

Newton Upper Falls Area Council – Minutes

DATE: December 17, 2020

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Zoom meeting

Meeting called to order: 7:04 pm

Members in Attendance:

Anil Adyanthaya (President)

Jeff Riklin (Vice President)

Susan Huffman (Treasurer)

Patty Connolly (Secretary)

Kathaleen Brearley

Marie Jackson

Jay Werb

Carol Stapleton, Newton Parks and Recreation Manager

Bill Humphrey, Newton City Council

Deb Crossley, Newton City Council

Nevena Pilipović-Wengler, Community Engagement Planner, City of Newton

Public attendees:

Kim Hokanson

Allison Park

Betsy Hewitt

A. Approval of the minutes

Jeff Riklin motioned to accept the November NUF Meeting minutes, Susan Huffman second the motion. Approved unanimously (6-0)

B. Treasurers report

Susan Huffman, Treasurer presented recent report

Grand total – \$4800

Most funds are provided by the CDC.

C. Zoning Redesign - Nevena Pilipović-Wengler, Community Engagement Planner, City of Newton

- Nevena has presented the proposed Zoning changes to all the Newton Area Councils. (Waban Area Council presentation pending)
- Nevena has been on the job 2 1/2 months.
- Zoning redesign project is about the way we regulate where things are built and the shapes of the buildings.
- It will be a multi-year effort to rewrite the zoning code.
- Zoning has not been updated since the 1950's.

- 2007 Comprehensive plan of Newton indicated the need to make zoning redesign to meet goals.
- Zoning redesign community engagement has occurred over the past year and a half.
- The month of December is the “where are we now” phase.
- There was 500 attendees at the community engagement event on Dec 2nd and Dec 3rd there were sessions held.
- Gather a more comprehensive strategy for community engagement.
- Zoom recordings are available on the Zoning redesign web site:
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/plans-policies-strategies/zoning-redesign>
- Goal is to communicate facts not fiction that could be spread.
- Feedback helps with creating a FAQ that can be posted to the City web site.

There was discussion if it would be beneficial to have a zoning reform meeting specifically for the Newton Upper Falls neighborhood, considering the characteristics of the village and there is a historic district. There was agreement that it would be beneficial and welcome. Feedback from previous meetings support this forum and have theme based presentations.

Agreement that having a specific meeting outside of the regular Newton Upper Falls Area council would be preferable. Nevena will be in touch to facilitate scheduling meeting at an appropriate time.

Garage Ordinance

There will be a public hearing on the proposed ordinance on Jan. 25th.

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/plans-policies-strategies/garage-ordinance>

The Zoning and Planning Committee will hold a public hearing on the proposed Garage Ordinance on January 25. Due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, this meeting will be virtual and can be attended by desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone by visiting the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85295431010>. The meeting can also be accessed by telephone by dialing 1-646-558-8656 and entering the Meeting ID: 852 9543 1010

D. Multi-Area Council Sponsorship of Ward 1 & 2 City Council Special Election Debate

This will be a virtual event with representatives from each Neighborhood Area Council.

- Virtual event
- Identify moderator
- Draft questions
- Advertise the event
- This is city wide special election
- Proposed election date – March 16.
- Mail-in voting and in person will be available
- Candidates will have until January 26th to turn in papers.
- Mid-February event is the tentative proposed time frame.
- This would be in addition to the Newton League of Women voters debate

Discussion among councilors about avoiding participating in a biased debate. Suggestion to appoint a neutral moderator and have the questions written by the moderator, or at least a percentage. Jay Werb

will contact Rena Getz to convey the NUF Area council would be supportive of a debate if efforts were made to avoid bias and had a neutral moderator.

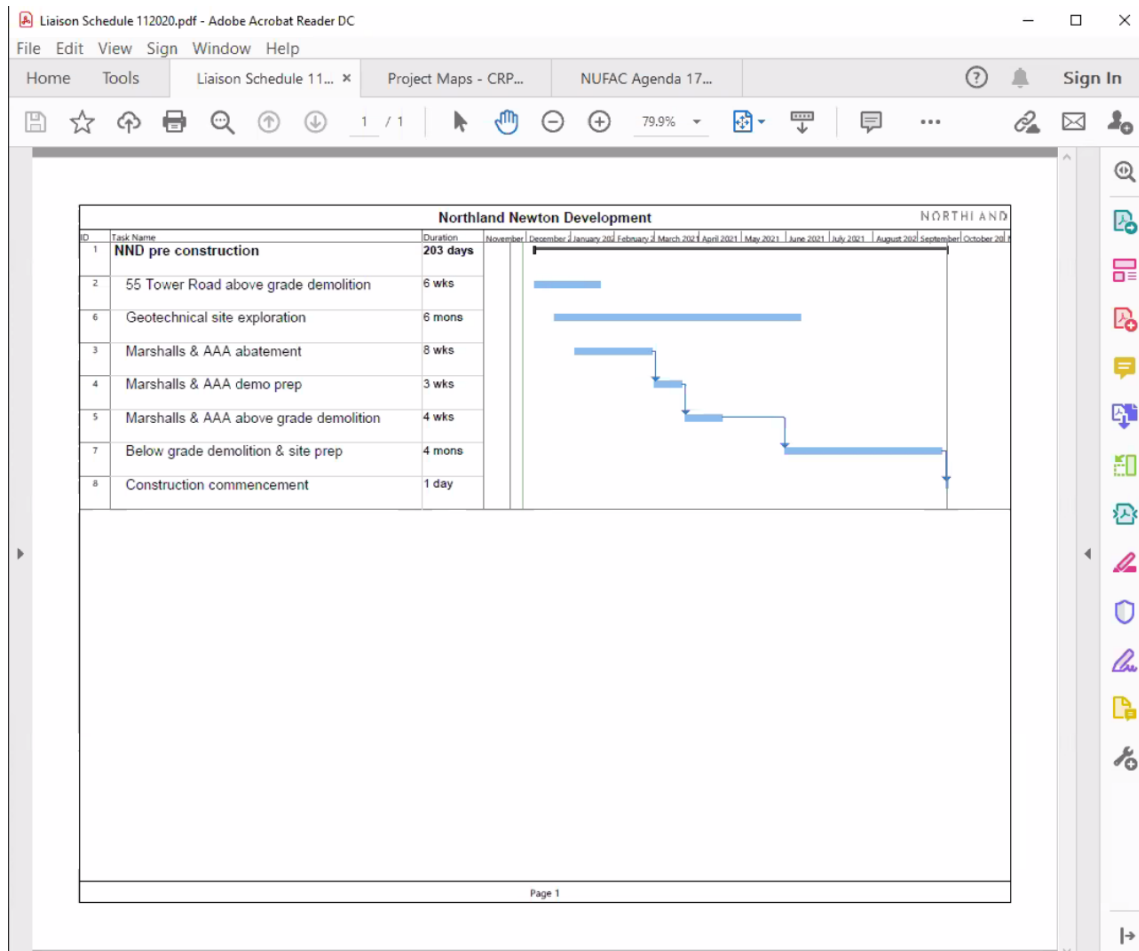
E. Northland Update (Area Councilor Jay Werb)

- Liaison Committee status, and UF Council role prior to formation.
- Northland schedule (see chart, attached).
- Possible Oak Street impacts in 2021

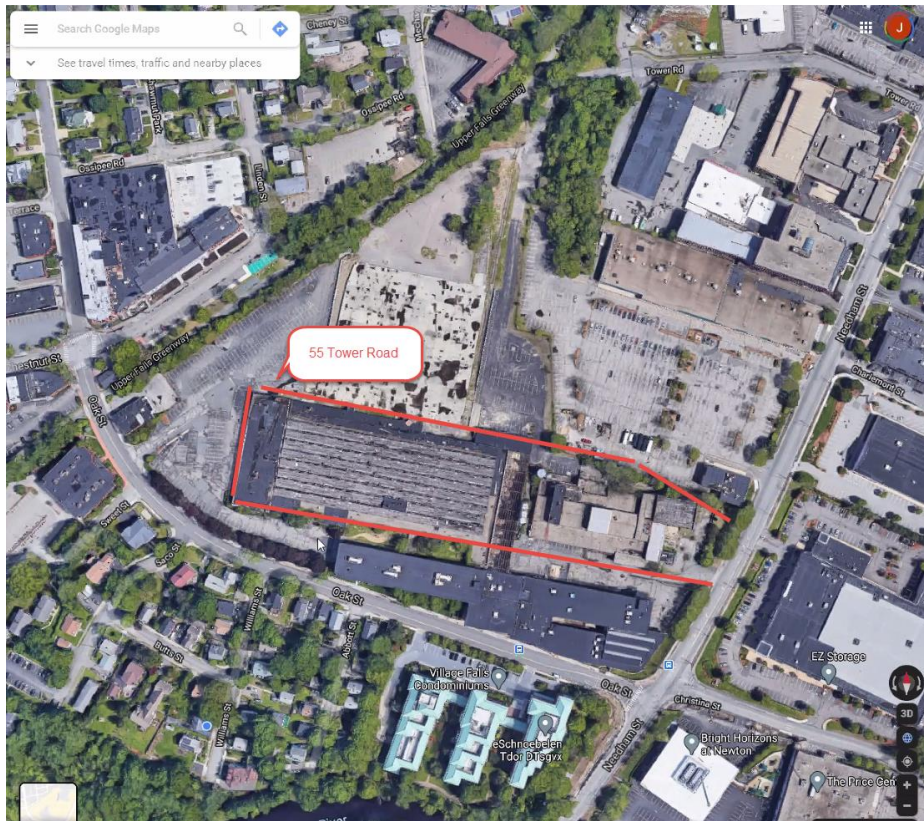
Jay Werb was invited and attended a meeting with Northland. Jay asked if it was a liaison committee meeting and if open meeting laws were applicable. Response was that the Liaison committee meetings will not start until June 2021.

Jay proposed Inviting Northland in January/ February and then again in April to provide updates to the NUF Area council and community outside of the Liaison Committee meetings.

Northland Schedule:



Task: 55 Tower Road above grade demolition



Task: Below grade site demolition and site prep. Site will have a huge hole.

Impact to Oak Street - Disruption at some point to place the electrical underground.



Liaison Committee is complete with the addition of the Jeff Aliber, from the Village Falls Condominium Complex.

Update from Councilor Humphrey:

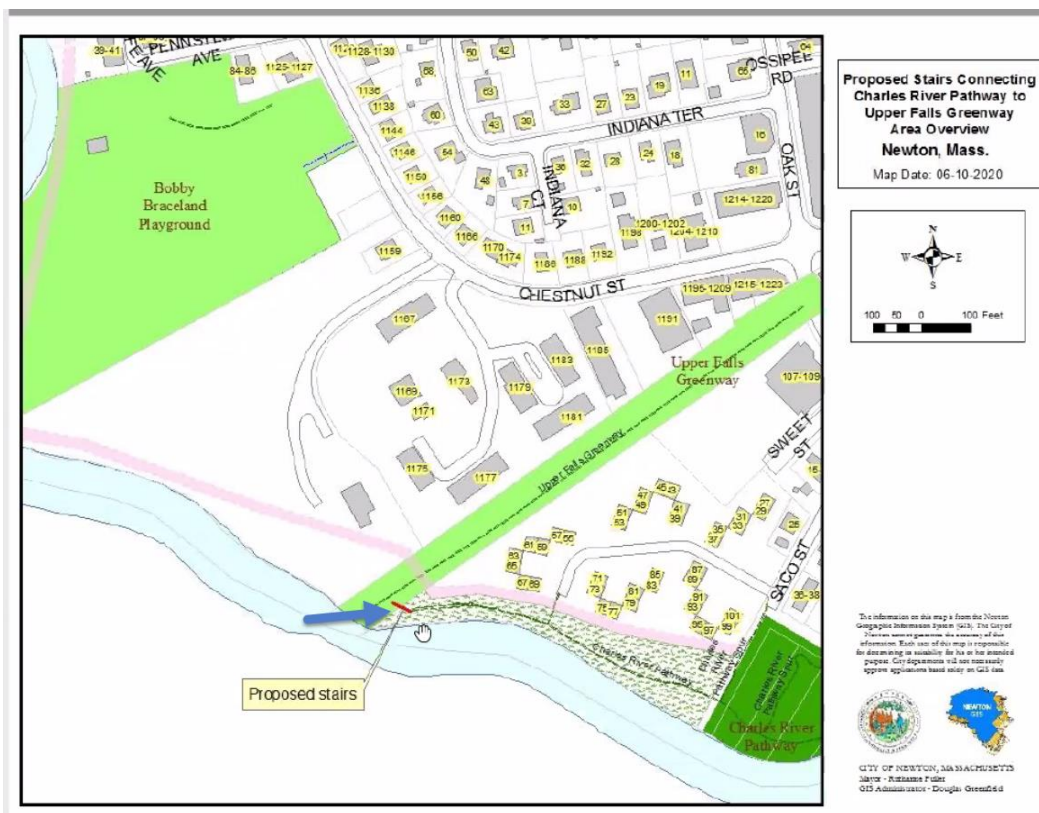
This hasn't been voted on yet but has finally appeared on the City Council agenda: Appointment of Jeff Aliber to the Northland Construction Liaison Committee
PRESIDENT ALBRIGHT appointing JEFF ALIBER, 173 Oak Street, as a neighborhood representative, to the Neighborhood Liaison Committee as established in Condition 40 of Special Permit 426-18 granted on December 2, 2019 to Northland Investment Corporation

F. Proposed Stairs Connecting Charles River Pathway to Upper Falls Greenway

Jay Werb provided an update. The stairs are coming in, the contractor has been selected and funds have been allocated. Box steps with railings will be installed

The pathway connect to an easement and then to the Charles River Pathway.

Jay said Jennifer Steele made this happen and to send her a Christmas Card.



Next phase would be a connection to Bobby Braceland Park.

G. Update on proposal from the Friends of Hemlock Gorge to improve access to Hemlock Gorge by developing crosswalks at the intersection of Route 9, Quinobequin Road, and Ellis Street.

Representative Ruth Balser had a follow-up meeting. Councilor Humphrey and Anil attended the meeting.

Summary: Safety of crossing Ellis over to Quinobequin is a concern.

The area is cross controlled by Mass DOT, DCR and a section the City of Newton controls. It was a positive meeting and the focus will be increasing safety for pedestrians and traffic. It will be a few months before we get an update for a few months.

There are some challenges with installing ADA crosswalks and narrow sidewalks with utility poles.

H. Update on Upper Falls Greenway Parking Meters/Pocket Park

Jason Sobel, Director of public works would like to meet with NUF Area Council in January and has asked for an hour of time. Please think of any questions and or ideas for the meeting.

I. Update on Brian Yates Memorial Plaque

- The most recent rendition of the plaque pleased Brian's family.
- \$2500 dollar deposit has been provided by the NUF CDC.
- Tentative timeline for completion is February.

J. 959 Chestnut Street (Jeff Riklin)

Front structure building was intentionally neglected and allowed to collapse.

Permission was given to frame building with the exact measurements as the collapsed building. Including the height and window size.

The Developer has not done what was agreed to do. Last Thursday (December 10th) the Newton Upper Falls Historic Commission had an emergency meeting to address violations. (Front structure height, more foundation exposed on the rear building, basement windows installed-not approved, left hand wall of the garage within set back.

The violations were noted, voted by Historic sent to ISD inspectional services department. Currently waiting for Commissioner Lojek to review them and to take some action against the developer. In addition to have ISD hire a surveyor.

ISD has in the past required the developer to take the structure down and rebuild.

City Council could sign off on retroactive changes. However, this appears to be pretty egregious and less likely to approve.

Setback for existing lot is 7.5 ft. and for new lots 10.5 ft.

Stop work order should be coming for the property.

13-19 Winter Street

New developer has bought the property. Approached the NUF Historic Committee. Initial request by developer to demolish. The request was denied. There has been other successful projects of restoration.

K. Public Comment/Questions

Proposed New Year's event in works. Jerry Reilly and Jay Werb met with Dunn-Gaherin's and Better Life Food to provide meals for order on New Year's Eve.

- L. **Adjourn** -Jeff Riklin motioned to adjourn, Susan Huffman 2nd, approved unanimously.
8 :34 pm. Next Meeting January 21, 2020 at 7:00 pm. Link to Zoom meeting will be provided in the next meeting agenda.