

MINUTES OF THE NEWTON UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

Date: February 21, 2019

Location: Emerson Community Center

Members in Attendance:

Anil Adyanthaya

Susan Huffman

Julie Irish

Nina Kochs

Jeff Riklin

Alderman John Rice

Ex Officio member

Other Attendees:

Councilor Jake Auchincloss

Charles Stover

Jay Werb

Ellen Katz

Alan Schlesinger

Bill Humphrey

Carol Stapleton

Parks & Recreation

A. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting

After a brief discussion, the minutes were approved 5-0.

B. Treasurer's Report

Susan Huffman gave the Treasurer's Report. There was no new income, but an expenditure of approximately \$480 for additional Historic Upper Falls T-Shirts. This will be reflected on the next month's report.

C. Comments from Councilor Jacob Auchincloss regarding Northland Parking

Councilor Auchincloss shared his response to the Area Council's letter asking for more parking at the Northland Site. He believed that few parking spaces would "bake in" the incentives for Northland to carry through on other related obligations like supporting a successful shuttle services. Members of the Area Council and some attendees commented that they did not want more people parking in the neighborhood if they couldn't find parking in the Northland site. Councilor Auchincloss said there was no good data on the optimal number of parking spaces. Councilor Rice suggested that more senior housing might ameliorate some of the parking issues. Ellen

Katz suggested co-working space should be developed as well. Attorney Alan Schlesinger, who represents Northland, said this was high on their list. He also previewed some of the updates that Northland will present at the March 12 Land Use Committee public hearing, such as reduced retail, 22 fewer housing units, underground parking. Area Councilor Riklin repeated the point that any egress from the Northland site onto Oak Street was a “non-starter” due to the impact on traffic it would have. A discussion of the Better Bus Project followed, with some commenting that the MBTA was not considering Newton very much.

D. Presentation from Lower Falls-Riverside Committee on Riverside Development (15 minutes)

Charles Stove from the Lower Falls-Riverside Committee gave a presentation on the latest news about the proposed Riverside development. He provided the attendees with a background and history of the project and an update as to where things stood today. He commented that his community’s efforts were similar to what we were dealing with with respect to Northland and that perhaps we could work together going forward. Area Councilor Koch stated her concern about the precedent set by such big development projects.

E. Programs and Services Hearing on Proposed Revisions to Charter Article on Area Councils

A discussion of possible changes to the Charter that could affect the status of Area Councils was discussed. Area Councilors Rena Getz (Waban) and Nathaniel Lichtin (Newton Highlands) provided helpful background on the issue. Councilor Rice stated he was firmly against proposed change to Article 9 covering Area Councils. There will be a public hearing held by the Programs & Services Committee on March 6 to discuss the issue.

F. Soup Social

Further discussion was held on the planning for the March 23 Soup Social, including updates on donors and efforts to publicize the event, such as Next Door, Facebook, flyers, and sandwich boards. Some discussion of entertainment, such as music and a slide show, was discussed. Someone suggested having paper tablecloths and crayons at the tables so kids could draw. Area Councilor Adyanthaya would invite the Mayor. Carol Stapleton said the chairs would be delivered on Friday, March 22. Area Councilor Adyanthaya said a new batch of Historic Upper Falls t-shirts would be in and would be sold at the event for \$5 per shirt.

G. Public Comment/Questions

Carol Stapleton asked that space be made at the March meeting for an eighth grader to present on his project to classify all the plants on the Greenway. There was some general sentiment that the Area Council should provide some financial support for this project.

Area Councilor Adyanthaya stated he would try to get the Chestnut Street Developer to attend the March meeting.

Someone also noted that the Greenway would be getting some steps donated in the area of Lover's Leap. These were donated by the Conservation Commission.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45pm.