

# NEWTON UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

## AGENDA

Pursuant to *An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations*, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, signed into law by Governor Baker on July 16, 2022, this will be an Online/Telephone Meeting

### Participation Details:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/714158912>

Meeting ID: 714 158 912

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Meeting ID: 714 158 912

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ani0ErE3g>

February 16, 2023 7:00PM

### NUFAC Councilors In Attendance

Anil Adyanthaya (President)

Jay Werb (Treasurer)

Patricia Connolly

Julie Irish

Matt Lai

Jack Neville

Marie Jackson

Kent Gonzalez

Michael Mederios

Alan Schlesinger

- **Approval of Minutes from January Meeting (5 minutes)**  
Marie moved that the Council approve the extensive minutes as submitted. Julie seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes from the January meeting.
- **Treasurer's Report (5 minutes)** no losses, no gains to the account.
- **Public Comment/Questions?** Jerry Reilly commented about the WWI memorial at the bottom of Pettee St (on behalf of other members of the community) They would like to clean up overgrown tree/hedge around the memorial there. Jack said he would inquire
- **Northland Update presented by Northland (25 minutes)**  
Michael Mederios gave a presentation on the current status of the Northland Newton Development This roughly 22+1/2 acre property with 14 planned buildings in the design.

Construction documentation and other activities related to the building permit approval process will continue into Spring and Summer 2023. During this time, below grade demolition will also continue to remove the remnants of the old buildings removed. He discussed Utility tie-ins, Telecom, water, sewer and drainage tie-ins are already complete on the Oak St side of the property.

They have data on seismic activity during demolition as well as monitoring earth movements and soil management as it moving around the property. For dust mitigation, there are ten monitoring sites around the property. Mederios illustrated the drones and other monitoring devices throughout the project. He described how the old foundry in the Marshalls parking lot was taken down in the 1970 and a lot of the foundation of the foundry building was simply buried underground. They have removed that rubble that was buried and segregated it from soil that can be returned to the ground after machinery has sorted out the soil that is safe to return to the ground. Undesirable/Invasive species were removed from the parcels along the South Meadowbrook. The ~100yr old culvert at the is still functioning but will need to be upgraded and further protected. Jack asked about the Barber Shop was up for sale and Northland reported that the owners were asking too much money for them to invest in it, given the amount of work that would need to go into it. Paula Kelleher asked whether wood fencing could provide further reduction of noise and dust, and Mike responded by saying that the monitors are not reporting anything near the limit of dust and noise.

Jay asked about the first occupants, which are projected to be in buildings 7 and 3 30-34 months from now. (By the end of 2025?) He also asked Mike to describe how the utility work would benefit the surrounding neighborhood. This includes services from EverSource, which lines will be put underground and upgraded, allowing for more than one circuit under Needham Street. So if power is lost on one line, power can be provided from one of the alternative lines. Verizon and Comcast have also add networking lines. Because Upper Falls abuts the Needham line, some of these fiber optic cables in Needham are actually newer and closer so they will be able to tie in to that infrastructure as well.

Jay also asked about the path from the Splash park to The Greenway. Mike described that the city Parks and Recreation will need to do some work to connect these paths. He suggested that NUFAC should contact Nicole Banks or Luis in Parks&Rec.

- **Village Center Zoning Update: Discussion of Letter Regarding Priorities for Pettee Square (15 minutes)**

Following up from last month's discussion with Councilors Crossley and Humphrey regarding the proposed zoning framework. Jay had provided some bulleted feedback that the Council could synthesize specific feedback and recommendations that NUFAC can agree to. Jay suggested that we might not have a level of consensus about what is tolerable in terms of size in Pettee Square under the new proposed zoning framework. Jack and Julie agreed that while NUFAC might not have consensus on every aspect, NUFAC should find the points that there is consensus on, such as the minimum setback requirements to protect the Greenway and other residential abutters. Why not ask for 30' setback? Councilor Crossley had reassured the group that the Greenway deserves special requirements for protection.

Jay drafted his proposed the following six points of possible consensus, as far as concerns about the proposed zoning framework:

1. The Greenway merits special treatment in this framework
2. Scale and Setbacks: Because of the scale of the Northland project, there should be a gradual reduction of scale into the residential neighborhoods
3. Historical Significance, particularly the storefronts on the Biltmore buildings
- 4 Parking: Reduced parking requirements for office/retail should be by Special Permit only (i.e. only with justification)

5. Given the amount of vacant office space in Pettee Square, we can agree to aim for a better balance of residents and office space in the village center.

6. Concerns about losing the Post Office in Upper Falls, given that this is a danger citywide when leases expire or if the properties are sold and the new owner doesn't renew the lease.

Jack and Julie agreed that NUFAC should agree upon a number of these points and put them together in a letter. Anil thought that this subgroup that had previously met to put something on paper for the March meeting.

Rena G. clarified some pieces in the proposed abutting non-residential vs. rear setback so that NUFAC should comment on the previous maps and figure out the maximum setbacks along the Greenway.

Paula K. thought a point of agreement could be about insufficient parking on the Northland site.

Betsy H. pointed to the age of the properties and the need for preservation along Chestnut St next to the Pizza store. She is also concerned about the height of the buildings along the Greenway if the current zoning framework is not reduced to VC1.

- **Wellesley Office Park Changes (10 minutes)**

Concerns about the amendments to the agreement to allow for 250 additional units on top of the 175 Hotel Units, with up to 850 units total on the site. The developer has asked for this with no expectation in upgrades/investment to traffic infrastructure in the area. The Waban Area Council is concerned about safety infrastructure for both Wellesley and Waban communities.

- **Elliot Street Safety Issues Updates (5 minutes)**

Councilor Downs reported via J. Sobel back to Julie but nothing has been decided yet as far as Traffic Calming.

- **Oak Street Parking Prohibition at Needham Street (5 minutes)**

Anil and Jay reported about new proposed changes by the Traffic Council to eliminate parking along Oak st from Abbott St to Needham St to extend the left-hand turn (or straight) lane onto Needham St. At this point during major construction by Northland, it doesn't seem like they will approve any major permanent changes.

- **La Nuestra Update & Pettee Square Redesign Update (5 minutes)**

No updates on either projects at this time.

- **Ken Newcomb Upper Falls Book Award (5 minutes)**

Anil wanted to announce this if the Council wants to continue. Marie suggested that the NUFAC should consider raising the award amount. They agreed to decide on this in March.

- **Transition Issues (15 minutes)**

- a) New Officers** Jeff Riklin will take over with Anil's departure. A vice-president will need to be elected in March
- b) New Member** A new ninth member will need to be appointed in March, and hopefully some applicants will apply using the advertisements that Anil posted. Anil suggested people should spread the word about this. Marie made note of Anil's role in the founding of the Upper Falls Area Council. Jack also noted Anil's work in getting the approvals for Little Luk's Café in Pettee Square along with many more contributions.
- c) Social Media-**
- d) Remote Meetings-** The Special Ordinance for Remote meetings expires in March so presumably NUFAC will return to in person meetings at the Emerson Community Center.

- **General Upper Falls News (5 minutes) Public Comment/Questions**

- **Adjourn**

The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [jfairley@newtonma.gov](mailto:jfairley@newtonma.gov) or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.