

# **Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council Meeting Minutes, September 10, 2013**

Attending: Rodney Barker, Groot Gregory, Peter Meyer, Srdj Nedeljkovic, Robert Solomon, Barbara Darnell

Ex Officio Alderman: John Rice

## **Guests:**

## **Newton Government:**

Ron Mauri, Newton Parking & Residential Development  
Adam Peller, Newton Transportation Advisory Group, (TAG)  
Carol Rose, Newton Commission on Aging

## **Other Participants:**

Sallee Lipshutz, Observer from Waban Area Council  
Maureen Reilly Meagher, Observer from Waban Area Council  
Anil Adyantklaya, Observer from Newton Upper Falls Area Council  
Susan Hoffman, Observer from Newton Upper Falls Area Council  
Larissa Hordynsky, Chair, Newton Ward 3 Democratic Committee  
Caroline Schwarzwaldner, Co-Chair, Newton Ward 5 Democratic Committee  
Don Ross, Co-Chair, Newton Ward 5 Democratic Committee

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Srdj called the meeting to order at 7:35 after determining a quorum was present.

Srdj presented the minutes from August's meeting and they were accepted as presented.

Groot then gave the Treasurer's Report noting that there were no transactions since the last report. The balance remained at \$11,636.30.

## **1. Discussion of Candidate Forum Options**

Srdj noted that many of the guests came for a discussion of what might occur regarding joint sponsorship of candidate forums. He noted that in the past the NHNAC had sponsored a Candidate's Night in the Highlands, but with new area councils in Waban and UF covering Ward 5, a joint forum should be considered.

The Newton League of Women Voters (NLWV) has scheduled a city-wide forum for mayoral candidates on 10/22 and Ward 5 candidates on 10/3. Sallie Lipshutz proposed a

separate forum on 10/22 for Ward 5 Alderman and School Committee candidates that would focus on more local issues and be co-sponsored by the three area councils. Some expressed a concern about whether non-partisan area councils should co-sponsor with one or both political parties. The general conclusion was that more sponsors would enhance visibility and attendance. There were also concerns about timing, especially overlapping with NLWV forum. There were also concerns about the number of candidates, but the consensus was that candidates would be limited to brief opening statements and then timed responses to questions so that two hours would be sufficient. It was decided that the NHNAC would co-sponsor a forum on October 10 with the Newton Democratic City Committee, including a possible small financial contribution. Regarding a candidates' forum with the other area councils, the NHNAC would be pleased to co-sponsor that forum as well, but that an alternate date from October 22 would be preferable, ideally a Sunday night. The plan is to have the forum on October 10 at the Women's Club on Columbus Ave. in NH. There was agreement that the organizers would work with the NHNAC and other interested parties in developing the program for that event.

## **2. Transportation Issues and Events**

Robert Solomon gave an update on MBTA accessibility and pedestrian crossings. He noted that he was told by Andreae Downs that recommendations on prioritization of the Newton Highlands MBTA station for ADA accessibility needed to be approved by the TAG before going to the mayor or public facilities. He noted that crosswalk painting in the Highlands had not occurred as expected, but John Rice reported that this was because the contractor was behind schedule and that the work would be done before winter.

Srdj and Adam Peller reported that the Tour de Newton bicycle ride is scheduled for Sunday Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 2:00 and riders of all ages and abilities are welcome. Experienced riders will ride 20 miles. More information is available on the Bike Newton website. Srdj asked for volunteers to help manage the event in Newton Highlands.

Srdj reported that there will also be a "Paddles and Pumpkins on Crystal Lake" kayaking event during the afternoon of October 6<sup>th</sup>. (Kayaks are a mode of transportation too!). The Crystal Lake Conservancy (CLC) is sponsoring the event, which will be free to participants. The event will be followed by the annual report on lake quality by the CLC and City officials.

Srdj reported that Bill Paille of Newton's Transportation Department has agreed to attend the October meeting of the NHNAC for an update and discussion of Centre Street-Allerton Road crossing improvement options. Adam Peller noted that this was timely since re-paving of that portion of Centre St. is being planned and the group felt it would be appropriate to send a letter requesting that the City provide information to and solicit input from the NHNAC on planned transportation improvements in the Highland area.

Regarding the Highlands Parking Pilot, Srdj reported that he has been unable to get the City to schedule a meeting with Planning and Legal staff to discuss and hopefully resolve the questions of legality of establishing a parking benefit zone. There is a concern that the City is delaying on this matter since they are currently focused on implementing a resident parking permit program in Newtonville around Newton North HS.

### **3. Other Items**

- John Rice reported that it will be difficult to bring a water supply for underground sprinklers to the Officer English garden because the garden sits on top of an MBTA bridge. However, he said that Parks and Recreation had agreed to install a sprinkler system, although water supply to the sprinkler system will still be by a hose from an adjacent business rather than underground.
- A Lincoln Street “Green City Mural” was scheduled for Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> and the rain date is 9/29. It will involve using chalk to create pictures on Lincoln St. However, we learned at the meeting that the event is likely going to be cancelled this year.
- The winter soup social is scheduled for Saturday evening, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> 2014.
- John Rice noted the intention to change the area newsletter to electronic distribution but since not enough email addresses are known he anticipates a mailing in or just prior to January.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM, with attendees eager to watch a Presidential address that has been scheduled at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ron Mauri