

Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, August 1, 2013

Members Attending: Groot Gregory, Peter Meyer, Srdj Nedeljkovic, Greg Reibman
Ex Officio Aldermen: John Rice, Richard Blazar, Cheryl Lappin

Guests:

Ron Mauri, Newton Parking & Residential Development
Tom Sheff, Mayoral Candidate
Chris Steele, Ald. Candidate, Ward 5 (At Large)
Mildred Hutchinson, Newton Highlands Community Development Corp.

Srdj called the meeting to order at 7:35 though there was not a quorum. He welcomed Alderman Cheryl Lappin to the meeting. Since the NHNAC service area includes parts of Alderman Lappin's ward, she is now an "ex officio" aldermanic member of the NHNAC.

The minutes from June's meeting that were accepted as presented.

Groot then presented The Treasurer's Report. As of July 24, 2013, there was \$11,636.30 in our checking account. Groot reported that Village Day net revenues will be about \$3,700 after all bills are paid which is similar to recent years. He noted that the t-shirts sale was a net loss of about \$300 with many shirts unsold. It was suggested that next year the t-shirt "logo" should be based on the new bandstand and that we consider giving some away.

The Needham Street Corridor improvement plan-proposal presented by Newton's Planning staff at the last meeting was discussed. Although there was general agreement that mixed use was desirable, the plan contained other items on which members had various concerns. It was decided that the official NHNAC response would be a simple "Thank You" letter, and that members could send their concerns individually.

The Haunted House will not have a slide this year due to safety concerns. As in the past, sponsors will take responsibility for individual rooms. Judy Dore of Newton's Parks and Recreation will provide promotional support.

It was confirmed that the City agreed to partially fence the Cold Spring dog park area that would serve as a buffer to other park users.

The need for improvements to area crosswalks and the Newton Highlands MBTA station were discussed. The NHNAC strategy is to appeal to the City through Bill Paille of the transportation department and ask that they be made a higher priority.

Ald. John Rice reported that the 13 concerts and movies at the Hyde Bandstand have been well attended by enthusiastic audiences of as many as 300. John noted that audiences are larger when children's movies are scheduled (and of course when the weather is favorable). He envisions using it as a music venue when the ice skating rink is in use this winter.

Regarding the parking pilot proposal, the next step is to get together with the City's Legal Department to see if the city will support a prospective permit program that would allow revenues to return for community betterment uses. We need to know whether there are specific State laws about residential parking permit programs to know if it is feasible to proceed with this proposal. The meeting with City legal staff is anticipated for September, but has not been scheduled.

Other Items

- The Rox Café and Market (note name distinction from the "Rox Diner" in Newtonville) is now open.
- John Rice stated that serious discussion is underway about some kind of holiday party with members of all the other area councils.
- John Rice noted the intention to change the area newsletter to electronic distribution. The concern is that not enough email addresses are known, and options for sufficiently expanding the list have not been identified.
- Srdj noted that the "Envisioning Newton Highlands" document has been submitted to James Freas of the Planning Department. Srdj noted that this "vision" is important for shaping of the upcoming second phase of Newton zoning reform, so remaining proactive is critical.
- It was noted that there are only seven candidates for the nine NHNAC member positions. It will be necessary to recruit additional members for appointment. Michael and Maria Kanellias, and Peter Meyer were mentioned as possibilities, but all members are encouraged to solicit other neighbors to become active with the Council. It would also be desirable to have participation from the local business community.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Ron Mauri