


# Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
<b>Attendees:</b>					
Working Group		Present	City Staff		Present
Susan Albright	City Councilor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Seth Bai	Veteran's Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sandra Butzel	Community Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Devra Bailin	Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jayne Colino	Senior Services Dir.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nicole Banks	P&R Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jini Fairley	ADA Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amanda Berman	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bea Goldsmith	Community Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barney Heath	Planning Director	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joan Belle Isle	COA Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ellen Ishkanian	Mayor's Office	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maureen Lemieux	Chief Financial Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zachery LeMel	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brooke Lipsitt	Community Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jack Neville	P&R Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norm Meltz	COA Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rachel Sherman	City IT	<input type="checkbox"/>
Josh Morse	Public Buildings Comm.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linda Walsh	Public Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Rasala	Community Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Consultants</b>		
Sue Rasala	COA Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tom Murphy	NV5	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Rice	Community Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Melissa Gagnon	NV5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nancy Scammon	P&R Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joel Bargmann	BH+A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alex Valcarce	Public Buildings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Chen	BH+A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jonathan Yeo	Chief Operating Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ruofeng You	BH+A	<input type="checkbox"/>

Josh Morse (Newton Public Buildings) opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:33AM.

An overview was provided of comments received at the last Community update meeting on 11/18/21. There are community members who desire the new building to be smaller and more traditional in nature and have requested requisite information to pursue land marking the current senior center. For this to happen, a public hearing would require ¾ majority vote of the NHC to recommend to the City Council. If landmarked, the building would not be able to be demolished. If landmarked, there would be two options: Start the site

selection process over or revert to further study of addition/renovation options which have previously been fully vetted.

Current concerns by those desiring the land marking process are that the current design is too big and does not look traditional. Although the size of the building cannot be controlled given the program, the aesthetic can be altered to look more traditional.

There was reference made to the main library which is both traditional and modern.

As part of the NHC straw vote in support of the project it was noted that the existing building would be demolished and the new facility would be architecturally sensitive and appropriate for Newtonville.

In response to previous comments, BH+A presented updates to the floor plans and elevations which include:

- Front entry at the corner of Walnut Street and Highland Avenue
  - Add door at front entry, off Walnut Street
  - Landscape paving at exterior at entry
  - Entry canopy to wrap around corner of Walnut Street
  - Building signage on Walnut Street façade
- Roof deck coverage options
  - Completely cover south deck outside fitness
  - Cover half of middle deck, roof line parallel to wall below
  - Open at north deck
  - Uniform and consistent roof line preferred over two roof lines
  - Solar panels at roof covering deck
- Terraces
  - Study wrapping terrace at corner of Walnut Place and Walnut Street
- Building height
  - Appropriate and not excessive; mindful of impacts to heating and cooling loads, energy usage
  - Confirm height for volleyball in gymnasium
- Materials and exterior comments
  - More traditional materials (brick) from Walnut Street, however not a brick box
  - Do not like vertical metal panels at entry
  - Fiber cement panels on third floor are OK
  - Be mindful of floor to ceiling exterior windows (furniture placement, etc)

- Floor plan refinements
  - Fitness room to outdoor deck with sliding glass panels (9'-0") instead of sliding glass wall

## Canopy Study

Rendered perspectives were presented from the corner of Walnut Street and Highland Avenue to show various options for the entrance canopy. Variations included a solid flat roof, solid pitched roof with column support, solid flat roof with column support, solid curved roof with trellis articulation at edge and column support, tall solid flat roof with column support (to height of spandrel between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors), tall solid flat roof with column support (to height above 2<sup>nd</sup> floor). A potential wood soffit was shown as an option for a warmer material.

- *There was consensus that a lower canopy is preferred, extended towards the front plaza and around to the Walnut Street side of the entry vestibule. Curved canopy is preferred.*

## Deck Roof Study

Rendered perspectives, were presented from the corner of Walnut Street and Highland Avenue:

- (current) Single roof with continuous curved roof line - 3/4 deck covered outside fitness, 3/4 deck covered near central lobby area, completely open at northern corner.
- Stepped down roof - 3/4 deck covered outside fitness, 3/4 deck covered near central lobby area, completely open at northern corner.

An East elevation was presented showing windows broken down with more traditional grids as well as a potential location for building signage above the lounge, depending on the design of the corner canopy.

After deliberation, the Working Group reached the following consensus with regard to the deck roof:

- *The preferred roof option is to be stepped down, rather than a higher continuous roof.*

## Panel at the Gym Facade Study

Rendered images were presented for all four (4) elevations, which included the concept of the gymnasium being a different material.

The following comments were noted with regard to the canopy/entrance, deck roof and elevations:

- There should be more direct access from the gymnasium to the toilet rooms.
- A nine foot opening from the fitness room to deck is good. South section of deck will be completely covered, central deck area should be ½ covered and north section completely open.
- With regard to the entry off of Highland Ave and Walnut Street, the goal is to create an entry which is noticeable as the main entrance.

- The front of the building needs to be identified as the front of the building and the Walnut Street façade cannot be seen as the side of the building.
- Horizontal box like lines need to be softened.
- Perhaps the center section along Walnut Street could pop up with an angled faux roof, which would emulate the existing building. Deck railing could be more traditional in style.
- An element with strong traditional forms could be integrated into the Walnut Street façade, such as the existing stained glass window panels.
- The gymnasium should blend in with the rest of the building and not be a different material.
- The exterior is too regular, appearing as though designed independently from the interior.
- The building appears cold and commercial. The building should feel warmer, perhaps with more stone. The Wellesley senior center appears warmer and softer.
- Moving main entrance to Walnut Street would require the interior to be rearranged in order to maintain a clear line of sight from the reception area to both entrances.
- It was decided that moving the entrance from the corner to the center is not necessary.
- It may be confusing to create a center entrance feel at the Walnut Street façade, without an entrance. Signage is OK at the Walnut Street façade, as long as there are no doorways.
- A second floor deck at the back side would create more covered parking.
- Columns at the main canopy entrance could help to create a welcoming ceremonial front entrance.
- The Billiard room should move to the second floor and Art could move to its place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, to take advantage of the northern light. The classroom would move to the original location, overlooking Walnut Street.
- Walnut Street should have a street presence and terraces should be accessible from the street side.
- Perhaps the roof overhand could extend beyond the building edge, similar to the library.

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

It was decided to cancel the 12/16 Community update meeting as more time is needed to further develop the design.

- 12/15/21                      Design Review Committee Meeting – 6:00PM
- 12/21/21                      Working Group Meeting – 9:30AM

NV5 shall coordinate with the City of Newton in distributing Zoom info for all meetings noted.