

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
ZONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2002

Present: Ald. Yates (Chairman), Sangiolo, Lennon, Johnson, and Baker

Absent: Ald. Gentile, Lappin and Mansfield

Also present: Merrill, Salvucci, Linsky, Stewart, and Fischman

#197-02 NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION submitting pursuant to MGL Chapter 40C, Section 3, a recommendation that ARTICLE III., HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND DISTRICTS, of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances, 2001, be amended by establishing a local historic district in Newtonville.

NOTE: The sole business of the meeting was a public hearing on the proposed Newtonville Historic District. John Rodman, Chairman of the Newton Historical Commission, presented the recommendation of approval of the Commission, which served as Historic District Study Committee for this proposed district. He urged approval. The District was limited in boundaries and essentially related to one period in time, the development of Newtonville as a railroad suburb, although there were a few properties that predated that period. District resident and professor of history Ellen Fitzpatrick presented a detailed description of the history of the proposed district. She went into some depth on the names of the architects who had built most of the homes in the district and described the process that led to the proposal. Several homes had been demolished in the neighborhood and replaced with more dense and inappropriate houses. There was a proposal for the demolition of the site of the former Red Cross headquarters (21 Foster Street). It was met with severe neighborhood opposition and withdrawn. Residents from the immediate vicinity began the study of a possible historic district and merged their efforts with a similar group from other streets. The overall effort continued for several months generating a great deal of neighborhood pride and community feeling. Neighbors who had not known each other became good friends in the common enterprise,

More than a dozen residents, long-time and new alike, spoke in favor of the district. Many said with pride that they were the fourth or fifth owners of the house built by one of the architects of the area. They seemed to be extremely familiar with the builders of their homes and all the previous owners. Several spoke favorably about the diverse quality of the neighborhood with second units in many buildings available to people of modest means. One resident dissented and felt that the district was elitist and would force out low-income people by increasing rents and property values. Some

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speakers after him denied his conclusion and felt that the district was the best way of maintaining economic diversity since any new homes built by right would be market rate housing.

Respectfully submitted
Brian Yates, Chairman