

Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, March 2, 2017

Attending: Rodney Barker, Bob Burke, Steve Feinstein, Nathaniel Lichtin, Srdj Nedeljkovic, Julius Starkman, Amy Wayne

Ex Officio Present: Dick Blazar

Guests:

Mildred Hutchinson, Newton Highlands Community Development Corporation

Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report

Srdj opened the meeting at 7:37 PM. The Secretary's Report for February was reviewed and approved without corrections.

The Treasurer's Report included the following. As of February 25, 2017, we had \$14,225.07 in our checking account; 9,221.00 is currently available plus \$120.00 available in cash.

Reimbursement of \$121.79 was approved on a 7-0 vote for Srdj for ice cream he purchased for the Soup Social.

Newton Highlands MBTA Accessibility Project

Srdj briefed our Council on a meeting that Robert Solomon recently had with the MTBA Design Team. The update included:

- The stairs leading from Hyde Street to the Highlands MBTA Station will be untouched by this project.
- There will, however, be a new platform from Hyde Street to the Station that will be accessible and that will include a roof. A similar roof will be added to the inbound side of the platform.
- There will be a community meeting in April for the 30% benchmark which should be finalized by this coming summer.

Northland Project Follow-up

Srdj asked for comments about February's meeting with Northland officials and their lawyers. A lengthy discussion followed.

Amy stated it was pretty clear that this project as presented would never meet the 40B threshold for affordable housing credits. She was concerned that this will only put us further behind as a city when trying to meet the 10 percent state threshold.

Steve continues to see school capacity problems as well as serious and unresolved problems with traffic.

Srdj is concerned that utilities aren't being placed underground around the development and along the entire stretch of Needham Street. He is considering sending a letter to the Governor and to Transportation Commissioner Pollack requesting them to mandate that a plan for undergrounding utilities is included in the design of the roadway.

He also has concerns about whether the project is sufficiently transit oriented. Also, it's clear there isn't a balance between the amount of new residential and new commercial development in Northland's proposal. Srdj stressed once again, the need for light rail along the corridor to Needham Heights to provide more transit options for people who will live and work in the development. There was additional discussion about the long term impacts of the total development on the Upper Falls and Newton Highlands communities.

Newton Highlands Local Historic District

Initiatives to outreach to the community dominated most of the discussion. Katy Holmes told us that the Massachusetts Historical Commission accepted our preliminary study plan in full. They recommended no changes. Katy and the Commission both think that the boundaries we set are sound and reasonable.

We will have more details about outreach at April's meetings, but there will be a concerted outreach campaign involving more open house sessions at the Brigham House, a possible community wide meeting and door-to-door canvassing of homeowners. We believe the public hearing will be held sometime in early May. Bob said he would talk with John about initiating talks with Village center landlords about the LHD.

Village Day

Steve gave the following update.

Progress is proceeding afoot on the June 11th Village Day.

There will be no auction this year. It's just been too much work for too little return. We'll work instead on strengthening our donor base.

Maureen Oates has been approached to handle the road race. Chris Pitts is coordinating the music. Steve thinks Anna McTigue will coordinate the booths.

Some new additions to the program include portrait painting and magicians.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Burke, Secretary,
Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council