

From: [Joshua R. Morse](#)
To: [Marc C. Laredo](#); [City Council](#)
Cc: [Alejandro M. Valcarce](#); [Jonathan Yeo](#)
Subject: Re: Acquisition of 47 Walnut Place
Date: Friday, July 1, 2022 8:56:56 AM

Good Morning Councilor Laredo,

I appreciate the questions you asked, which were discussed last night with the community. I agree that back and forth should probably be left for the committee meetings, but I feel it's appropriate to share with you the same information and answers I have given to the community in the past 12+ hours.

The acquisition will require the approval of the City Council, so the following is based on the assumption that we receive the support needed to move forward with the agreement. The agreement is structured such that the occupant will reside in her home for the rest of her life, or until she moves out. We wish the owner many happy years in her home. After four and a half years of hard work, with the incredible support of the City Council, and overwhelming support of the thousands of residents, committees, and commissions whom we have worked with, and having just received unanimous endorsement of the site plan and schematic design from the Design Review Committee, we are very excited to move forward and break ground next year.

The acquisition of this land does not change our plans for the siting, size, or design of the NewCAL project. The current site design and plans are utilize several planning tools from a siting and massing perspective. The building is closer to Walnut Street which pulls the massing away from our closest residential abutters to the west, which is very important from a site plan perspective. The front of the building on Walnut Street is stepped back by having a two-story façade, with the third story stepped back where the deck is located. Even if we had the property now, or in the near future, we would not recommend any modifications to the design or site plan. Pushing the massing closer to our closest residential abutters is something that we all know is not desirable.

As I discussed with the community last night, provided we receive the support of the City Council on the acquisition, we will immediately begin working with the community to determine the best use of this additional land once it becomes available. I shared the following list of potential uses for the additional land.

- As much as a twice the onsite green space from what exists today
- Creation of a cohesive community gathering space
- Net increase in onsite parking potential
- Net reduction in heat island effect
- Increased tree plantings and landscaping
- Increased passive recreation
- Net reduction in impervious surface and improved stormwater resiliency
- Increased opportunity for outdoor programs for older adults
- Opportunities for expanded pollinator gardens

As I also mentioned last night, this planning will be for the future. Where we have worked on this acquisition for more than two years now but could not share the intentions at the request of the owner, we have created a site plan and building design that is fluid, flexible, and

provided opportunities to make the most of the future land. Just one example of this can be found in the west façade of the area beneath the gym. You'll see that we aligned the durable medical equipment room, and trash and recycling room, to either side of the façade. This was done so that the opening between these two spaces can be used to access the abutting property to create a logical connection to the new land when the time comes.

I look forward to working with City Council to answer any questions they might have. Your questions are great, and they are all things that I have been studying and contemplating for the last few years as we have worked to secure this incredible opportunity for the older residents of Newton, and for the Newtonville neighborhood.

I also look forward to working with all of you, our older residents, and the folks in Newtonville to brainstorm now about how best to use the new land once it becomes available in the future.

Regards,

Josh

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
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From: Marc C. Laredo <mlaredo@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 1, 2022 8:07:48 AM
To: Joshua R. Morse <jmorse@newtonma.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>
Cc: Alejandro M. Valcarce <avalcarce@newtonma.gov>; Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Re: Acquisition of 47 Walnut Place

Commissioner Morse,

Thank you for your email. The potential acquisition of 47 Walnut Place seems like a great opportunity (since it will be a pending matter before the Council I do not want to comment further via email). It does raise some questions, however, about the current plan for New Cal. I understand that, by definition, the length of a life estate is uncertain. However, if the city were to acquire the parcel now, how might that alter the design for New Cal? Could it be a larger building, for example? Would the building be configured differently? Might its location on the combined site be different? What is the current vision for the open space?

No need to respond to these questions now - and probably better not to in order not to create open meeting law issues - but I hope that we will be able to discuss them and other related questions when the Council takes up this matter.

Thanks,

Marc

From: Joshua R. Morse <jmorse@newtonma.gov>

Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2022 1:28 PM

To: City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>

Cc: Alejandro M. Valcarce <avalcarce@newtonma.gov>; Jonathan Yeo <jyeo@newtonma.gov>

Subject: Acquisition of 47 Walnut Place

Councilors,

Mayor Fuller sent you an announcement regarding our request for approval to acquire the property located at 47 Walnut Place earlier today. This is the parcel at the corner of Walnut Place and Highland Avenue, and once we take control of the property this land will create opportunities which we will be studying in the future. Primarily, this acquisition will allow for the creation of more than twice the green space than what exists there now, but it also create several other exciting possibilities.

If anyone has any questions at all, please let me know.

Regards,

Josh Morse
Public Buildings Commissioner
Public Buildings Department
City of Newton