

Minutes of the March 2024 Meeting of the Newton Upper Falls Area Council 3/21/24

Present: Jack Neville
Jay Werb (Treasurer)
Julie Irish (Chair)
Patty Connolly
Matt Lai
Paula Kelleher
Kathaleen Brearley (Secretary)
Carol Stapleton, City of Newton
Betsy Hewitt, Neighbor

In absentia Jeff Riklin (Vice Chair)

A) Minutes of the February 24 Meeting

Ms Marie Jackson moved and Mr Jack Neville seconded that the minutes of the February meeting be accepted. All Area Councilors in attendance voted to accept the minutes from February as amended.

B) Treasurers Report:

The Treasurer reported that there is currently approximately \$6,700.00 in the account. Some expense commitments include \$239.05 for purchase of Nuroum webcam to allow UFAC meetings to be held in hybrid (Zoom and in person) format.

New Business

A) Newton Serves.

Newton Serves will take place on May 5th, 2024.

Discussion to clarify the amount of work required of a point person. The City drops off trash bags. Some online communication needs to be done to get on the City's publicity materials. Kathaleen Brearley agreed to be the point person to register the event this year. Betsy Hewitt and Tom O'Connor were thanked, and appreciation of their efforts to keep the Greenway clear of dog defecation by raking it into the undergrowth was communicated by all. After further communication, it was agreed that the Upper Falls effort would concentrate on the Greenway, with the addition of the rather scruffy adjacent area at the bottom of Mechanic Street and surrounds. Julie offered to reach out to the owners of Gamewell Telegraph building to let them know Newton Serves will be happening on May 5. She will also confirm that it is okay to clean up the section which abuts (and may include) their property.

We further discussed the possibility of additional city trash disposal units, at Easy Street and adjacent to the Stop'n'Shop/Boston Ballet parking lot. Carol Stapleton advised the UFAC to reach out to Derek Mannion, Superintendent of Park Maintenance, about getting another dog waste receptacle that could be placed closer to Easy Street. When reaching out to Derek, we would also inquire about the cost of the receptacle and the service to remove the dog waste. If the City was not willing to purchase, perhaps the UFAC could purchase. Julie offered to reach out to Derek Mannion.

B) Upper Falls Village Day

Our preferred date is Sunday, September, 15. At the April meeting of NUFAC Julie Irish will dig out the shared Google Doc from last year on what worked for Village Day 2023 and what we could do better. Carol Stapleton has agreed to check and let us know if we would be competing for vendors on the same day as other villages, e.g. Newtonville or the Highlands.

C) Yard Art Project

Julie introduced the concept of a Yard Art Project as a Spring Community-building Family Event. The idea is that we choose a weekend and publicize it to all the Upper Falls residents, inviting them to make or place a piece of art in their front window or on their front lawn. We would not be reinventing the wheel - Watertown already does something like this. Should it be competitive or not? Everyone present was very enthusiastic. Matt and Julie will write it up for the April Meeting.

D) The Ken Newcomb Annual Award. It was unanimously agreed that the cash value of the award should be raised to \$200. Kathaleen proposed that we change the date to September. Jay will contact Bob Jampol to see if we should focus particularly on oral history projects, so the students do not have to write something specifically for the Award. However, it was decided that for this year, we would continue with the same requirements (i.e. no oral history projects)

E) City of Newton email addresses: Members of NUFAC are given City of Newton.gov email addresses and should focus on using them for NUFAC business. Matt volunteered to set up a distribution address list for the NUFAC members.

Old Business.

A) Pettee Square improvements

The current proposals have been outlined on a map. We will publicize it through the Upper Falls News and by posting it on our City of Newton website. A discussion took place on the proposed area and the missing bus stops, both City and school bus stops, from the map. There also does not seem to be any spot for NUFAC to display banners, as is done in the Highlands and Newtonville. Julie will follow up with Paula Gannon, representative of the Telegraph property. If they give us notice ahead of time of proposed closures and detours we can get the word out via the Upper Falls News. Further, we are being given two big planters by the City for the Pettee Square area. Julie will coordinate between the city planter people and the construction people on the timing and placement of planters.

B) Northland Transportation \$5M to the City

The first half of the fund (\$2.5M) is paid by Northland to the city at the first building permit, probably later this year.

The second half of the fund (\$2.5M) is paid by Northland to the city at the first residential unit occupancy permit, perhaps in 2027.

Based on discussions at prior UFAC meetings, Jay outlined several projects that would be a good use of the funds to address consensus priorities of Upper Falls residents. Jay will discuss with Kent Gonzales (Northland) to explore whether Northland's recommendations to the city are likely to be aligned with UFAC priorities. Paula Kelleher proposed and Julie Irish seconded that we support Jay's prioritized listing of the suggested improvements to be used by the fund. The motion passed unanimously.

General Upper Falls Business

A) The Tennis Courts at the Braceland Playground are being used by adult instructors. Carol will check to see if these people have a permit to teach tennis lessons at Braceland.

B} Feast of the Falls:

Jay Werb asked if NUFAC money would help ensure that this event could happen this year. Marie Jackson explained that it is not a matter of cash, but rather of coordinating the three principals, Christopher Earl Osborne of Better Life Food, Seana Gaherin of DunGaherins, and Jerry Reilly, to commit to dates, working around their busy schedules. Marie will nudge Jerry to ask Seana and Chris to get together and coordinate whether this is happening ASAP.

Motion to Adjourn was proposed by Jack and seconded by Marie. Passed unanimously.

The UFAC April meeting will be held via Zoom. The next hybrid (in person and Zoom) meeting will be held in May.