

October 7, 2014 Update from Zervas School Building Committee member Chris Neal:

Greetings all,

Last night the Board of Alderman voted to approve the funds needed to acquire the 3 properties on Beacon St. for an expanded site footprint for the new Zervas school. A new P&S was reached with the third property owner that morning, so an amendment was added to the motion at the beginning of the BoA meeting to account for the 3 properties (rather than the two).

Next step:

This Thursday, October 9th at 6:00pm in the Ed Center (100 Walnut St.), Room 210, there will be a joint Zervas School Building Committee (ZSBC) & Design Review Committee (DRC) to review and vote on whether to proceed with the currently proposed schematic design [[click here](#)]. This schematic is very similar to the one reviewed at the July 31st meeting (and which I sent out this weekend for reference): the building footprint has not changed. The floor plans have been further defined with regard to administrative, art, music, and custodial areas as well as some minor local adjustments to the upper floors. There is also an additional massing study from the southeast, which provides another view but not a new design.

This document is also posted to the Zervas project website at: <http://zervas.projects.joslinlessner.com>
Voting to approve the schematic design locks down the footprint of the building and allows the architects to then start fleshing out many of the other details necessary for a complete plan. Many other elements of the building beyond the footprint are still in discussion and can be altered as we proceed (i.e., your input still very much matters even after the schematic design is approved).

The Thursday 6pm meeting is open to the public.

If you have questions, concerns, things you like about this design, things you do not like about this design, etc., feel free to let me know directly and I will communicate them to the rest of the committee in advance of the vote, and/or feel free to contact the project leads directly (again: <http://zervas.projects.joslinlessner.com>).

Best Regards,
Chris
ZSBC Community Representative

Note: To be added to Chris Neal's email list for updates please email him at zsbc.community@gmail.com.

Update: On October 1, the BOA Finance Committee met and took up an item sent back to them that they re-sent to the BOA. The decision to send the conversation back to the next full BOA meeting (from the Finance Committee) to consider the purchase or "friendly taking" of the 2-3 properties to enlarge the Zervas footprint, passed through the Finance Committee, along with the request for monies to make those possible purchases/takings. (Two properties are under agreement, the corner property at Beacon/Beethoven is being renegotiated with the owner).

If only two properties are purchased, \$1,600,000 will be required, if three are acquired, the request from the Mayor will rise to \$2,700,000. There was a discussion about the impact that reduced parking might have if only 2 of the three properties were purchased. The decision as to whether the City will actually buy these properties will likely be made by the Aldermen at an October full Board meeting. (That meeting will be either on Oct. 6 or Oct 20...I am not sure which one. We'll have to check the City's Electronic Billboard to read the BOA Agendas to find out.) SL

The WAC is currently studying concerns from the neighborhoods and the consideration of the City, School Committee, and Design Review Committee - we do not have a position at this time. We do know that Zervas is going to be rebuilt. Many of the Details can be found at this [link](#). We also know that Newton's K-6 demand is going up, Angier is being rebuilt to fullest capacity, Zervas is the only school that can be enlarged to accommodate 25% more students, the new students will come from increased radius from the school, the cost of building another school is 50M+, the city looking to get additional space by purchasing three abutting properties. Playground space is a major issue yet to be addressed as is increased traffic and parking. Some Zervas neighbors have expressed the view that the additional 150 students will adversely change the school culture.