

Union Square Neighborhood Council - Meeting August 30, 2018

Attendance

USNC Voting Members:

Ben Baldwin, Bill Cavellini, Ann Camara, Pennie Taylor, Rachel Weil,
Mike Firestone, Ganesh Uprety

-

Neighborhood Resident Members: 4 total

Co-Facilitators: Rachel Weil, Bill Cavellini

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Bill chaired the meeting and led off introductions
2. Approval of 8/15/18 minutes
 - a. Postponed until quorum achieved
 - b. Pennie
 - i. Mike
 - ii. Vote 7 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain
3. Public Comment
 - a. Minutes from last meeting on Bow St. suggested reaching out to other groups. Member of Somerville YIMBY. How can I get involved?
 - i. We'd like to work with the developer but want to get buy in from abutters and other local groups. Part of the idea is dealing with USNC's own capacity and having someone to champion the project. Aaron Weber got looped in via email.
 - b. Climate Coalition of Somerville member- I want to push for net zero to one up the passive house.
 - i. Most tension about the development was parking and car related
 - c. Next step was for (possibly) Erik Neu to call another meeting for community members and abutters to make their case
 - d. Envi remediation is important. Erik had discussed additional checks above and beyond. YIMBY doesn't take a strong stance on parking and traffic but general feeling that more parking spots for cars will lead to more traffic.
4. BEC Report & Possible decision in response to D2 design & Planning Board assignments
 - a. Postponed until a BEC member arrives
5. Report on progress of negotiations for a CBA
 - a. Mike Firestone- Some positive meetings. Some concerns that we weren't getting any initial commitments after a suggestion that US2 would wait to put anything forward until all topics are discussed. Negotiations Committee disagreed.
 - b. Affordable housing- discussed nature of commitments on D2 block. Raised our level of understanding about what is planned for the project. More housing to be discussed next week.
 - c. 450 rental units, 90 affordable units, 15% be 3 bedroom units. The market rate are studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom. Whole project has 998 units
 - d. Joint statement released in Somerville Journal today

- e. Are there any general updates from US2?
 - i. Residential tower- there are a number of large investors in the project. The ownership group intends to be the long-term owners of the tower.
 - ii. US2 will internally subsidize the affordable units, not relying on state or federal subsidy.
 - 1. What laws are they beholden to? Can we keep this open regardless of immigration status? Can we now push for lower
 - 2. We are considering pushing for preference for people already in Union Square
 - iii. Affordable units will be built in the first phase- otherwise displacement is not really dealt with. Phase 2 has no residential. Second residential tower will be built in Phase 3. Goodyear Tire building won't be redeveloped until Phase 3.
 - iv. US2 will administer its own affordable housing. Rental tenants will have to income qualify and then they will pay rent like anyone else. There are restrictions on rent increases.
- 6. Membership Plan discussion and decision, as required in bylaws
 - a. Bill Cavellini- USNC is supposed to, within 6 months of election, (bylaws 3.3.7), find persons and implement a plan to recruit a diverse membership. Supposed to seek public input on this plan. I propose we do 3 kinds of outreach-
 - i. Make an outreach to 145 signed up members- possibly a Tiny Letter focused on getting people more active
 - ii. 700 election voters- reach out the best we can and have them fill out membership forms
 - iii. We should go to Head Start, Welcome Project, First Source, Homeless Coalition and Food Pantry, other food pantries, Catholic Charities, women's shelter, council on aging, Properzi Manor.
 - iv. Ann Camara- In preparation for the CBA summits, we reached out to many of these people
 - v. Mike Firestone- The idea of what it means to be engaged shouldn't be defined by regularly coming to meetings. Success means finding ways to engage in activities and provide activities for civic engagement in this neighborhood. Fall is an opportunity about ways to do something.
 - 1. If bar for engagement is coming to meetings we must have fewer meetings.
 - 2. Resident member- set up a table at the farmers market or Fluff festival
 - vi. Pennie- The bulk of work should be happening outside of meetings. Meetings should be for check ins.
 - 1. Initially, membership concerns were around local business representatives.
 - 2. Outreach and Communications Committee has not been meeting over the summer. We should do a big outreach for approval of the CBA.
 - 3. More informal opportunities to catch up. This group works in a pretty formal way
 - vii. If you have meetings more often, it's easier to stick with the

- viii. thread. If you're trying to accomplish a lot you've got to meet a lot. Pennie- need to set realistic goals for what broad participation looks like.
- ix. Ben Baldwin will get an Outreach and Communications Committee meeting scheduled.
 1. Mike Firestone- discuss frequency of meetings as a factor in broad engagement. We have to prepare for an election, and should clarify meeting frequency for potential candidates.

7. Bylaws Committee report

- a. Bill Cavellini- Erik Neu found a chart that takes items out of our current interim bylaws for various reasons. Some of them are just typos. Others require much more in depth discussion. Some aren't even problematic, they are minority positions that were held during the creation of the interim bylaws: eg composition of the board and voting. A group of people wanted all 15 (or 10) to be at large spots. This is going to have to be hammered out again. Bylaws Committee
 - i. I'd like to see us agree, tonight, to the process proposed by the BEC:
 - ii. **Suggested Deadlines (Goals):**
 - iii. Friday, September 14: Soft Deadline for community to send comments or feedback on the bylaws to USNC ByLaws Committee
 - iv. Week of October 1: Present Draft of Permanent USNC Bylaws
 - v. Week of October 15: USNC Board to vote on presenting new USNC Bylaws to have a membership vote for ratification
 - vi. Week of October 29: Membership vote on USNC Permanent Bylaw Ratification
 - vii. Looser deadline suggestions (not discussed at the meeting tonight, but that I'm proposing now):
 - viii. Candidates for USNC Board declare by mid-November.
 - ix. Election early to mid-December.
- b. Mike Firestone- Bylaws committee could put out a draft of proposed new permanent bylaws and allow for community members to comment on the draft.
 - i. Bill- Committee will bring draft bylaws to the board, once it incorporates public comments
 - ii. Pennie- I think people will respond better to a concrete draft.
 - iii. Mike- We can issue a draft that is essentially the interim bylaws
 1. Bill- We can do that, plus a list of existing comments/suggested changes.
 2. Pennie- Proposing changes rather than presenting issues may get us better responses
 3. Bill- I will take these comments into consideration, bring to Bylaws Committee. Are we going to meet next week? If not, the Bylaws Committee will have to decide on process.
 4. Pennie- Does board or council decide on final bylaws?
 - a. No- requires 2/3 approval
 - iv. Bill- Desire of Bylaws Committee to amend a part of the bylaws at the next meeting: 3.3.9 and separating bylaws approval from board election. If we don't change this before updating the bylaws

we will be in violation of the interim bylaws.

- v. Bill- We need to amend interim bylaws to correct an inconsistency in 3.3.9, which says that when we enter election season and permanent bylaw approval, we must do that on the same day. Problem because we would be electing board under old bylaws configuration.

1. Put out that the board is going to discuss and vote on this bylaws amendment at our next meeting in 2 weeks and circulate the proposed change.
2. Interim bylaws must be amended before the election
3. Vote: 8 yes, 0 no

8. Public comment

9. Executive Session - to discuss strategy and tactics for further negotiations