

MINUTES OF THE UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

DATE: August 15, 2019

LOCATION: Emerson Community Center

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anil Adyanthaya	Nina Kochs
Julie Irish	Jo-Louise Allen
Maxine Bridger	Susan Huffman
Marie Jackson	Jack Neville

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councilor John Rice

PUBLIC:

Jen Kohl	Bill Humphrey	Rena Getz
Betsy Hewitt	Maureen Reilly Meagher	

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved pending the addition of a sentence about writing a letter of support for Ellen West's letter concerning Ellis Street.

B. Public Comment

C. Treasure's Report

There was no change.

D. Ward 5 City Council Candidate Rena Getz

She introduced herself. She has lived in Newton for 28 years, and lives near the Village Center in Waban. She was a founding member of the Waban Area Council and is now its Vice President.

She got involved with zoning issues when the abutting lot to hers was being developed. They decided not to litigate, but she became self-educated on zoning and on how to solve regional problems with zoning and by-right allowances. She feels we need to do better and mentioned Washington Street and Needham Street. About Northland she said there are too many units and she is not happy with the transportation solution. The zoning proposals for Upper Falls will allow by right more units on a lot, so affordability will shift. The Needham Street project needs to be phased in.

She felt that we need a master plan for the City instead of doing things piecemeal. There should be a spreading of the density.

It was mentioned that Brian (and others) wanted a 16<sup>th</sup> school on the Northland site.

Question: Would you vote against your Ward for the greater good?

Answer: It shouldn't be either/or. What is good for the City should be good for the Ward.

There was concern for people, multigenerations, surviving here. Rising property taxes make it hard for the elderly to stay.

Question: How do you feel about no more housing in Newton?

Answer: Right now accessory structures can be built all over. We need to rework accessory requirements. They are too liberal now.

We have to consider habitat, canopy, so we don't lose our garden city.

Question: Exit on Oak Street?

Answer: Against the exit on Oak Street.

Question: The city now has negotiated 1450 parking spaces with Northland, but some want only 900. If 900, where will people park? If the parking is underground who cares how many spaces.

Answer: The heights need to be revisited and parking. Northland is huge and dense. It needs to be phased in. Nothing should be built across the street until we see the first part.

Question: Trees? We have lost some at the Library to put in solar panels and the new senior center site is planned for parkland. And Albermarle is not T accessible. Why the dichotomy trees versus solar?

Answer: We don't need to use parks or open spaces. The Austin Street lot would have been a good place for a new senior center.

Comment: They took houses to build the Mass Pike and the Austin Street parking lot was a site for extra staging for the Pike.

The Armory would be an incredible site for affordable housing.

Question: How do you feel about Charter change?

Answer: The mayor didn't like that the City Council was able to get their own counsel. But any change in size has to go back to the voters.

#### E. Village Day Planning

Julie is using EventBrite to line up vendors. So far she has 5 vendors. Julie contacted Linda Walden, the economic development director, but she wasn't sure what access to businesses we could have.

It was noted that the pet store changed its name to Loyal Pet Companion.

Bill asked to whom the candidates should write. The answer, go to EventBrite or the Upper Falls Facebook page.

Question: Is there a non-charge community category?

Motion: The 4 Little Free Libraries can have a table for free.

Passed unanimously.

Bring a book and take a book and they can advertise for Village Day.

Advertising for Village Day. Jeff was pricing banners, but has to check with the City.

They look nice, cost about \$1000 nice, but there is a lot of work putting up banners. Councilor Rice said he wouldn't recommend banners. Sandwich boards are better.

Question: What about a smaller banner at Emerson and at The Depot? That will be cheaper, maybe \$200 each and easier to put up.

In addition to smaller banners we could also put flyers on poles, like we did for the Soup Social. Fast Signs in Needham does a good job.

There will be no postcards sent out this time. It's not worth it.

Other issues were discussed. Food? Maybe pizza from Anthony's or Stonelove?

What about inflatables? Maybe a Bouncy House? It was mentioned that the DPW and Parks and Rec have different requirements for a Bouncy House. If it's on the Greenway, then Parks and Rec. If it's in the Street, then DPW is in charge. We will put it on the street and get a company, like Busy Bee, that will do a professional job.

Funding/Costs. Should cost around \$3300. Music and musicians are \$1300, same as last year.

Question: Do we have sponsors?

It was noted that Village Bank now has corporate headquarters in Upper Falls. The pet store is moving to the Newbury Comics site, and Everpresent is also moving.

Waban Village Day uses porta-potties. Should we?

A question was asked about asking Village Bank if they wanted to be a sponsor. We could offer them listing on our signs and in the Upper Falls News. We could also ask Stop and Shop if they wanted to be a sponsor; they would get free publicity.

Jack brought up the issue of the corner spaces at Petty Square. It would be nice to have flowers, etc. there. The City owns the Plaza. The people at the liquor store said that they would take care of plants if we put them on their corner. Councilor Rice will get the City to contact Julie.

Public: Are the trash barrels ever cleaned?

Answer: No. Just the bags are changed.

#### F. Ward 5 Debate on September 5

On Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a real debate here at Emerson, from 7:30 to 9:30, for the ward 5 primary for Ward Councilor. Marjorie Arons Barron will moderate, and the Waban Area Council is soliciting questions.

We need more volunteers to collect audience questions for the debate.

Re: Publicity. In the past the City helped out with sandwich boards. Councilor Rice suggested we talk to David Olsen and the DPW. Julie suggested we put up flyers and notices in the Upper Falls News and Village 14.

Question: Does Carol Stapleton know about the debate on the 5<sup>th</sup>?

Answer: Yes and that we will be in the gym. Chris Pittis is the AV guy and Julie Malakie does Facebook live.

We should have water available for September 5<sup>th</sup>. Its potluck. Bring something if you want.

#### G. Discussion of Brian Yates Plaque

The CDC controls the area around the Depot, and the sidewalk is the responsibility of the nearest tenant, which is Jack and the CDC. So we can do a brass plaque. We need to work on wording. Maybe we can get it done before Village Day.

Anil passed around some possible wording for the plaque. The wording was amended to include mention of the Historic District, the CDC, etc. Councilor Rice will look into the wording. It was suggested that an etching of Brian's face be on the plaque.

Note, the DCR contributed the bench in Hemlock Gorge honoring Brian, and the Friends of Hemlock Gorge paid \$1000 for the engraving.

The CDC could pay for the plaque, and Maureen, from the Waban Area Council, suggested that the WAC and the NHAC could also contribute to the plaque. Jack suggested that all three AC's contribute some and the CDC will pick up the rest of the cost.

Councilor Rice suggested we light up the plaque. There is a lot of room on the Depot building to do that.

It was suggested we do something for Brian in the War Memorial Auditorium, or maybe a book fund and place in the Library where books in honor of Brian could be placed.

#### H. Area Council Candidates Forum in October

Barbara Donough is the point person for questions for the Citywide Candidates Forum in October.

There is no moderator in place now. Andy Levin did one before.

The dates planned are:

October 20<sup>th</sup> at Newton North for Wards 1 – 4, from 2 – 5 pm.

October 27<sup>th</sup> at Zervas for Wards 5 – 8, from 2 – 5 pm.

We need a strong moderator. Should we ask Jen Adams?

The Area Councils contributed financially to these events. Last year we contributed \$189.

Susan is helping Marie with this.

#### I. General Upper Falls News

#### J. Public comment/Questions

It was suggested that we have a soapbox (at Village Day) for all political comers.

To be fair we would have to tell all the candidates about it. It was tried at the Farmers Market during the charter debate and didn't work out well.

It was pointed out that soapboxes are for the general public and not for politicians. Politicians should have their own tables. Village Day should be a family day.

The signs describing the change in route of the 59 bus were mentioned. It was suggested that the T send someone to Ward 5 to explain the changes.

#### K. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:40.