

Minutes of the 18 April 2024 Meeting of the Newton Upper Falls Area Council

UFAC Members In attendance:

Julie Irish (President) *PRESENT*
Jeff Riklin (Vice President). *PRESENT*
Kathaleen Brearley (Secretary) *PRESENT*
Patty McBride Connolly *PRESENT*
Marie Jackson *PRESENT*
Paula Kelleher *ABSENT*
Matt Lai *PRESENT*
Jack Neville *PRESENT*
Jay Werb (Treasurer) *PRESENT*

Guests:

Kent Gonzales, Northland
Daniel Greene, Northland
Peter Standish, Northland
Garry Miller
Betsy Hewitt

Administrative

- a. Approval of Minutes from March Meeting
Motion to approve with amendments: Kathaleen motioned and Jeff Riklin
Seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.
- b. Treasurer's Report
Treasurer Jay Werb reports no income or expenses in the past month. Bank
balance is about \$6,500.

Public Comment / Questions

None

New Business

- a. Northland project status and transportation fund
Kent Gonzales updated UFAC regarding status of Northland project. A copy of
the presentation can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P8Q-iBj5mB3iKT6sLkKSr11FRrNf4LGq/view>

Notes:

- 250,000 gallons underground to collect runoff from across the site for irrigation.
- A structure “cap” is being built around the underground culvert to protect it
- Construction generally will start on Oak Street side and build toward Building 8.
 - Splash park starting in a few weeks. This includes the main street connector and everything west of that. The Splash park should be operational by Spring 2025, and the park may be usable earlier. East of the main street connector will be in a later phase. Splash park will be licensed to the city. It will use fresh water
 - Building 3 (95 units & ground floor retail) hopefully starting construction Fall 2024, followed by Building 4 (125 units & ground floor retail), Village Green, 2025. It will be about 3 years from the start to occupy for each building. They plan to look for tenants before finalizing design on Building 2.
 - Building 1 will be renovated when the office market ○ 5-7 years to finish once they start Building 3.

Residents in the neighborhood have noticed a "pond" on the site and hope this will be kept drained during mosquito season. This is due to a very rainy spring. It will not be there when mosquitos come back in the spring.

Residents in the neighborhood have noticed that piles of "dirt" continue to be shifted around. What is this all about? Most of the underground material is being processed and will eventually end up underground on the site. Some material with rebars is too difficult to process and will need to be disposed of.

Residents in the neighborhood have noted dust along Needham Street that is occasionally unbearable. It's been very wet and Northland does have a water truck when things do get dusty. If the source of the dust is from the Northland construction, people can contact Northland directly.

<https://www.northlandnewtonconstruction.com/#Contacts>

Constituents continue to be skeptical whether Mechanic Street (across the Greenway to Northland) is wide enough for use by emergency vehicles in an actual emergency. The status of that project is unknown; Northland's response is that the bus stops at the edge of their property.

Work to underground utilities along Oak Street is up to the Utility companies. Northland doesn't know when this will be done.

Transportation fund.

Northland is generally aligned with UFAC's suggested priorities that were unanimously approved in the March meeting. Kent Gonzales suggests that the Winchester Street connection, which is listed as one of several Greenway projects, is very important and should be more prominent.

How should Northland and UFAC collaborate to promote these shared objectives to the city? UFAC will send our recommendations to the city council, mayor, and planning department, preferably by the end of June. Northland can then make similar recommendations using our material to demonstrate community support.

Jay Werb will draft such a letter from UFAC to the city prior to the next NUFAC meeting in May or June.

Nuestra Updates?

A special permit was approved for Nuestra in 2022. We are not aware of any further action from them since then. Their special permit will need to be renewed after a year.

b. Outreach to small businesses in Upper Falls

The City does not have a coherent list of local businesses. If we want to do some outreach, such as for Village Day, you'd need to go door to door.

Newton Highlands Area Council has various sponsorship levels. Jeff Riklin will contact Jeremy Freudberg to see if they have a workable approach that we can model.

Old Business

a. NewtonServes – Sunday, May 5 2024

Discussed logistics and publicity. Confirmed that the area discussed around Mechanic Street is not private property.

b. Pettee Square Construction Update

Construction has begun. If there are any road closures they will be at night. Should be completed in time for Village Day on September 15.

Banners will be looked at when the project is complete. Poles have already been purchased and on site.

Groundbreaking April 23rd 10am.

c. Village Day Planning

Sunday September 15th .

Newton Highlands Area Council has various sponsorship levels. As was stated above. Jeff R. will call Jeremy F. to see if they have a workable model to share with us.

Possibly rent a bounce house this year but first need to understand the liability considerations

d. Yard Art Project

Watertown did a Yard Art Watertown program. Maybe something like that in Upper Falls would be fun.

We will send out something to the Upper Falls News and see if there is interest.

e. 2024 Ken Newcomb Book Award

Anil sent an announcement to a long list of email addresses. A similar announcement was sent out this year

f. Eagle Scout project

Materials have all been purchased, boxes all built, gravel is at the end of Williams St. Installation planned for Sunday April 28. UFAC will cover the cost when done, then recoup $\frac{3}{4}$ of cost from sponsors: CDC, Northland, Friends of Greenway.

General Upper Falls News

Various projects in historic district are doing preliminary drawings.

The Christina St Bridge will be replaced, at a cost of ~\$4.5M, including adjacent pathways, with the help of both State and Federal funding.

Public Comment

None