



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Leary (Vice Chair), Auchincloss, Sangiolo, Schwartz and Baker

Absent: Councilors Hess-Mahan and Kalis

City Staff: Dori Zaleznik (Chief Administrative Officer), David Olson (City Clerk), Jayne Colino (Director, Senior Services), Alice Bailey (Administrative Manager, Senior Services), Deborah Youngblood (Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Linda Walsh (Deputy Commissioner, Health and Human Services), Donnalyn Kahn (City Solicitor), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#154-16 **Mayor's appointment of Treffle LaFleche as Trustee of Jackson Homestead**
TREFFLE LAFLECHE, ~~86 Prince Street~~, 1603 Commonwealth Avenue, West Newton, appointed as a Trustee of the JACKSON HOMESTEAD for a term to expire May 31, 2019 (60 days 6/30/16) [04/15/16 @2:47 PM]

Action: **Approved 4-0 (Councilors Baker and Schwartz not voting)**

Note: Mr. LaFleche joined the Committee. He explained that he knows quite a bit about the history of the City as well as its architectural fabric due to his profession as an architect. He has been on the Historic Newton Board for about 8 years already and be appointed to the Board of Trustees is quite an honor by which he is humbled and pleased. Most importantly, the role of the Board of Trustees is to preserve local history and to serve as a resource to educate both adults and children in the historical events that have occurred in this community. The Jackson Homestead is a wonderful resource for children to learn that significant historical events have taken place in their neighborhoods.

It was asked how Mr. LaFleche feels about the movement to form a Historic District on West Newton Hill. He noted that as an architect he walks a fine line between preservation and the idea that all neighborhoods and environments evolve. The environment is only as enriching to live in as its inhabitants and the buildings are static vehicles that are brought to life by people in them. Each generation changes in terms of how a built environment is viewed so it's important not to preserve fabric based on one generation's needs over the next generation's needs. Technology, property rights, preservation and sustainability are all bigger issues to consider as well. As much as older buildings contribute to history and fabric of a neighborhood and sense of place, they are for the most part incredibly inefficient in terms of use of energy.

A Committee member hoped that the he as a member, and the Board of Trustees as a w hole, would be helpful to those who are doing research for these efforts to preserve historic buildings or

areas. It was also pointed out that waste going into landfills when old homes are demolished adds to environmental issues when they are perfectly good homes that could be renovated and retrofitted. Mr. LaFleche said he does not disagree with historic districts but also does not blindly accept them as the solution for all the issues that face neighborhoods like West Newton Hill. He believes they can be overly restrictive and when imposed on a neighborhood that is already thriving, they don't seem necessary.

Councilor Auchincloss moved approval and the Committee voted in favor of Mr. LaFleche's appointment unanimously.

#155-16 Mayor's appointment of Jay C. Walter as Trustee of Jackson Homestead
JAY C. WALTER, 83 Pembroke Street, Newton, appointed as a Trustee of the JACKSON HOMESTEAD for a term to expire May 31, 2019 (60 days 6/30/16)
[04/15/16 @2:47 PM]

Action: Approved 4-0 (Councilors Baker and Schwartz not voting)

Note: Mr. Walter joined the Committee and explained that he also been on the joint Board at the Historic Newton for a number of years and has been the vice president of the Historical Society for 9 years. As part of the executive committee, he has seen the inner workings of the organization and feels the Board of Trustees could play a larger role in the direction of the institution. As an architect the built environment is important to him and Historic Newton plays a vital role in helping residents appreciate that as well. He is also a commissioner on the Upper Falls Historic District Commission and also Chair of the House Tour and Preservation Awards, both sponsored by Historic Newton. He felt these programs brought the history and heritage of Newton to its citizens.

It was asked if he was supportive of Historic Commissions and if he felt one in Newton Corner would be useful. He noted that Newton has grown over time and there are no areas where there are consistently period periods – the buildings are interwoven because of the growth pattern of the City. This makes it difficult to choose an area to designate as historic without including houses that are not particularly significant within those boundaries. Historic Districts help preserve the historic fabric of the City but should be applied judiciously and not in large swathes, nor should they be tools for stunting growth or density. Mr. Walter went on to say that combining all the district commissions under one umbrella would be a mistake. Upper Falls for example, might allow some things that Chestnut Hill would not and that diversity of experience and opinions is needed to successfully serve the City.

It was suggested that Historic Newton get more involved in providing more detailed educational brochures and pamphlets throughout the City.

Councilor Auchincloss moved approval and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously.

#156-16 Mayor's re-appointment of Karen Haywood as Trustee of Jackson Homestead
KAREN HAYWOOD, 69 Walker Street, Newtonville, re-appointed as a Trustee of the JACKSON HOMESTEAD for a term to expire May 31, 2019 (60 days 6/30/16) [04/15/16 @2:47 PM]

Action: Approved 5-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Note: The Committee voted to approve Ms. Haywood's re-appointment with no discussion.

#157-16 Mayor's re-appointment of Harry Lohr as Trustee of Jackson Homestead
HARRY LOHR, 157 Cherry Street, West Newton, re-appointed as a Trustee of the JACKSON HOMESTEAD for a term to expire May 31, 2019 (60 days 6/30/16) [04/15/16 @2:47 PM]

Action: Approved 5-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Note: The Committee voted to approve Mr. Lohr's re-appointment with no discussion.

The Committee continued to hear and discuss the departmental budget presentations for City Clerk, Senior Services, Health and Human Services and City Solicitor. Those are detailed in the forthcoming budget reports.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John R. Rice, Chair