

Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, July 6, 2017

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

Ex Officio: John Rice

Guests:

Joan Freedman, Highlands Village business owner, Limited Edition
Mildred Hutchinson, Newton Highlands Community Development Corporation
Sallee Lipshutz, Waban Neighborhood Council
Brenda Noel, Candidate Ward 6 City Councilor

Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report

Srdj opened the meeting at 7:35 PM. The Minutes for June were reviewed and approved as written. The Treasurer's Report included the following. As of July 4, 2017, we had \$12,410.00 in our checking account; \$5,860.00 is currently available plus \$120.00 available in cash.

Fall Candidates Forums

Sallee Lipshutz came before our Council to update us on a series of debates and meetings that will be focused on constituencies of the 4 area councils serving Newton Highlands, Waban, Newtonville and Newton Upper Falls. Newton Upper This year, it is Waban's turn to sponsor and organize the debate schedule and organizational logistics. Sallee stated that two separate debates have been scheduled at Angier School from 1-5 PM on Sunday October 8 and Sunday, October 22nd. The October 8th event will feature contested races for City Council and School Committee and the October 22nd event will feature the two finalists for Mayor and the proposed new City Charter.

Sallee also reported that she has drafted a letter to School Superintendent David Fleishman to request that the normal fee for renting space at Angier be abated because a provision of the Newton School Committee Rules and Regulations states that “charges may be abated when, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, the purpose is of such significance as to warrant such abatement. In such cases, the expenses of the necessary custodial service shall be borne by the Newton Public Schools.

Sallee is requesting that each Area Council donate \$300.00 to insure adequate funding for the two events and asked if our Council would contribute to this effort. A short discussion ensued and Bob moved that our Council appropriate \$300.00 as our contribution to this effort. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with no dissents or abstentions.

Newton Highlands Village Day

Steve Feinstein was unable to make the meeting, so a detailed report must await next month’s meeting in August. Even so, Amy and others stated that overall the event was a big success with some suggesting it was the best Village Day ever.

Newton Highlands Local Historic District

Rodney, Bob and Amy updated the Council on events since June’s meeting. It will be recalled from last month’s meeting that we hoped to tap Commissioners from the four established Newton LHDs to help answer specific questions from property owners in anticipation of the survey the City is in the process of sending to all property owners.

We received notice from several homeowners within the proposed district that they had not received the City’s survey in the mail. We reported this to Katy Holmes who is following up to see what’s caused this problem.

We understand the concern that some homeowners have brought to our attention, but are pretty certain that Katy and the rest of the staff will identify the source of the problem and find ways to correct it without compromising the survey or its results.

Trees and Sidewalks on Beacon Street

Barbara gave a report on the City's recent meeting at the Waban Library where sidewalk improvements and related plans and proposals for tree removal and needed sidewalk improvements were discussed. Barbara said that the meeting was very well attended. Barbara was pleased that most participants seemed to appreciate the importance of doing everything possible to make the sidewalks safe for pedestrians, particularly kids using the sidewalks to get to Zervas while at the same time, keeping tree removal as limited as possible within the constraints of safety. As a result of the meeting, the City has agreed to reduce the number of trees that will be removed from 29 to 11.

Items in Brief

- Srdj will draft a letter to the residents of the Floral Street portion north of Walnut Street to bring them up to on measures related to the handicapped accessible project at the Highlands MBTA Station.
- We had an extended discussion with Limited Edition's owner Joan Freedman about the many challenges of trying to run a business in the Highlands.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Bob Burke, Secretary, Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council