

# MINUTES OF THE UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

DATE: February 15, 2018

LOCATION: Emerson Community Center

## MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

## OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Carol Stapleton (Parks and Recreation)  
Councilor John Rice  
Councilor Deb Crossley

## PUBLIC:

Mark Bridger	Bonnie S. Fraser
Verne T. Porter	Darren Gallant
Nancy and Francis Passawant	
Nathaniel Lichtin	Amy Wayne

A. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting  
The minutes were approved.

B. Public Comment

C. Treasurer's Report

There has been no activity since the last meeting.

D. Presentation by Cypress Tree Management re Proposed Marijuana Dispensary on Elliot Street  
Representatives from Cypress Tree Management reported on their plans for turning the Green Tea Restaurant complex into a medical marijuana dispensary and Wellness Center.

The principals involved in this venture are old friends with business and hedge fund management backgrounds. The wellness director came to some of her expertise through dealing with her own health issues. Cypress Tree is working with the City of Newton to secure the necessary permits for what has to be a vertically integrated company. That is, they can only sell products they produce.

The plan is to open a Wellness Center next to the dispensary. This center will be open to all adults and will offer educational programs. To use the dispensary you would need to have a medical marijuana card. They also plan to have room for short-term, pop-up retailers. Eventually they plan to sell recreational use marijuana when those licenses become available.

They showed architectural drawings of their plans for the site. They plan to have parking in both the front and the rear of the building, with plantings for stormwater run-off and maybe a rain garden and mural along the gas station edge of the property.

A representative of the security company Cypress Tree is working with also did a presentation. There will be detailed remote video monitoring of the site. The security company has recent experience with medical marijuana dispensaries.

There was a question and answer period after the presentation.

Q: Are you dealing with the Sunoco people?

A: They were receptive to traffic calming and maybe a mural.

Q: Entrance to the Dispensary?

A: We are still working on the entrance. Maybe the CVS and Green Tea entrances can be combined and we can have a two-way entrance/exit. CVS owns its entrance so a deal will have to be made with them. Another problem is that cars entering the gas station might block this entrance. Negotian, CVS, Cypress Tree and the cleaners need to meet to discuss the egress/ingress issue including the entrance to the back parking lot.

Q: Hours of operation and traffic to the dispensary?

A: 9 AM to 7 or 8 PM with reduced hours on Sunday, maybe 12 – 6. Maybe valet parking? The 1<sup>st</sup> visit to the dispensary might last ½ hour and after that visits would be 10 to 15 minutes. The DPH (Dept of Public Health) will oversee the dispensary, but the Wellness Center will be independent of the DPH.

Q: What is happening to the lions?

A: They'll be someplace.

#### E. Needham Street Vision Plan Community Engagement Group

The Task Force meets on Mondays from 5 – 7:30 PM at the Barry Price center.

There is tension between the agenda of the Vision Group and the Mass DOT which is set in its plans for Needham Street and so is limiting what can be envisioned. But, the work of the Vision Group will inform what happens as each new project comes up. This group would like to make Needham Street more vibrant, a place to go at night. They would like to see art and music there, better seating and better lighting. They want to see the street heavy with retail. There is not even an ice cream shop there now. It would be nice to have a concert hall or college satellite campus. Needham Street should become a destination.

Some people in the group would like to usurp the Greenway for transportation. The City has a 100-yr lease, but the MBTA could call it back.

The topic for the 3/26 meeting of the Vision Group is synthesis and the 4/23 meeting will be a public hearing and presentation from 6 to 8.

Northland will be back in the Spring with a proposal for the City Council. Proposals don't carry over year to year.

#### F. Soup Social Planning

The Soup Social will be March 24<sup>th</sup> from 5 to 8 with free soup.

A list was passed around with possible vendors and Area Council members volunteered to contact the vendors. We need to advertise the Soup Social, and make sure that the local schools mention it in their newsletters. We should put info on websites.

#### G. Upper Falls News Update

Margaret Alexander, from Rockland Place, volunteered to help with the Upper Falls News.

#### H. Coyotes in Upper Falls

We need to alert people to be careful with pets in areas with coyotes. People who see coyotes should call 311 so the City can keep a log of sightings.

It was mentioned that coyotes don't like fire engine sirens. So after a fire engine passes by you can often hear coyotes howl.

A suggestion was made that the City should notify people of sightings. It was noted that the City website has a map showing coyote sightings.

#### I. Little Free Library

It will be done by Spring. It would be nice to dedicate the Library on Mother's Day, or Memorial Day.

#### J. Fundraising Idea—NUF car magnets

There is a quick turnaround in getting them. We can sell them at the Soup Social.

The CDC will put up the money and get reimbursed as they are sold.

#### K. General Upper Falls News

The new owners of the building at Oak and Chestnut went before the Historical Commission. The owners have no plans to change the use of the buildings. They will be all commercial with small spaces. They plan to replace some windows, get rid of the entrance at Oak and Chestnut, get rid of the loading dock and have an entrance there. They plan to beautify the building, replacing stucco with brick, and will rebuild the garage. They will encourage parking in the buildings' lots. They also own the parking lot across the street from the building, but have no plans yet for that space.

The Emerson gym floor is being redone this week. There was a dance there recently for special needs adults. But, there were problems with some people parking in the Condo spots. The City needs to find a way to work with the Condo re parking at special events.

The tables and chairs for the Soup Social will be brought in on Friday.

L. Public Comment/Questions

M. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55.