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Newton Lincoln Eliot School - NECP Project

Design Review Committee (DRC) – NECP at 687 Watertown Street

March 13, 2019, 6:00pm, Room 129, 687 Watertown Street

Attendees: Amy MacKrell*, Jonathan Kantar*, Stephanie Gilman*, Peter Barrer*, Carol Schein*, Ambrose Donovan*, Thomas Gloria*, Ellen Light*, Andrea Kelley, Steven Siegel, Joshua Morse, Robert Hnasko

* - Denotes Voting Member

Professional Team: Meryl Nistler, Larry Spang - Arrowstreet
Mary Mahoney - Hill International

Guests: Alejandro Valcarce, City of Newton, Public Buildings

Action Items are denoted in bold/italic font.

Meeting opened at 6:03pm with a tour of the 687 Watertown Street property and building interior.

Items:

1. Site/Building tour with discussions that included, but not limited to:
 - a. Need to retain mature trees at the playground area.
 - b. Fencing/ gate options at the access from building to play area.
 - c. Request for a planter strip of trees and/or shrubs along Watertown St to buffer the parking from the streetscape.
 - d. Discussed the very low headroom at admin created by the existing beam heights; please identify spatial impacts to that area.
2. Site Plan Option –
 - a. Site survey and topography data was reviewed, including plans to maintain the existing parking lot area for staff parking, need to address steep topography transitions across the site, environmental impacts due to the proximity of Cheese Cake Brook.
 - b. Development Option - The proposed concept for the building and site includes moving the main building entry to face Albemarle Rd with entry into the lower level of the building. Removing the existing modulars attached to the building and constructing a one way van only drop-off/pick-up lane around the back of the building. Vans would entry on Albemarle Rd. and exit on Watertown St. NECP play area would be located in the existing Horace Mann play area and existing park play structures would be located to an adjacent Albemarle park area. The existing single handicap parking space and blue zone along Albemarle Rd would be changed to (7) parallel parking spaces with certain spaces with accessible designation. An added on-site parking area alternate is being considered within the existing lawn area along Watertown St.

Discussion ensued regarding existing parking on-site and angled spaces on the north travel lane of Albemarle Rd. Currently 93 spaces exist and the NECP plan would make no changes to the angled spaces.



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One way van circulation on site, entering at Albemarle Rd and exiting on Watertown St. and width of the van drop off lane at the back of the building was discussed.

Suggestion was offered to square off the existing on-site parking area to gain spaces.

Discussion continued regarding the existing play structures in Albemarle Park that are closest to the school being not age appropriate for NECP, relocating the structures to available park to the left of the current location, and relocating the existing NECP equipment at 150 Jackson Rd. Some of the existing equipment adjacent to the Horace Mann School is new and provided by a community group so moving it out of the park may be an issue. Discussions ensued regarding soil/wet conditions at the proposed park play structure relocation, area for relocation being part of Albemarle Park property and control and restrictions on Park use.

Providing a pedestrian connection and safe walking route between the 687 Watertown St. property and Boy's and Girls' Club having opportunities for both sites and option for providing a safe walking path to the school, school parking lot and Albemarle Park were discussed.

3. Site Impacts and Required Improvements were reviewed including but not limited to: drainage system improvements with treatment/retention components, re-paving site and adjusting sidewalks, new dumpster pad, new transformer, adjusting and flattening site grades at multiple locations for site/building accessibility and for van discharge/loading.

Discussions ensued regarding school transportation (van) drop-off/pick-up procedures and providing a travel lane that ensures flexibility depending school programs and dismissal practices. NECP does not have many walkers as a District-wide program and due to the age and independence of students. Confirming that on-site parking would be for staff only to ensure safety during vans arrival/departure and access to outdoor play area.

Discussions continued regarding activities on Albemarle Rd. due to Day Middle School (MS), including students crossing the park from parent drop/pick up on Albemarle Rd, bus queue for Day MS, Day MS staff parking, NECP public off-site parking needs, parking opportunities along the south drive of Albemarle Rd and need for a pedestrian access across Cheese Cake Brook, and public parking available on side streets along Watertown St.

Waterfront and Wetland impacts to site plan options and use of pervious paving to offset increase in paved area. Impacts of high water table should be considered with pervious pavement.

Proposed dumpster location positioned well for servicing but concern with proximity to outdoor play area and park. Dumpster relocation to be considered.

Snow removal/storage – expected to be the same as the current Horace Mann School practices.

Discussion transitioned to DRC process and purview and the progress and adjustments to the NECP's site plan options since the last DRC meeting. Arrowstreet reviewed the various options considered during the past two months for site plan development and the input from professional team members, City Departments, Boards, and Committees that eliminated those other options. The DCR recommended that future Site Plan Approval updates include information that presents each option considered through the development process and why certain options were not chosen to move forward. Based on information provided on previous schemes and current option, there was a consensus to continue developing the presented preferred option.

DRC recommended that future presentations include a preamble explaining the difference in the NECP program and practices compared to Elementary Schools so there will be an understanding of how the site and building needs to work for the NECP population.

4. Building Plans



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- a. Floors plans were reviewed.
- b. Main entry and main office will be at the lower level in the space that currently is the gymnasium. Entry will face Albemarle Rd. and will include glass assemblies to bring natural light into the space and create prominence for the entry. A new stair to the second floor and central positioned elevator to all three floors will be located near the main office to provide ease of circulation within the building.
- c. Each floor plan was reviewed noting the classroom locations, access to toilet facilities), educational support spaces, circulation paths, and access to the outdoor play area.

DRC discussion ensued including concern with the lack of natural light in administration office at the lower level and request to add natural light to office area. Location of the elevator, including proximity to the main entry, proximity to the van drop-pick-up zone, adequate size for NECP needs, and building impact considerations with location.

5. HVAC Systems – two options considered based on the system requirements previously provided by DRC and Public Buildings Dept.
 - a. Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) – providing VRF units in every room, (6) on grade condensing units for air conditioning needs, (4) rooftop outdoor air supply units, and duct system for supply and return.
 - i. Impacts and costs – new roof dunnage required to support fresh air units, duct penetrations throughout, on grade area for condensers, zero combustion from source equipment. = \$48/sf
 - b. Hot/Chilled water fan coil system – providing fan coil units in every room, single chiller, (2) new low pressure hot water boilers, hot/chilled water circulation pumps, (4) rooftop outdoor air supply units, and duct system for supply and return.
 - i. Impacts and costs - new roof dunnage required to support fresh air units, duct penetrations throughout, on grade area for condensers, indoor mechanical space for boilers, uses fossil fuels for boilers. = \$51/sf

Discussion ensued regarding verification that the VRF equipment can support building heating needs during non-typical cold weather during winter.

6. Building Insulation System and various approaches to exterior applied insulation/finish systems. Options for assemblies and exterior finish and associated s.f. costs were discussed.

Discussion ensued regarding the age of the existing windows, replaced in 2013, that will remain, options for alternative exterior insulation assemblies and finish.

Evaluation of best system approach should include costs, building energy efficiency, and carbon impact.

EIFS assemble and need for a durable exterior for school design and with structure adjacent to a playground. That exterior material choice meets City maintenance needs (ie, wood is likely inappropriate). Request for more information re: sustainable material choices, thermal loads, and relative budget for each option prior to DRC vote.

Future presentation should include reasons why interior insulation for the envelope is not recommended due to possible condensation impacts to perimeter steel structure.

7. DCR – Site Plan Approval documentation requirements
 - a. Budget
 - b. Site Plan and Floor Plans
 - c. HVAC System description and energy efficiency information



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- d. MEPFP – Scope Narratives
- e. Elevations and Typical Details
- f. Sustainable features of design

Next DRC meeting for NECP at 687 Watertown St. is scheduled April 10, 2019.

Final Site Plan Approvals for NECP at 687 Watertown St. is expected April 24, 2019.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.

To the best of my knowledge, these notes are a fair representation of the items discussed at the meeting. Additional items or corrections should be brought to the attention of the writer. Submitted by: Mary Mahoney 3/14/19