

# MINUTES OF THE UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

DATE: January 18, 2018

LOCATION: Emerson Community Center

## MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jeff Riklin	Maxine Bridger
Susan Huffman	Anil Adyanthaya
Jo-Louise Allen	Nina Kochs

## OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Carol Stapleton (Parks and Recreation)  
Councilor John Rice

## PUBLIC:

Betsy Hewitt	Kathaleen Brearly
Jay Werb	Dave DeLorie

Marc D.

A. Approval of Minutes from December Meeting  
Minutes were approved.

B. Public Comment

M. General Upper Falls News

Two new programs, pickleball, and cornhole, will start at the Emerson Community Center a week after St. Patrick's Day. Maybe we could announce the start of these programs in the Upper Falls Newsletter. We could also put this on our Facebook page. There is currently pickle ball for seniors in Newton Lower Falls.

Councilor Rice met with the new owners of the Oak/Chestnut/Ossipee property and reported on their plans for the property. The new owners are planning a historical renovation of the building and plan to redo the underground parking space which is in a poor state with some of the ceiling falling off. The owners intend to keep the building commercial property. They are also opposed to Northlands plan for an Oak Street exit.

The owners will be at the February meeting of the Area Council to talk about the renovations.

C. Treasurer's Report

The credited amount is \$2724.

D. Nomination and Election of Officers

Motion: To keep the current officers as a slate for reelection.

Passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the slate.

Passed unanimously.

## E. Needham Street Corridor Project

Maxine and Jo-Louise reported on the DOT presentation and Jo-Louise also reported on the meetings of the Needham Street Area Vision group.

The DOT presented plans for the renovation of the Needham Street/ Highland Avenue corridor. They plan to solicit bids in April 2018 and start construction a year later. The project should take three years, during which time they plan to have one lane open in each direction. Whether the work begins in Needham or in Newton will be up to the contractor.

The DOT plans to have a raised bike lane adjacent to a pedestrian lane on both sides of the street. The bike lane will be asphalt, the pedestrian lane a different material. However, there will be a problem with these lanes near the Evergreen Cemetery since Needham Street can't be widened there. Some businesses, like Boston Showcase, will lose parking spaces.

There will be new traffic lights at Charlemont and some pedestrian operated crossing signals.

Two bus stops will be moved to better locations.

When the project is completed Needham Street will become a city street and no longer a state road.

Questions were raised about increasing the service on the #59 bus. The DOT said it was not up to them, but some in the audience felt that issue should be part of the multimodal use planning for Needham Street.

A question was raised about putting the utility wires underground. The DOT response was that it was very expensive and if the project didn't require it, it wouldn't be done. Some utility poles will have to be moved. This is a big expense, also, and members of the Area Council raised concerns at the Area Council meeting about this.

The DOT representatives claimed that the plans were based on what is there now and not what Northland is planning. However, they are changing the Charlemont Street intersection because of Northland's plans, which have not yet been approved by the City Council.

The Area Council decided to write a letter to Thomas Currier of the DOT asking:

1. for info on the costs of moving the utility poles
2. about improving the #59 bus schedule
3. whether the Northland project was driving any of the plans.

Jo-Louise then reported on the work of the Needham Street Area Vision Plan Group.

The group meets at the Barry Price center on Christina Street on Mondays from 5-7:30. The meeting on 1/29 will be on transportation.

The group had handed out a questionnaire on the use of Needham Street. It asked for bus routes to school and driving routes for parents who drove their children to school. How do those NSHS students from Upper Falls drive to school who drive?

A question was raised about the goal of this group. Is it to see Needham Street as a destination? The goal of the group seems amorphous. They will offer input to the City.

#### F. Soup Social Planning

The Soup Social is March 24<sup>th</sup>.

We have sandwich boards and need to put them up. We can put one at the new Brian Yates Plaza. Maybe we could have signs on telephone poles and on trees.

#### G. Upper Falls News—greater Area Council assistance?

#### H. Future of the Green Tea Location

A meeting with the new owners of the Green Tea Restaurant was reported on. The new owners are hoping to put in a medical marijuana dispensary there. Eventually they hope to sell recreational marijuana as well. They need to go through a City Council special permitting process to do this. But the project can't be forbidden on just general principles since Newton voted to legalize marijuana. If a police detail is needed at the site, that could be done.

A question was raised at that meeting about the strip of land along Negoshian's property. No one knew who owned it.

The new owners will do a presentation at the next area council meeting.

#### I. Jane's Walk

A Jane's Walk is a walk around a community led by a member of the community, to help people learn about the community. These walks are sponsored by a world-wide organization.

Should we organize one? We need more info on this.

#### J. 2018 Village Day Site Discussion

There are major traffic flow issues with closing off the lower end of Chestnut Street. Discussions with the Newton Police about this are still ongoing. So, the Village Day site is still to be determined.

#### K. Little Free Library

The Area Council offered to pay the fees for the Little Free Library by the Depot. When the Library is ready the fees can be paid and an official plaque can be obtained. The Little Free Libraries on Cottage and on Rockland have these plaques. Jeff will check out the size before building the structure.

It would be nice to have a fun thing, like a ribbon cutting, when the Library opens.

#### L. 2017 Annual Report Draft

Comments are needed by next week since that is when the report has to be submitted.

#### M. General Upper Falls News

Some City Council members have proposed that the City dedicate the plaza in front of the Depot to Brian Yates. It would be called the Brian Yates Plaza at Pettee Square. Such a dedication was done for Rodney Barker and he was delighted with it.

#### N. Public Comment

#### O. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:39.

