

COUNCIL ON AGING—October 26, 2021

Present: Joan Belle Isle, Sandra Davidow, Mary Glendon, Naomi Krasner, Julie Norstrand, John Pelletier, Joyce Picard, Sue Rasala, Nancy Scammon, Sue Schlesinger, Dan Shaw, Laura Shaw, Gordon Szerlip, Norm Meltz, Maria Meyer, Allison Sharma

Absent: Beth Dugan, Adele Hoffman, Tyrone Hooks, Lisa Samelson, Tom Shoemaker

Guests: Joel Bargman & Dan Chen, BH+A Architects

Staff: Jayne Colino, Josh Morse, Alejandro Valcarce, Norine Silton

Meeting was held by Zoom Videoconference and was called to order at 7:34 PM. Introductions of guests and staff were made.

Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting on September 21, 2021 were approved as submitted.

NewCAL Update

Joel Bargman & Dan Chen presented a PowerPoint outlining the updates to the plans based on comments received from the last COA meeting and the most recent Community meeting on October 21, 2021. They reviewed the current site plan, and the floor plan of the interior. The presentation can be viewed on the NewCal project website or by clicking on the link. [most recent NewCAL presentation 10-21-21](#)

The presentation included a review of the drop-off space on Walnut Street and Highland Ave, view from Walnut Place highlighting that the building would not be as close to keep from getting a “canyon” feel, the 3 outdoor terraces, a review the current interior floor plans including the integration of the front roof deck space to the 3rd floor spaces, review of the elevator 1 vs 2 data and plan for “green” use on the roof area.

Q&A:

- Suggestions that a retractable awning should be added to keep deck from being too hot during the summer.
- Discussion on need for 2nd elevator for emergencies, maintenance, larger capacity. Dan Chen presented data from the elevator consultant for NewCAL. Data included info on average breakdowns/year, person capacity and additional info on the current technology used for elevators.
- Suggestion to have a seating area in the main stairway at each landing was suggested and noted that it will be included in plan.
- How the building would be fueled for utilities and generator? Josh Morse said they are looking at many options which include solar power hot water heaters and battery powered heating system. Generator would be able to cover the entire building needs and more.
- Is Kitchen Commercial? Answer was Yes.

- What kind of materials to be used in exterior of building? Dan Chen answered that they are looking at many materials but plan to use brick, glass, wood.
- Could larger spaces, such as gym, be used for other purposes? Answer- Yes.
- Where are sprinklers located? Answer- - as required by the Newton Fire Department as the building is considered Class 1.
- Where will Fire Extinguishers be located? Answer - in all public locations as required.
- Where will Defibrillators be located? Answer - on each floor.
- What are the acoustics going to be? Answer - Still being studied.
- Will the airflow and ventilation, paint and materials be considered for people with chemical allergies? Answer – yes and similar to the systems in the school buildings they can be operated-adjusted remotely.
- Will materials for the outside overhangs be able to withstand issues with mold & mildew in areas that do not get regular sun? Answer – yes they are looking at options such as veneer with moisture barrier.
- What’s the capacity? Answer – in larger spaces up to 200 people and in activity rooms around 1500 sq ft 50-70 people.
- How much parking available? Answer - 31 spaces currently with additional parking on Highland Avenue and Austin Street parking lot.

A straw vote was taken and all COA members present approved of the current floor plan. Chair, Joan Belle Isle, announced that the Executive Committee would be discussing this at their November meeting to review comments from COA and call a formal vote of the commissioners on the floor plan.

Sunrise Chestnut Hill

Joan and Jayne met with them to discuss their new project in Chestnut Hill area. They are looking for support from the COA. Joan will be organizing a tour of the Sun Rise facility in Newton Corner and asked that members reach out to her if interested.

It was discussed that under the Inclusionary Zoning Law the Newton Corner Sunrise location provided 3 free units but when the lottery took place it was unclear what was being offered. Currently the unit is considered a bed and is not a private space. Future development should be clarified and possibly consider updating to include private spaces. Because this is a “special” translation of the law related to assisted living facilities we will keep informed on how this law plays out as new facilities are being built.

The discussion also included whether the COA should support projects or simply provide guidelines and what would those guidelines look like. It was commented there is a great unmet need for Senior Affordable Housing in our community and there is a need for a multi-tiered support level at these facilities to allow seniors to stay in the same place as their needs change rather than moving.

It was decided that COA members were interested in an educational seminar on the changing facets of senior housing options. Joan and Jayne will explore an appropriate presenter(s) on this topic.

Isolation Task Force

- Dan Shaw gave an update on the task force and said their goal is to identify what programs/organizations are doing to identify seniors at risk for isolation and loneliness. They are looking for COA members to participate. Members Gordon, Mary and Robert agreed to participate.

Updates

- Robert Pierson submitted his application to the Mayor's Office for new membership
- NewMo is in year 3 of contract with the City. The program was recently expanded to allow for pre-arranged rides to medical appointments in the designated medical buildings and hospitals. They have also extended their hours to start earlier to and end later to accommodate the commuters. . The maximum ride cost is now \$2. It was previously \$5. And is curb-to-curb. This updated program blends well with the senior service program. The fleet is doubled to accommodate the bigger demand which allow seniors to use the extra cars if they are not being used by the commuters. Currently over 2000 seniors enrolled in the program.

Motion to adjourn by John Pelletier and seconded by Dan Shaw. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.