approach:

- An add/reno plan is preferred, provided the building design will meet the needs of the user group.
- An add/reno plan is preferred, provided the building design is within the allotted budget.
- Much of the existing building interior will be gutted, with only select features to be salvaged and repurposed. Windows will need to be replaced.
- Although the existing building has charm, the site is limiting and is problematic for this program.
- An add/reno building design will be much closer to direct abutters, as opposed to an add/reno.
- An add/reno may be justified to save the existing building however the design may not be better.
- The existing building does not particularly fit into the architectural context of Newtonville.
- An add/reno will have one way parking, via Walnut Place (access via Highland Ave is not possible).
- If the Newton Centre site was selected, a new building would not have a first floor 6' above grade.

## Next Steps

An update will be made to the Council on Aging next Tuesday, 1/26/21. The plan is to unveil draft exterior images at the 2/02 Working Group meeting as well as review cost estimates relative to the project budget. Updated plans, exterior images and cost estimates will be presented to the DRC on 2/10/21. Given the dissemination of updated information, a vote is anticipated at the February COA meeting.

It was noted that regardless of which building approach is selected, the final design needs to be contextual with the overall neighborhood. It was also noted although it is challenging to match the architectural style of Newtonville given ongoing development, there is however an opportunity to lead the architectural direction of future context. The plan would be to create a forward looking building with traditional forms.

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

- 01/26/21            Council on Aging meeting
- 02/02/21            Working Group meeting
- 02/10/21            Design Review Committee (DRC) 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.