

Austin St Liaison Committee Meeting Notes City Hall

December 5, 2017

Attending Liaison Cttee Members: Jake Auchincloss (chair/City Councilor), Helene Sroat (Newtonville Area Council), Stephen Logowitz (Newtonville Resident Rep), Michael Tucci (Jackson Rd Area Rep), Margaret Albright (Newton Public School designee), Gwen Noyes (Austin St Partners, providing these notes with help of Lily Reynolds), Susan Albright (City Councilor), Dori Zaleznik (Mayor's designee), Mark Dufton (Austin St Partners)

Absent: Bill Honeycutt (Newtonville Business Rep), Brian Shaw (Newtonville Business Rep), Alison Leary (City Councilor)

Also attending:, Arthur Klipfel (Austin St Partners), Ouida Young (City Law Dept), Rachel Blatt (City Planning), Lily Reynolds (City Planning), Joe Cyrulick (Austin Street Partners' consultant), John Lojek (Inspectional Services), Jonah Temple (City Law Dept), Councilor Emily Norton, Councilor Susan Albright, Members of NAC

Note: All documents herein referred to and presented in the Liaison Committee (LC) meeting have been posted by Newton's Planning Department on the City's Austin Street project website. Revised updates made in these documents, wherever requested and/or noted in the following minutes, will replace whatever documents are currently posted as soon as they are made available.

Meeting notes:

Chair's Invitation for Comments: One local resident commented that he hadn't participated over the years of the project related proceedings, but was wondering what had taken so long to it going? Committee demurred to respond.

Board Order Consistency review (continued from Liaison Committee meeting on Nov 15, 2017):

Solar installation question has been resolved by Austin St Partners (ASP) commitment to include solar array in current construction program, as described in the Special Permit plans;

Austin St planters:

- **two** alternative illustrations were shown, illustrating two varieties of planters (rectangular and with outward slanting sides) and two options for planting (one with a consistent row of ornamental trees and one with a mix of coniferous and deciduous). There was general agreement that the planting should include large ornamental trees as shown and some variety of evergreen plantings. Request to discuss further at next meeting: what varieties?, what material is used for planters?
- reminder that planters, lighting and other streetscape decisions should be shared, consistent, and coordinated with ongoing Walnut St design work.
- ASP assurance given that maintaining and removing litter from planters would be ASP property management responsibility.

Plaza Design:

Presenter (Mark Dufton) explained that the plaza in the current plan revision of the 2015 version is bigger, has more trees, but - due to City liability concerns- has removed an earlier proposed fountain.

- Comments and questions from the committee: the plaza area appears smaller than 2015 proposal because of trees screening along Bram Way; disappointment about loss of fountain; seating areas seem closed off; where do bikes park?; preference for having open plaza for public events, markets, etc; need to balance requirement to keep Bram Way open for 2 way traffic, business deliveries, and also be safe for pedestrians;

- Responses: ASP will revisit plans with Landscape Architect to reconsider fountain, removal of a few trees to open up the plaza; consider removable bollards, suggest lighting choices; reconfigure seating benches to have backs to the building; extend planted area to reflect larger area available for public space.

Landscape architect will present at January meeting.

Building materials: Responding to LC request, ASP will bring samples of actual materials to the January meeting.

Construction Management Plan:

The Chair, Jake Auchincloss, noted that the Construction Management Plan being presented needs no “authoritative review” by LC at this time, and that he would forward any concerns for responses. There is time, as construction of the building is not planned until March. (Also noted is the fact that there will be limited pre- construction, sub surface foundation preparation in January, lasting about 5 weeks, and being done to allow for the ASP promise of 50 parking spaces to be available throughout the construction process.)

Joe Cyrulik provided an explanation of the various consecutive phases of construction and how the deliveries, regular traffic, and parking considerations will be managed throughout the building process, until completion and occupancy in early 2019. The set of graphic plans by traffic consultants, Howard Stein Hudson, has been made publicly accessible through the City’s Austin St website. It covers building logistics that affect the surrounding area throughout the building’s various scheduled phases.

The plan has been worked out with the cooperation of the Newton Transportation Department, is still in the process of refinement, and was presented to the LC and other attending community members for information purposes, not for formal review. It was noted that City staff was starting its reviews simultaneous to the Liaison Committee review.

Several questions were posed that Mr Cyrulik noted and assured attenders would be responded to either in the plans or by direct communication. (As noted above, these responses or plan notations will be posted on the website as soon as available.)

Questions and comments included: concern about safety impact from proximity of construction deliveries to Newton North High School students who commute to school; need for timely

notification to the school about such traffic; how much Saturday parking at High School?; fencing of the property needed; police details as needed for directing traffic and parking area; modules are bulky cargo to deliver and manage traffic around; worker parking area location at Aquinas; Austin St parking kiosk operation and locations; where the new Bram Way parking spaces are located; whether or not the foundation footing construction will be noisy and disruptive (response: much less than pile driving); timing for each phase; timing for Bram way being temporarily limited to one-way traffic; means of retaining 50 parking spaces throughout building process;

Modular construction advantages:

There were questions and clarifications about the attributes of building with modules, ie: significant time saving (several months), high level of finish accomplished off-site (almost all interior finishes); substantial reduction of fire liability before alarm systems operational due to closed-in construction from start and rapid completion.

Business Engagement Plan: Presented by Mark Dufton;

Note: Full program is provided on City's Austin St web page

- Shuttle bus: Programed to circle from Senior Center to Aquinas parking area every 20 mins; will have regular hours M-F from 6:30 am – 7:00 pm; Sat 9:00- 3:00, with extension of time, if needed.
- 2 way communication with local businesses, including monthly invitations to meet, postcard with parking availability; construction hotline; late ride service for local employers if needed; possible Senior Center monitor indicating shuttle arrival times.
- Recommendation from the LC to focus attention on ensuring people know about the parking options available

Business Mitigation Plan:

Funds available (\$150,000) if a particular business can demonstrate loss of business or damage due to construction. Decision re: losses made by mediator; If no claims, \$25,000 will be available for streetscape improvements. No recommendations from the LC at this time

Shop Newtonville Program:

- Advertisements for Newtonville businesses, working with City Economic Development Director
- Notices, signage and cards showing parking availability to be provided and displayed;
- Inform Faculty of High School of parking availability and restrictions;
- ASP will notify local businesses of January preliminary construction activity

Relevant Upcoming Dates to note:

December 15: Application submission for “segmented permit” for footing foundation allowing required parking spaces;

January 2: Submit application for whole building permit

Decision to meet again on Jan 10 at 7:00 in City Hall

January 10, unless otherwise advised: Next Liaison Cttee Meeting at City Hall (*agenda to include revised plaza design by Landscape Architect; parking way finding plans; Walnut St plans*)