

MINUTES OF THE NEWTON UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

June 15, 2023 7:00pm

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
Newton Upper Falls Area Councilors in Attendance:

Jay Werb (Treasurer)
Julie Irish
Kathaleen Brearley (Secretary)
Marie Jackson
Jack Neville
Matt Lai

City Councilors In Attendance
William Humphrey
Pamela Wright
Deborah Crossley

1) Approval of Minutes from May Meetings (5 minutes)

Marie J. moved to accept the minutes as submitted and Jack N. seconded this motion. All councilors in attendance were in favor without objection.

2) **Treasurer's Report (5 minutes)** Jay W. reported that there were no changes in the account balance

3) Public Comment/Questions

4) Question about cigarette receptacles in Pettee Square

Patty C. and Katie B. picked up a ton of cigarette butts behind the Depot and Bocce court as well as behind the Biltmore block along the Greenway, as part of a clean-up during Newton Serves. Councilor Humphrey suggested that we contact Parks and Recreation for the best solution. Members of NUFAC agreed to contact both P&R and try to talk to anyone smoking down there to ask if they would actually use a receptacle if one was installed near Pettee Square. Councilor Humphrey also suggested contacting Paula Gannon, Director of Cultural

Development: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/cultural-development> to enquire if we are concerned about the new blue tarp covering the utility box in Pettee Sq.

5) Northland Project Update? List of transportation budget uses 2.5 of 5 million will be available at the end of 2023

Jay proposed that NUFAC members come up with a list of suggested uses for traffic

mitigation projects at the next meeting. Councilor Humphrey recalled discussions about connecting Elliot Station and other auxiliary projects
Jay moved to send out the specific language related to the criteria for use of these funds so that member of NUFAC can agree on a specified list where these fund can be used.
Jack asked if Jay could ask about tours of the Northland at some point for members of the community who are interested in the current state of the project. Other members expressed interest in a tour of the project as well.

6) Pettee Square redesign project

Councilor Humphrey reported that he believes this project is moving forward and on track.

7) Village Day Planning

Julie talked with Parks n Rec, and Sunday October 1st is the working tentative date for Village Day 2023
She suggested a working group should be actively planning ahead of time. Marie, Patty and Katie volunteered to join this discussion.

8) Traffic Council Meeting related to Eliot St traffic calming 7:30PM June 22

- **9) Village Center Zoning: Impacts on Pettee Square (8:00PM)**

This portion of the meeting will start promptly at 8pm (not earlier), with a time limit of one hour. Priority will be given to questions from the Upper Falls community.

Councilor Deb Crossley delivered a brief overview of the current state of the proposed Zoning revisions, followed by constituent questions.

Councilor Crossley began by stating that ZAP is currently working with Version 2.0, and briefly reminded everyone why the City began doing this in the first place. Two years ago, when this project began, Newton was identified as unique in its pattern of development, and at the top of the list with respect to housing shortage. Land use development has only increased the exclusivity within the City, maintained in part by specifications where housing can be built and how much land is required for it. Land use development rules exasperate the environmental resources and are a far less efficient way to build. Having people live closer together on less square footage would be an environmentally smarter way to build.

Thus, ZAP set out to determine how to provide more options to builders. By having contiguous and connected land in at least 50% of this new MRT Zone/district. (3.4%) Councilor Crossley explained the goals of the MRT Zone, specifically in instances where a one family residence will be converted to a minimum of 3 units. There is a new construction option if such a conversion is too cost prohibitive.

Councilor Crossley confirmed that there would be 15' setback required along the Greenway.

Both the Newton Electric lot and anything larger than 30,000 sq ft with the overlay will require a special permit.

Councilor Crossley conveyed that the quality of the design benefits from flexibility in the zoning. In the business district, design standards are related to size and dimensional standards. If we would prefer more interesting facades, we'll want to encourage bays, windows dormers, and awnings without the extra square footage, as some examples.

Having this overlay business district with high quality design standards will allow projects under 30' to only have to follow guidelines from the Planning and Review board, which is specified by the zoning code. The design standards are written into the

zoning code and are required but Inspectional Services Dept will enforce the materials being used to comply with the state zoning code.

Councilor Crossley confirmed that the zoning code will include a required 15' setback from the Greenway. These rules will enable some of the development that we hope to see in the future. The current zoning does not allow or encourage anything. It creates a barrier to the type of development the City wants to encourage.

Councilor Crossley answered a question about encouraging more affordable units in these districts under the proposed new zoning. Councilor Crossley pointed to summary sheets in the Inclusionary Ordinance that were recently added to the website, summarizing an overview of the zoning details and design standards.

Councilor Wright confirmed that in the current proposed zoning standards, additions on houses cannot be higher than the original building. Councilor Crossley confirmed that it tends to be expensive to renovate and turn these old houses into multifamily units, even without having to get a special permit.

Jay asked about how to prevent the 15' setbacks being filled with parking or dumpsters.

Councilor Crossley confirmed that it is difficult to police use on private property.

There was a discussion about having natural grade requirements, which would disincentivize changing the grade to add height to the rebuild project. Councilor Crossley referred to specific ordinances that help to prevent grade changes.

10) General Upper Falls News (5 minutes)

11) Public Comment/Questions

Julie asked about the utility box down in Pettee Square that has recently been covered with an unattractive blue tarp. Councilor Humphrey recommended contacting Paula Gannon in Commerce to find out if it can be removed.

Rena Getz reminded folks about a Newtonville survey on the 2.0 zoning proposal and Councilor Wright reminded folks that the ZAP Committee will present the revised zoning proposal next week to the full City Council and encouraged all to attend for a more comprehensive presentation and summary of the Zoning proposal. (Tuesday June 20th at 6pm) via <https://newtv.org/watch/channels/government>

12) Adjourn : Marie J. motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm and Katie B. seconded this motion. All voted to adjourn the meeting.

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 or (617) 796-1253.