

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2004

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Gerst, Albright, Salvucci and Mansfield

Absent: Ald. Stewart, Yates and Lappin

Also present: Anne Lerner (School Committee Chair), Dori Zaleznick (School Committee) and Victoria Danberg (Alderman-elect)

City staff: Nicholas Parnell (Public Buildings Commissioner), Arthur Cabral (Special Projects and Budget Specialist, Public Buildings Department), Carolyn Sarno (Facilities Manager, Public Buildings Department), Carol Stapleton (Parks/Recreation Dept.), Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner, Parks/Recreation Dept.), Jayne Colino (Human Services Department), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer), Michael Rourke (Chief Administrative Officer), Robert Rooney (Commissioner of Public Works), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Heidi Black (School Department) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

Chairman's Note: Carol Stapleton presented the Committee with a project proposal (attached) for the Millennium Park-Claflin School Studios-Time Capsule Project. The proposal is to place a time capsule in Millennium Park. The cost of the burial and the bronze plaque marking the site will be funded through a grant. She asked if the Committee felt that there was a need for the project to go before the Board of Aldermen. The Committee felt that there was no need to docket an item as long as a plan pinpointing the location of capsule is provided to the Board. (Attached)

#232-04 DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE petition pursuant to Sec 5-58 for site plan approval of the Albemarle Playground to accommodate the addition of a gazebo and related site improvements.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Dan Bradford, KBA Architects, Margaret Doris, Friends of Albemarle Playground Project Community Representative, Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation and Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, were present for the public hearing. Ms. Doris gave an overview of the project. A need for passive recreation space and space for small gatherings at Albemarle was identified during upgrades of the playground. The design is a small gazebo located behind the playground at the tail end of the park. The gazebo is a 20' classroom, which will be handicap accessible. Benches will surround the gazebo and there will be an area with picnic tables. There will be water and electrical service to the site and a drinking fountain. There will also be improved landscaping with new plantings, including trees. The project will be funded from the Community Preservation Fund.

Ald. Gerst questioned whether the site would require environmental clean up due to the oil spill at Horace Mann Elementary School. Commissioner Parnell responded that the spill did not affect that area. Ald. Salvucci asked if anyone could use the gazebo. Mr. DeRubeis explained that it is for everyone but if a school requested the use it would be done through a permit process. Ald. Salvucci also asked what department would be maintaining the site. Ms. Doris explained that the Friends of Albemarle Playground Project would maintain the site through donations, as they have done for the play area in the past decade.

Mr. Curtis Betts, 305 Albemarle Road, stated that he is strongly in favor of the project. It is a good use of otherwise wasted space and would provide a meeting space for the Friends of Albemarle. It is his belief that the gazebo will become a vital part of the neighborhood. The Committee supported the project; therefore, Ald. Albright moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#220-04 KEYSPAN ENERGY DELIVERY requesting a grant of location to install and maintain 250'± of 4" gas main in CAPPY CIRCLE, West Newton from the existing 4" gas main in Derby Street north to House No. 18 Cappy Circle

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0 (Mansfield not voting)**

NOTE: Francis O'Leary, Keyspan Permit Representative, was present for the discussion of the petition. The petition is to place a gas main in Cappy Circle to provide gas service to 18 Cappy Circle. Keyspan has contacted other residents of Cappy Circle and no one else wanted to convert to gas. The public hearing was opened and no one spoke for or against the petition. Ald. Salvucci moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#179-04 BOSTON EDISON CO. d/b/a NSTAR ELECTRIC requesting a grant of location to relocate pole 308/21 in NEVADA STREET located on the northeasterly side approximately 90' southeast of Linwood Avenue.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney was present for discussion of this item, which was held at the last meeting because there was a question about zoning on the site. A car is parked in the front setback and appears to be in violation of the Zoning Ordinances. Commissioner Rooney stated that the relocation of the pole has no bearing on the zoning issue and it is recommendation that the petition be approved. He has spoken with Commissioner Gilroy regarding the property and the Commissioner of Inspectional Services stated that it is possible that the space is legal, as you are allowed one parking space in the front setback.

The Committee felt that the parking space is probably not in compliance with the Zoning Ordinances because of where it is located. The Committee requested that a memo requesting an investigation of the property be sent to the Commissioner

of Inspectional Services. Ald. Salvucci moved approval of the grant of location, which carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PS&T, PUB.FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#203-04(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$65,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding the following Public Buildings Department project:

Police Dispatch Ctr. Improvements.....\$65,000

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell was present for discussion of this item. The dispatchers need more space, as they are closely grouped and there are privacy issues. In addition, two more dispatchers are to be added this upcoming fiscal year. The Police Department will also be centralizing the records for the Police Department at headquarters. The remodeling will provide security by placing at least three staff people at the front doors. The new design provides handicap accessibility at the new doors. All of the work will be done in-house except for the doors. Ald. Salvucci moved approval, which carried.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#201-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund Bonded account for the purpose of remodeling portions of the Newton Senior Center.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Jayne Colino and Commissioner Parnell were present for the discussion of this item. There is a need for additional office space at the senior center and a vestibule addition. If the Board approves the project, the Historical Commission and the Design Review Committee will review the project. The proposed office will be built over one of the double stairwells at the front of the building. The office will be 12x14' and will be glass walled. The new vestibule will be located at the rear entrance and be constructed of aluminum and glass.

The new office will allow staff to be present on every floor of the Senior Center. The vestibule will provide a place for people to wait for transportation without standing in the cold. There will be no loss of parking in the rear of the Senior Center due this project. Ald. Gerst moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#258-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting that the sum of \$86,625 be appropriated from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of making emergency repairs to the Newton Free Library main branch cooling towers.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell was present for discussion of this item. The Public Buildings Department discovered that the coils in the chiller unit at the library had split and needed to be replaced. It appears that all four coils are damaged, which means that there will be no air conditioning in the library. The air conditioning is critical to the library and must be replaced. Mr. Pooler stated that the Mayor would send a letter of correction, as the amount in the docket item needs to be increased to \$93,125.00.

Commissioner Parnell provided the cost estimate for the replacement of the coils to the Committee (attached). It is hoped that the City will recoup its cost from New England Trane, the service contractor, as they should have drained the coils and maintained them during the winter. The Public Buildings Department craftsmen have built temporary coils to provide air conditioning to the library, while the new coils are delivered and installed. The Public Buildings Department saved the City over \$90,000 by building the temporary coils. The Committee was very pleased and felt it was appropriate to send a resolution to the Public Buildings Department praising them for their efforts.

The Committee unanimously approved the emergency measure, the request for the appropriation and the resolution to the Public Buildings Department.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#258-04(2) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR**, in accordance with Section 2-9 of the Newton City Charter, declaring docket item #258-04 to be an emergency measure, necessary to protect the health and safety of the people and property of the City of Newton.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Please see above note.

#258-04(3) **PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE** offering a Resolution to the Public Buildings Department congratulating them for their ability to create temporary coils for the library cooling system, which resulted in substantial savings for the City.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Please see note for Docket Item #258-04.

REFERRED TO PUB. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#268-00(6) **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting issuance of long term debt in the amount of \$2,120,000 for the purpose of completing construction and renovation of Newton South High School. These funds are necessary to cover unanticipated costs associated with the project.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell began discussion of this item. He explained that during the construction and renovation work at Newton South High School several

unexpected problems have arisen causing an increase in the cost of the project. Unfortunately, all of the 5% contingency money has been used on change orders. It is estimated that the project cost needs to be increased by 4% or \$2,120,000, in order to complete the project. The Commissioner previously provided a breakdown of the \$2,120,000, as well as a summary of previous change orders (attached).

Dick Ampster from DRA spoke with the Committee regarding the request for additional funds. He explained that it is more common to have a 10% contingency for projects of this size and if a 10% contingency had been allowed as suggested there would not have been a need to request additional funds. As Project Manager, he has worked very hard to monitor the contractors and curtail expenses. As the project has progressed, several problems have been encountered. The basement floor in the girls' gym and locker room area needs to be replaced as it cannot support future loads. When Goodwin and Wheeler Houses were renovated several valuable lessons were learned and are being applied to the renovation of Cutler House, which has added to the cost of the project. There are \$433,958 of change orders pending resolution. They will be reviewed but it is the belief that the City will need to fund them.

Ald. Salvucci is very upset regarding the change orders. He feels that most of the change orders were generated due to design flaws and should be the responsibility of the architect. Mr. Carl Francheschi of DRA responded that it is not as if any work is being undone due to design flaws. He also stated that conditions develop that are not part of the original cost, such as removal of mold and asbestos. Ald. Mansfield asked if there is any possibility that any of the outstanding change orders will not be accepted. The Commissioner responded that the review is a very long process and it is hoped that some of the cost can be cut. Ald. Albright asked how the additional money would affect the bond plan. Mr. Pooler stated that the City can absorb the additional request for funds, however, it may affect other projects. Ald. Mansfield requested a summary of where the money has come from and where it is going for this project.

Ald. Gerst asked if any lessons have been learned from this experience. The Commissioner responded that they are currently utilizing lessons from earlier renovation phases at Newton South High School. Ald. Gerst also asked if the Commissioner shared Ald. Salvucci view regarding change orders. The Commissioner stated that he feels that gross errors are the fault of the architect but the architect can only prepare for what can be seen. He feels that the City is working with one of the better school architects in the Commonwealth and there have been no major mistakes from the architect.

Mr. Ampster gave the Committee a timeline of the project. The classroom spaces, library and art rooms will be open in September. The basement floor, site work and bulk of the work will continue until the end of the year and balancing of the systems will be complete by the end of the school year. He believes that part of

the problem with this project was an unreasonable time frame was set due to SBAB funding.

Ald. Gerst moved approval, which carried unanimously.

#245-04 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of the Dedham and Walnut Streets intersection design.

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-1 (Salvucci opposed)**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney and Clint Schuckel presented the intersection design to the Committee. The intersection is very wide and dangerous to pedestrians. The proposed island would give direction to drivers, slow down the speed of vehicles and add safety for pedestrians. Mr. Schuckel gave a PowerPoint presentation of a bus making the turn with a makeshift island in place. The proposed island will reduce the number of parking spaces available but should not have an impact on parking in the area.

Ald. Salvucci asked if snow were piled on the island would it affect turning. The Commissioner stated that the snow will be plowed to the curb and should not create a problem. Ald. Salvucci also asked if the Fire Department had sent the hook and ladder truck to see if the truck could maneuver around the island. Mr. Schuckel stated that he has consulted with the Fire Department and it meets their standards. Ald. Albright moved approval of the item as long as a ladder truck could make the turn. Mr. Schuckel stated that the fire truck would definitely be able to make the turn. The Committee approved the item with four in favor and one opposed.

#246-04 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of the 25% design plan submittal for Walnut Street from Homer Street to Centre Street including a small section of Centre Street to Route 9.

ACTION: **HELD 5-0**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney and Richard Kelly of Earth Tech were present for discussion of the item. The reconstruction of a portion of Walnut Street from Homer Street to Centre Street and a small portion of Centre Street from Walnut Street to Route 9 is to be paid for by T.I.P. funds from the State in 2006. Because the project is to be funded this way, it requires that there be bicycle lanes in the roadway. Therefore, there are proposed changes in the way the road is used. The proposed reconstruction will cost approximately \$2.3 million and work will last about 1 1/2 years.

The roadway, traffic flow, traffic signals and cross walks will be improved. A formal left turn lane will be added at the intersection of Lincoln Street and a raised right turn island will be reformed at Beacon Street. All ramps and sidewalks will comply with the ADA standards. The reconstruction will require that eleven trees to be

removed but 83 trees will be replaced. The parking spaces on Walnut Street from Beacon Street to Newton Highlands will need to be removed.

Several Committee members felt that the addition of bicycle lanes was unnecessary and it was ridiculous to sacrifice parking for bicycle lanes. Mr. Kelly stated that the requirement of bicycle lanes had been appealed but was denied. Although Ald. Mansfield is a strong proponent of bike use, he felt strongly that there are not enough bikers on Walnut Street to justify the elimination of parking. The project is not worth doing with the bike lanes, as it is a waste of resources.

The State will hold a public hearing on the reconstruction project in three to thirteen months time. The Committee was uncomfortable approving the item without input from residents of Walnut Street. The Committee opted to hold the item and hold a public hearing in September to get the public's input on the project.

#247-04 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting approval of the Grant Avenue and Ward Street intersection design.

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-1 (Salvucci opposed)**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney and Clint Schuckel presented the intersection design to the Committee. The intersection is dangerous and speed is an issue. Ald. Schnipper stated that the proposed island is across from her home and it is her sense that the community is in support of the island. She has reservations about snow being piled onto the island and would like a directive that snow cannot be placed on the island. The new island would require a no parking sign in front of Ald. Schnipper's house, as large vehicles would not be able to make the turn if a vehicle was parked in that spot. Mr. Schuckel gave a demonstration of a fire truck making the turn with a makeshift island in place. The Committee had no problem with the proposed intersection design and approved the item.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman