

# **Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, October 6, 2016**

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

Ex Officio Present:  
John Rice

## **Guests:**

Isabelle Albeck, Waban Neighborhood Area Council  
Joe Corkery, Waban Neighborhood Area Council  
Rena Getz, Waban Neighborhood Area Council  
Mildred Hutchinson, Newton Highlands Community Development Corporation  
Marc Kaufman, Newtonville Neighborhood Area Council  
Nina Koch, Newton Upper Falls Neighborhood Council  
Marie Jackson, Newton Upper Falls Neighborhood Area Council  
Sallee Lipshutz, Waban Neighborhood Area Council  
Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Waban Neighborhood Area Council  
Jack Neville, Newton Upper Falls Neighborhood Council  
Barbara Smiley, Newton Highlands Local Historic District Planning Group  
Robert Solomon, Newton Highlands MBTA Station Accessibility Coordinator

## **Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report**

Srdj opened the meeting at 7:40 PM. The Secretary's Report for September was approved with corrections.

Groot presented the Treasurer's Report. It included the following. As of October 1, there was \$15,994.00 in our checking account, of which \$10,140.00 is currently available. \$120.00 is available in cash.

Our Area Council voted to approve \$1,000.00 to the Newton Highlands Community Development Corporation for the 2017 Summer Concert series.

Other items remained basically unchanged from September's report.

## **Snow Shoveling Ordinance**

The meeting began with a discussion of a recent Report from the City Council pertaining to the status of the City's snow shoveling ordinance. There has been an overall improvement in snow removal activity by both businesses and residences, but as Steve pointed out, there's been "pushback" at the City because it has been far from thorough in removing snow from public walkways it is responsible for. "I'll remove my snow when the City removes its snow" was how Steve phrased it. Rodney listed the walkway leading to the Highlands MBTA station and the walkways over the Walnut Street bridge as particular concerns.

But most of the concern was directed at the Police because they have made clear that they don't want to spend limited resources enforcing the ordinance. Barbara stated that she was extremely upset that the Police would take it upon themselves to determine what ordinances they would and would not enforce. She knew we were pressed for time because of the Charter Commission's timely discussion about the fate of area councils in a new charter, but she would return to it in subsequent meetings.

## **Charter Reform and Area Councils (Article 9)**

Discussion then moved to the Charter Commission's pending vote on the future of area councils under Article 9 in a new City Charter. Several members from the 3 other area councils (Newton upper Falls, Waban and Newtonville) were in attendance to see if a common set of positions and responses could be framed for presentation to the Charter Reform Commission at its regular October meeting.

Srdj began the discussion by pointing to: (1) A current version of Article 9 with "red-line" changes that our area council supports, and; (2) A September 12<sup>th</sup> letter that Srdj had sent on behalf of our Area Council to the Charter Commission explaining the rationale for our suggested changes.

Srdj also briefly summarized the three options the Charter Commission was examining that pertain to the future of area councils in a new charter. These are: (1) Retain the current language in Article 9; (2) Entirely remove Article 9 from the new Charter, and; (3) Retain Article 9 with specific changes.

There was a robust, positive and extensive discussion involving almost all the participants that focused on fully articulating the positive accomplishments of all four area councils and the kinds of people or individuals that have been helped by bringing their concerns or personal problems to the attention of their respective area councils.

Sallee then distributed the draft of a letter she thought could be the basis for a final letter to the Charter Commission that would be endorsed and signed on behalf of all four area councils. The area councilors present from all four area councils then voted 22-0-1 to request that Sallee draft a final letter and that each area council act quickly to let her know of any changes they recommend.

On behalf of the Highlands Area Council, Rodney then moved that we reply to Sallee's draft by tomorrow (Friday), but no later than Saturday of this week. Srdj agreed to author our response to Sallee. This motion was seconded and approved on a vote of 7-1-0.

## **Newton Highlands Local Historic District Update**

Continued progress was made in completing the undocumented properties within the proposed Local Historic District. Barbara Smiley is handling the historical narrative and Bill Roesner and Carol Clark are halfway through walking every street within the proposed district in an effort to complete the architectural descriptions of each undocumented property. Amy Wayne will soon begin taking new photographs of every house and property within the proposed district.

At last month's meeting, we reported that we were close to completing 6 representative samples of all the undocumented properties that we have been doing complete historical and architectural inventories on. During this past month, we talked to Katy Holmes who told us we didn't have to submit full documentation on all 70 plus dwellings. She suggested that a better and more manageable route would be for us to complete approximately 15 complete documentations on a representative sampling that would demonstrate the rich diversity of housing within the proposed district.

We have also started to compile material for a "preliminary study report" that will be the basis for moving our project through the Newton Historical Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission and ultimately through a public hearing, a community meeting and consideration by the City Council.

We expect to complete compiling material for the study report in October and begin drafting the report in early November. We also expect to start our concerted outreach program within the proposed district and to the City Council in November.

## **Results from Crystal Lake Community Meeting**

The September 15<sup>th</sup> community meeting at the Crystal Lake Bathhouse was a tremendous success and a great kickoff for this multiyear project with more than 100 in attendance. There was strong support for:

- Keeping the construction of any new building at a reasonable size and height
- Promoting 4 season use wherever and whenever possible.
- Making certain that nothing disrupts the lake's swimming program.
- Providing assurances that on-street parking needs of nearby residents are fully accounted for.

## **Planning for Halloween Haunted House**

Groot, Barbara Darnell and John gave a progress report on this year's Haunted House at the Hyde Center. The theme this year is a "Haunted Restaurant". We need to get word of this out to students and their parents. Groot moved that we appropriate \$500.00 to print promotional flyers. The motion was seconded and approved on a 7-0-0 vote.

## **Items in Brief**

- Janet Fagan needs a storage area for the village flower pots over the winter months.

- John reported that the parking and drop off areas at the new Zervas School has been scaled back to two lanes following safety, accessible and parking concerns from nearby residents, parents and the Waban and Newton Highlands Area Councils.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Burke, Secretary,  
Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council