



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Members

Karen Kennedy, Neighborhood
Pamela Burton, Neighborhood
Marvin Fox, Neighborhood
Jay Hirsh, Wells Avenue
Holly Ryan, Ward 8 City Council
Barney Heath, Newton -Planning
Devra Bailin, Newton-Planning
Jeff Cournoyer, UMass at Mt. Ida
Steven Goodwin, UMass at Mt. Ida
Tony Maroulis, UMass at Mt. Ida

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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Neighborhood Council UMass Amherst, Mount Ida Campus

Meeting Summary

Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2020
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Place: UMass Amherst at Mount Ida, Private Dining Room at the Campus Center
Members Present: Holly Ryan, Karen Kennedy, Pamela Burton, Marvin Fox, Jay Hirsh, Jeff Cournoyer, Devra Bailin
Others Present: Kathryn Ellis, Nick Trocki, Tom Hanold, Steven Reynolds

1. UMass Updates

Jeff Cournoyer introduced himself as the new managing director of the UMass Mount Ida Campus. As such, he will serve as the primary point person, providing coverage five days a week. Introductions were made. Jeff offered the following updates: (1) They anticipate a gradual rollout of academic programs. The spring semester will see undergraduate students in the Vet technology program and three masters/graduate programs, including business and analytics, statistics and GIS. (2) The number of resident students will gradually increase as internship programs become established. They expect that the number of students commuting during the day will remain well below what existed under Mount Ida.

Kathryn Ellis explained the plan for experiential learning in 20,000 sq. ft. of coworking space being developed in existing office space. They have presently signed CoachUp, a sports management company, which will hire student interns. They are in discussions with companies regarding leasing existing lab space. They too will be providing internships to students. They will also be bringing professional development courses into the internship experience.

2. Neighborhood Updates

Pam asked about the college providing programs for Newton residents. Per the discussion at our last meeting, Jeff connected with Newton Community Education about providing such programs through NCE on the campus, which would allow for daytime courses for adults. (NEC utilizes mainly school facilities which limits hours of programming.) These discussions are in progress. They also hope to eventually offer faculty speaker series and performance-based events that will be open to the community.

Jeff looks forward to working with Pam to get information out in the newsletters and via email list to interested residents.

Karen expressed concern about construction vehicles parking at the intersection at Dedham and Carlson, making it difficult to safely maneuver. Holly stated that she was advised, as was Devra, that the City's work at the intersection is almost complete. Karen wondered if no parking signs should be posted.

Karen noted that many neighbors and others are very upset about the new UMass red sign. Although she understands that landscaping is planned, it looks very commercial and out of place. Pam suggested perhaps the columns could be brick, the edges rounded, and landscaping be provided on both sides of the sign. Jeff noted that the sign is consistent with UMass Amherst branding, shared a rendering of how the sign will appear when work is complete, but agreed to solicit additional neighborhood feedback and make an assessment about potential tweaks.

Pam asked if Jeff could confirm that there are no current plans to expand the facility physically. Jeff noted that they are in the process of strategizing this long-term asset and being thoughtful in how best it can serve the future needs of the university, the community and the businesses in the Boston eco system they are positioning themselves to serve. He assured everyone that any expansion or development will be a very public process.

Pam asked about whether the university has given any thought about rehabbing the woods—getting rid of dead trees and shrubs, removing invasive species, and replanting native vegetation. Steve Reynolds, UMass Amherst Mount Ida Campus Director, noted that, although their arborist program may be surveying the woods, they do not have plans beyond that at present. Holly noted that she is pressing Councilors from other wards to get an appreciation of the woods in the area.

Pam asked about the plans for Nahanton Street which have been rumored. Devra noted that the area is under review for possible improvements. Holly noted the need for smart lights to better deal with increased traffic.

3. City Updates

An update was requested with respect to providing shuttle service to the area. Devra explained that the City applied for one grant months ago to assist with the cost of a shuttle (no word back on it) and recently applied for a second one right before the holidays. UMass, Wells owners, and the JCC have expressed interest in participating in a shuttle to Newton Highlands, Newton Center and/or the commuter rail. Holly explained that she has pushed hard for community use of a shuttle, as there is limited mass transit coverage for the area. She noted the difficulties of getting out onto Nahanton and Carlson from the neighborhood due to traffic volumes.

Pam mentioned the construction expected at the Mass Pike and the impacts on traffic. She expressed the need for shuttles as a possible solution to some of the traffic. It was discussed that the Mass Pike should create express lanes for shuttles, busses and shared rides.

4. Next Meeting Date

It was discussed that the next meeting should be consistent with prior practice of quarterly meetings. We will target late March/early April. Devra will coordinate with UMass for an available date and get back to the Council.