



**City of Newton, Youth Commission
October 13, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.**

Attendance/Introductions:

Spencer Solcoff, Arman Tendulkar, Zack Gusenoff, Nolan Anthony, Shivani Gulati, Allie Guo, Audrey Wei, Preethika Vemula, Nicole Tarasenko, Ava Freeman, Rhiannon Esposito, Rachel Alpert-Wisnia, Esther Zhang, Mia Chu, Leo Lin, Shiv Sawhney, Ethan Situ, Ethan Dhadly, Jessie Traxler, Tia Joseph, Lucy Ponce, Meghan Murtagh, Kathy Shields, Michelle Menken, Lily Siegelman, Jackson Tarbox, Kassra Ehsan, Claudia Wu, Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler.

Meeting called to order at 6:38 p.m., followed by brief introductions.

Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler, City of Newton Planning Department:

- Nevena introduced the term zoning and asked members to assist with the definition. It was shared that zoning is a set of laws that determine what can be built where within a community, determines how land is used, including built and not built spaces.
- It was shared that the zoning redesign efforts in Newton is an effort to update the zoning ordinance that has not been updated since the 1950's.
- The Planning Department engaged with the Newton community for 4 months with focus groups, a survey and through Vision Kits with participation from approximately 1500 community members.
- Nevena asked two members of the Youth Commission to share with the group the YC involvement in the engagement efforts with youth within Newton.
- Engagement effort findings can be found here: newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc
- Nevena named a few themes:
 - More intergeneration access to village centers
 - Affordable housing/rent for young people post college
 - Community spaces that do not require the purchase of goods/service from a business to sit/visit
 - Climate change
- Currently the Planning Department is reviewing qualitative data with a presentation of findings scheduled for October 25, followed by a public info session on November 15. Information for both meetings can be found by clicking here: newtonma.gov/zoningredesign/vc

Other Business:

- Introduction to "Roberts Rules of Order."
- Review of the following open meeting terms:
 - Quorum
 - Voting
 - Motion
- The Youth Commission currently has 4 Commissioners, with 5 recommendations waiting for City Council approval. The Commission will not be able to conduct formal business until the approval is made, however the group will continue to meet for brainstorming and community building.
- Brainstorm activity:
 - Those in attendance were broken into 3 groups and were asked to discuss the following questions for 20 minutes:
 - What initiatives/issues/concerns do you see the Youth Commission tackling this year?
 - What is happening in your community and your school that you would like to see the Youth Commission change?

- Brainstorm special events, workshops, community work that the Youth Commission should/could take on?
- Each group then took 5-7 minutes to share out their group discussion. Groups were asked to highlight any common themes for further discussion.
- Below is a list of common themes, with a full listing of discussion topics here [YC 10.13 Brainstorm](#):
 - Mental Health
 - Zoning Redesign, continue to engage youth voice
 - Gun Shop, continue to engage youth voice
 - YC getting more involved in the community, as well as be more visible in Newton:
 - T-Shirts
 - Tabling events
 - Inviting young people to come and speak on issues they would like to see Youth Commission work on (platform for youth)
 - Social media
 - Newsletter
 - Connecting with other youth groups in the community to streamline communication, sharing of resources and to work more collaboratively.
 - Having city government officials join YC meetings for Q & A.
 - Have YC representation on other City/School Boards to ensure youth voice has a place at the table, but then also to report back to YC.

Next meeting; Wednesday, November 10 at 6:30 p.m., Newton Free Library.

Meeting closed at 8:00 p.m.