

Newtonville Area Council Minutes July 11th, 2019

Newton City Hall, Room 211

Members present: Peter Bruce, Tarik Lucas, Dana D'Agostino, Marc Kaufman, Susan Reisler, & Colleen Minaker

Absent: Maura Harrington, Martina Jackson, Helene Sroat

7:05-June Minutes were not approved, due to the fact that a final draft for approval was not submitted. They will be approved in August.

Peter Bruce made a motion to remove the agenda item, "Mayor rejects Charter changes. Reconsidering NAC's mission". Approved unanimously.

The Burning Issues for the meeting were future ordinances on AirBNB residences in Newton. Zoning & Planning will take up this measure on the July 15th meeting.

Peter Bruce mentioned that RightSize Newton will have a training at Auburndale Library on July 16th, 2019 at the Auburndale Library on how citizens can start a petition to overturn City Council Land Use special permits. The Newtonville Area Council is a co-sponsor for this event.

Dana D'Agostino provided updates on Newtonville Village Day. She informed us that there will be two (2) sound stages for Village Day. One will be on Walnut Street and the other will be on Austin Street. There will be local musicians performing on both stages. She also said that Maura Harrington is getting sponsors for the event. So far, she has received sponsorship commitments from Village Bank and Cabot's Ice Cream. There were complaints last year that some booths were double-stacked on Walnut Street, which resulted in a lack of exposure for certain booths. She said she will try not to let this happen again. Brewers Coalition will have a beer garden set-up on the street. LeDu Thai will have booth to serve food, and Deep Pasqueles will have a food truck. The Newtonville Area Council will have two tents set-up like last year. The train rides will once again be available this year. There will be a bouncy house for kids, a cake similar to the one from last year, and free T-Shirts. Jake's Falafel will also have a booth set-up for Village Day. Dana also said that she trying to obtain 1-2 artist who will draw caricatures of people.

Peter Bruce provided an update on the City Council debate preparation. He informed us that Marc Kaufman, Marie Jackson of the Upper Falls Area Council, Bob Jampol of the Waban Area Council, and Chris Pitts of the Waban Area Council have formed a working group to coordinate 2 different days of debates. The NAC voted 5-0-1 (Tarik Lucas abstaining) that there would be two days for the debates. The first one would consist of the competitive races on the north side of the city. In total there are 5 competitive races in Ward 1-4 (as of 7/9/19). This day for the debates is tentatively scheduled for Sunday 10/20/19 at Newton North High School. The second day for the debates would take place on Sunday 10/27/19 at either the Zervas School or the Angier School in Waban. These would be for the competitive races on the south side of the city. As of 7/9/19, there are 6 competitive races.

The Washington Street Vision Plan was released to the public on Friday July 12th, 2019. Peter Bruce opened the discussion to the NAC and each person shared their thoughts on it. Colleen Minaker felt overwhelmed by the plan. Tarik Lucas said that there should be an abridged version of the 119-page Vision Plan or an executive summary. He was also concerned about that the NAC survey was ignored in the process. And a portion of the Principal Group survey, which said that development should be limited along Washington Street. A member of the public was concerned over the 6+ story zoning district. Dana D'Agostino mentioned that there was no financial information in the vision plan, when there was financial information in the previous drafts. Peter Bruce commented on the vagueness and the process. Peter Harrington mentioned that the Principals Group's previous vision plan in Newcastle, ME was voted down by the residents. He also talked about overdevelopment in an oncoming recession and that the city's Nexxus shuttle bus failed a couple of decades ago for many reasons. Susan Reisler stated that a lot of this development depends on the viability and reliability of the T. Marc Kaufman wondered what the right size is for Washington Street. Other people mentioned that a lame duck vote on the Washington Street Vision Plan could happen. Comments from the public were about the building heights, the approximate 800 vacant apartments in Newton (according to Zillow) at this moment, a lack of financial information in the Vision Plan, building heights, and a health analysis plan is needed for a park over the Pike.

The NAC voted 5-0 that we should solicit question from the public ahead of the September 9th Zoning and Planning committee meeting on the City Council.

The last item that was discussed was that Peter Harrington wanted to talk about the boundaries of Newtonville in the burning issues for the August meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm