

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2008

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Lennon, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin

Also present: Ald. Baker, Harney, Linsky, Merrill, Parker and Sangiolo

City staff: David Turocy (Deputy Commissioner of Public Works), Nicholas Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings), Candace Havens (Chief Planner), Arthur Cabral (Budget and Project Specialist; Public Buildings Department), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Heidi Black (Administrator of High School Construction and Strategic Planning; School Department), Arthur Cohen (Chair of Design Review Committee), Dori Zaleznik (School Committee), Reenie Murphy (School Committee) and Jonathan Yeo (School Committee)

Re-appointment by Board President

#45-08 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending Mark Chudy, 34 Prescott Street, Newtonville, be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/09. [01-17-08 @ 3:48 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Mark Chudy was present for the discussion of his reappointment to the Design Review Committee. Mr. Chudy is an electrical engineer with extensive experience in his field and has served on the Design Review Committee for approximately four years. The Chair explained that it is not the usual practice of the Public Facilities Committee to ask reappointments in for discussion; however, several members were interested in having a conversation with the reappointments regarding the high school project. She asked Mr. Chudy to give a brief summary of what is happening in the Design Review Committee. Mr. Chudy responded that the Design Review Committee is just finishing with the value-engineering list. It is his personal opinion that the school reflects the program, and the siting. Whether one likes the architecture or not, is a personal opinion, but the design is reflective of what the needs are for the school. The city can change the needs if it wants to cut costs. The building costs what it costs. It has many things, such as a trade school, which makes it difficult to compare it to any other school. If the building is to serve all of the needs of the community, you get this building.

Ald. Yates asked why the building is a zigzag. Mr. Chudy explained that it is partially due to exposure to the sun and light. The east west siting gives the most natural light to each part of the building. It is reflective of many things, such as the visual impact to the neighbors. The building is 400,000 square feet and the zigzag creates the illusion of a smaller building. If the city wants a lump of brick, it can be done, but he is not sure how much money will be saved. Ald. Yates was pleased with the explanation and stated that the reasons needed to be better publicized.

Ald. Albright would like input from the members of the Design Review Committee on how the site-plan approval process is working. There is currently an item before the Board of Aldermen regarding site plan approval and the Design Review Committee. She is not sure that the current process works. In addition, the Construction Manager at Risk needs to be factored into the process. She would like to know if Mr. Chudy has any comments and if the Aldermen can ask for comment in the future. Mr. Chudy responded that the only part of the process that bothered him was that the Design Review Committee sometimes felt that it was not being listened to, as the design team did not formally respond to comments. He is willing to comment in the future as well. Ald. Gentile is a little concerned about some of the Design Review Committee members' attendance at the meetings. He will be asking every reappointment if they are willing to put in the time that is necessary. Ald. Mansfield agreed with Ald. Gentile, as it is important to know people are committed. He would recommend that the Board President confer with the Commissioner of Public Buildings and/or the Chair of the Committees regarding attendance of the members.

Ald. Salvucci stated that Mr. Chudy is a great member of the Design Review Committee, who attends the meetings regularly and contributes whenever necessary. Therefore, Ald. Salvucci moved approval of Mr. Chudy's reappointment, which carried unanimously. Ald. Schnipper thanked Mr. Chudy for his willingness to serve on the Committee and his past dedication.

Re-appointment by Board President

#50-08 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending Joseph Michelson, 94 Park Avenue, Newton be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/09. [01-17-08 @ 3:48 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Mr. Michelson was unavailable for discussion of his reappointment; however, he will join the Committee on April 23, 2008 for discussion of his reappointment. The Committee voted unanimously to hold the item until Mr. Michelson could be present for the discussion.

Re-appointment by Board President

#49-08 PRESIDENT BAKER recommending Howard Goldberg, P.E., 27 Theodore Road, Newton Centre be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/09. [01-17-08 @ 3:48 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Mr. Goldberg was not present for the discussion of his reappointment. Therefore, the Committee opted to hold the item until Mr. Goldberg was available to meet with the Committee.

Re-appointment by Board President

#46-08 **PRESIDENT BAKER** recommending Robert O. Smith, P.E., 55 Chester Street, Newton Highlands be re-appointed as an Aldermanic appointee to the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, term of office to expire 12/31/09. [01-17-08 @ 3:48 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: Mr. Smith was not present for the discussion of his reappointment. He will be available on April 4, 2008 to discuss his reappointment. Therefore, the Committee opted to hold Mr. Smith's reappointment until he is available to meet with the Committee.

#8-08 **ALD. GENTILE, HARNEY AND SANGIOLO** requesting the necessary approvals for the off-site road improvements outlined in Board Order #232-07, also known as the Hess Gas Station Special Permit.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-1 (Salvucci opposed)**

NOTE: Ald. Harney, Ald. Sangiolo, Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel and Steven Buchbinder, the attorney for the Amarada Hess Corporation joined the Committee for discussion of the item. Attorney Buchbinder stated that the Board of Aldermen recently approved a Special Permit, which will permit a change from a Mobil gas station to a Hess gas station with a small market at the corner of Auburn Street & Commonwealth Avenue. Residents of the area are concerned that this change may increase pedestrian and vehicular issues in the neighborhood. The Amarada Hess Corporation has agreed to pay for the cost of traffic and pedestrian safety improvements in the area as part of the special permit conditions. The proposed improvements include a curb extension along Commonwealth Avenue, Oakland Avenue and Auburn Street, which the city will install, a crosswalk, modifications to the existing traffic island and pedestrian signals at Auburn Street and Commonwealth Avenue, and a raised crosswalk or something comparable across Auburn Street at Evergreen Avenue.

Mr. Schuckel reviewed the discussion and votes that occurred in Traffic Council. Traffic Council recommends approval of the curb extension, sidewalk improvements and striped crosswalk at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Auburn Street. The Mayor has committed the City to constructing the curb bump outs. The Traffic Council is also in favor of the proposed traffic restrictions that do not require an action from the Public Facilities Committee. However, the Traffic Council did not recommend a raised crosswalk at the intersection of Auburn Street and Evergreen Avenue. McMahon Traffic Consultants submitted three possible plans for the intersection, which include a curb bump out, raised crosswalk and a speed hump alternative. The recommendation of the Traffic Council is to construct a bump out on either side of the street to lessen the crossing distance. The neighborhood and Ward Four Aldermen are opposed to the bump outs and are all in favor of the raised crosswalk. Mr. Schuckel said that while the Fire Department said it was not a primary response route, the Fire Department is opposed to a raised crosswalk in this location, and generally, is opposed to vertical deflections in the road. Mr. Schuckel also explained that there are minimal numbers of pedestrians in the area and he does not believe that the addition of the Hess Station will substantially increase the pedestrian traffic. Therefore, the Auburn Street at Evergreen Street location does not merit a raised crosswalk. Ald. Gentile responded that the main purpose of the

raised crosswalk is to reduce the speed of vehicles traveling along that route. He felt that a 4" raised crosswalk at that location would be the most appropriate to reduce the speed of vehicles. Ald. Harney used to live in the immediate neighborhood and knows the area well. He felt that there is a real need to slow vehicles down as they come from Route 128, as there are many children in the area. He is also concerned that the mini-mart at the Hess Station will become a draw for the neighborhood children creating safety issues.

Ald. Gentile moved approval of the recommendations of the Traffic Council with a substitution of a 4" raised crosswalk instead of the bump outs at Evergreen and Auburn Streets. The motion carried by a vote of seven in favor and none opposed.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#36-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$367,500 from Free Cash for the purpose of replacing two underground gasoline tanks at the Elliot Street DPW Yard. [01-15-08 @ 5:19 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVAL FAILED TO CARRY 3-3-2 (Lennon, Mansfield Salvucci opposed; Gentile and Yates abstaining)**
APPROVED ABOVE GROUND TANKS 4-0-4 (Albright, Gentile, Schnipper and Yates abstaining)

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell, Arthur Cabral and David Turocy joined the Committee for the discussion of this item. The item was previously discussed and held for further information on why other cities and towns have chosen above ground tanks, as well as what type of tanks the Department of Environmental Protection recommends (report attached). Commissioner Parnell has called a number of municipalities that have both in ground and above ground tanks. Lexington has had above ground tanks for quite a longtime; therefore, the Public Works staff do not have any information to compare with on in ground tanks. Waltham went to above ground tanks because they have had issues with the Department of Environmental Protection. In discussion with Mr. Cabral, it was determined that the Public Buildings Department is prepared to go either way with the placement of the fuel tanks. The Building Department would like the Public Works Department to weigh in on the choice. The Deputy Commissioner of Public Works stated that it is more important for the department to have the fuel available than whether it is above ground or in the ground. From an operation standpoint, it is easier for the department vehicles to maneuver on the site if the tanks are below ground. Arthur Cabral pointed out that the pipes for both the above ground and in ground tanks are below ground and the pipes are where the leaks are most likely to occur. The Department of Environmental Protection has no preference as to the placement of the tanks.

Some Committee members were concerned about the costliness of a leak if the tanks are placed below ground. Mr. Cabral responded that there would be a leak detection system for the below ground tanks. Ald. Yates asked if there were neighbors who would have a view of the tanks if placed above ground. Mr. Turocy responded that the tanks would be at a fair distance from the nearest residences but would be visible to anyone looking down onto the site. Ald. Salvucci felt strongly that it was appropriate for the tanks to be placed above ground to avoid any problems with leaks and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Ald. Lappin moved approval of the original item with the tanks underground, which failed to carry by a vote of three yeas, three nays and two abstentions. Ald. Schnipper then suggested a motion for approval of the item with the tanks above ground. The Committee agreed to the suggestion and approved the motion by a vote of four in favor with four abstentions.

#385-07 ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11-21-07 @ 10:23 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: The Committee reviewed the recent revisit to the Newton North value engineering list that was generated in an attempt to hold down the costs of the building without negatively impacting the program. The list, which was attached to the agenda, included a page of items that the School Committee and Design Review Committee have reached consensus on and a second page of items that have not been accepted or are still to be determined. Some of the accepted items are not issues for the School Committee as they are not programmatic therefore the School Committee action on those items are reflected as n/a on the list. The Board of Aldermen does not vote on this list.

Ald. Albright voiced her frustration that there is a 50% reduction in the landscaping and that the roof screens have been eliminated. She is very concerned about the negative impact to the neighborhood due to the visual and auditory impact from both of these cuts. Ald. Schnipper responded that an increase to landscaping is easily added back if there is enough funding. Commissioner Parnell stated that the design team pointed out that the roof top units have their own noise attenuation within, so the screens are purely visual. The Commissioner believes that the residences on Hull Street will be able to see the units; however, he believes that those residences are so high that they will be able to see the units even if they are screened. Arthur Cohen, Chair of Design Review Committee, pointed out that most of the units are located on the fourth floor of the academic wing, which is the highest part of the building. They are also as far away from the residences, as possible. Heidi Black explained that it is the intent to cut the landscaping in the parking lot and ceremonial entrance where it would have the least impact on the neighbors. Ald. Linsky requested a landscape plan displaying the reductions of landscaping and a rendering of what the roof will look like without the screenings.

Dori Zaleznik addressed the proposal to simplify the theater wing. Brad Dore of Dore & Whittier Architects suggested a different design for the theater, which would generate significant savings. School Committee members and Newton North drama faculty visited the King Phillips Regional High School, which has a new theater. It was found to be extremely serviceable and the School Committee and School Department are in favor of change to the theater. They are waiting to hear back from Dore and Whittier regarding how much savings can be accomplished.

The Committee was pleased that there is the possibility of recognizing over \$7 million in savings without impacting program at the school. Several of the list items, such as the reuse of the current bike racks are practical reductions in the cost of the school. Arthur Cohen stated that the Design Review Committee requested that none of the reductions effect life-cycle costs negatively. However, they are still waiting to review the proposed mechanical equipment value engineering reductions.

Ald. Gentile gave the Committee an update on what is happening with the State Treasurer. There was a memo distributed in the last packet from Commissioner Parnell indicating that the State Treasurer requested certain documents from the City of Newton. There was a list of twelve documents and the Commissioner has put all of the documents and forwarded them to the State Treasurer.

Ald. Gentile also provided a brief update on the progress of construction on the site. The mud mat where the foundation of the athletic wings is being built has been completed along the back portion of the wing. There is only a small portion along Hull Street left to be completed. The footings for the building are following the mat along. There is a form all along Walnut Street, where a wall is going to be poured. By early next week a 16' wall section will be located in the front part of the athletic wing. All of the remaining foundations from the old building have been removed and the area where they are filling back in earth has mostly reached the proper height. The biggest change is that the walls are actually being poured for the first wing of the building. Ald. Gentile also provided an updated project budget report to the Committee that reflects all of the expenditures and encumbered money as of March 5, 2008, which is attached.

The item was held for future updates.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#144-07(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$111,805 from the capital stabilization fund to increase the original appropriation (Board Order #144-07, approved on 5/21/07) for replacement of **one** boiler at the Carr School building in order to cover the cost of **both** boilers at this location, since the City has received a favorable bid to combine the two replacements. [02-12-08 @ 6:20 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell and Arthur Cabral joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The City received a very favorable bid, which included an additional boiler. The original request for the replacement of one boiler at the Carr School was for \$225,000. When the bids came back on the job, they included a favorable bid to combine the replacement of both boilers for an additional \$110,000. The Committee agreed that it made sense to replace both boilers for the additional funds and a motion to approve the item carried unanimously.

#178-06 ALD. SCHNIPPER, LINSKY AND ALBRIGHT requesting a report on the commissioning of Newton South High School.

ACTION: **HELD 8-0**

NOTE: This item was held without discussion, due to the length of the other discussions. However, Commissioner Parnell introduced the Committee to the new HVAC Engineer, Josh Morse. The Committee was very pleased that the position had been filled.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman