

Newtonville Area Council
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2018
Newton City Hall Cafeteria

Members in attendance:

Tarik Lucas
Susan Reisler
Peter Bruce
Dana D'Agostino
Thomas Kraus
Helene Sroat
Maura Harrington
Emily Norton

Public in attendance:

Tim Stone
Ken Roberts

City Staff in attendance:

Barney Heath (Planning Director)
Lily Canan Reynolds (Community Engagement)

The meeting was opened at 7:05 PM.

Gwen Noyes and Mark Duffton from Austin Street Partners(ASP) spoke with the area council to address issues that have been raised at the January Liaison Committee meeting. They presented three options for the design of green space on the plaza. A new option, which they called 2A, was deemed most preferable by a consensus of the NAC. There was interest by NAC members in exploring a more interactive, child engaging water feature, and ASP expressed interest in such an option, although space concerns were raised. NAC recommended green walls, such as vine support, for the baffles that separate the parking lot from the plaza.

ASP stated that their construction management plan and business engagement plans were on the project website. Also discussed were the construction parking plans, tree plantings, parking lot issues and commercial space size reductions resulting from creating of a rear sidewalk.

At 8:15, Barney Heath, Director of Planning for the City, provided an overview of the City's plans for community engagement on the issue of the Washington Street corridor. The Planning Department has docketed an item requesting \$500,000 to fund an external consultant, the Principle Group, of which Russell Preston is a primary, to engage in a roughly year long effort of community engagement, including a week-long charrette, and other meetings. The goal of the process is a local-community-driven vision of the Washington Street Corridor.

There was concern raised by the City staff that the NAC's efforts and the City's efforts could be conflicting or confusing to residents. The NAC members expressed confidence that the NAC efforts could help establish engagement with the public, and would be complementary to the City's processes.

Due to the extended discussion on the ASP and Washington Street items, the administrative items on the agenda, as well as zoning discussions, were postponed until later meetings.