

Newtonville Area Council Minutes for March 18, 2018

Members present: Maura Harrington, Peter Bruce, Helene Sroat, Colleen Minaker, Tom Kraus, Susan Reisler, Dana Dagostino, Tarik Lucas
Marc Kaufman was absent.

Members of the public present: Andrea Steenstrup, Helen Nayar, Peter Harrington, Fred Arnstein, Tim Stone

At 6:30 pm the Cabot School construction management team provided their monthly update.

On March 5, the team will begin to utilize the northern gate of the site for all deliveries. The Parkview St. entrance will be used for drywall, soil and metal framing deliveries. These are needed as the main entrance is blocked until the gymnasium foundation is complete. The Cabot community is aware of these changes. Work completed so far: the library addition foundation and backfill is complete; the gym excavation and backfill is ongoing; the foundation is in progress and steel construction will begin early April. Site cameras are operational. Underground MEP coordination is ongoing and will be complete early April. Soil testing for compaction is underway. Interior masonry will begin in March.

At 7:00 pm. NAC president Maura Harrington opened the NAC meeting. the Feb.8, 2018 minutes were read and approved by council members.

At 7:10 pm. Tim Stone and Tom Kraus spoke about the Babson College student Walnut St. project. Their strategic business analysis of Newtonville is underway. The students participated with NAC members and conducted a public charrette on Feb. 15, 2017. A report will be compiled next month by NAC members. The students assisted several NAC members who acted as facilitators for each of 6 groups. The students recorded the discussion points of the groups which were made up of 12-15 members of residents from city wards. The 6 discussion topics were: housing, business mix, physical impact, community benefits, community impact and transportation. After the charrette results are tabulated the students will work with the charrette sub committee to design a public survey. This will be distributed throughout the wards in order to discover more information about the public response to the major housing development changes planned for Washington St. between West Newton and Newton Corner.

A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed to between the NAC and Babson College. A copy is included with the Feb. minutes. Tim Stone said that no budget and no costs are anticipated.

At 8:00 pm. Maura Harrington suggested that council members should set the date of March 21, 2017 for a special meeting to establish an outline and questions for the charrette survey. The members agreed to March 21, at 7:00 pm in the city hall cafeteria.

Several people discussed the purpose and design of the survey. Peter Harrington complimented the NAC on the success of the charrette which he thought set a very good standard for community engagement. He believes the survey is an important follow up in this outreach process. He recommends it be sent to developer Bob Korff as well as Barney Heath director of city planning. This would be useful to obtain more complete public input. Peter suggested the survey ought to use easy to understand and clear language with no more than 40 questions/answers. Andrea Steenstrup suggested there be a balance of questions aimed at both sides of the housing development issue. Several NAC members recommended that some of the questions ought to be framed with contextual information.

Helen Nayar asked about a possible timeline for the survey to be completed and sent out. Maura and Tim thought the students could code it. Tom Kraus thought all the questions ought to be kept secret until the survey questions are complete. Several council members agreed. However, public input during this process is encouraged. Tom believes that the survey questions ought to be unbiased.

At 8:30 pm. Susan Reisler suggested she should write a rebuttal letter to be sent to the Tab and the Newton City Council. She believes that a announcement in the Tab from the Mayor's office was in error

regarding the Feb. 15 charrette. Several area council members offered rebuttal suggestions. Susan will write a letter and when approved by council members it will be sent out.

At 8:45 pm. Maura Harrington rescheduled several of the March agenda items for the April 12, meeting i.e. the NAC facebook page, the NAC governance rules discussion and a Korff development update.

At 9:00pm. Maura discussed the NAC website and formation of a new e-mail list. She said there are 60 letters on the website which need to be read and resolved. Someone ought to manage the site. Secretary Colleen Minaker will work with Tarik Lucas in the future to provide some management of the site.

Maura suggested that a new e-mail list be formed based on the list of names from Beautiful Newtonville list that has been managed by Tim Stone since before the Area Council was formed. Tom Kraus suggested the current people on Tim's list ought to be informed so that they can decide to opt out if necessary. Tom and Maura will work together in the future to form a new updated e-mail list.

At 9:15 pm. President Harrington adjourned the meeting. April 12, 2017 is the date set for the next monthly meeting at 7:00 pm, in the city hall cafeteria. Cabot school update will be before the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Colleen Minaker