

USNC Meeting
February 20, 2019

1. Welcome and introductions, including newly-elected Board members

2. Public Comment:

Joe Beckmann registers concerns about disappearing businesses; the old post office has no culture for the community, just holds a business now. There has been no discussion of zoning across the street from Bow Market (meeting 2/26 at Public Safety). He wants a report on the on status of negotiations with US2, and feels that there's a need for transparency and reporting, and that a report on plans is overdue.

Ben Bradlow:

Gave a direct response to Joe's comment about Negotiating Committee reports; he wants to schedule a public meeting to make the report being requested.

Minutes from 2/6 approved
6 Yes, 2 Abstentions

3. Election of Officers and Decision on regular meeting time of the Board

Andy Greenspon feels uncomfortable with the idea of a small board electing officers

Ben Bradlow doesn't feel strongly about this problem, but wants current officers to continue until new officers are elected

Jacob Kramer offers that officers should let others know what responsibilities the positions entail

We may want to have online voting for the officer positions, with opening and closing of nominations for officer positions.

Meeting scheduling discussion:

Bill Cavellini to follow up with **Johny Vens Vital**.

Andy offers alternating Wednesdays and Tuesdays for USNC meetings.

Pennie Taylor offers 1st Tuesday / third Wednesday for a meeting rhythm.

Jacob proposes a model where nominations open now, and close 48 hours before the next meeting (7pm March 3rd) with rank choice votes registered with the current interim co-chairs.
This motion was approved unanimously.

Pennie moves that the next meeting be on Tuesday March 5th at 7pm.
Motion approved.

4. Report on City Council Finance Committee meeting on Opportunity Zones and Royal Hospitality Services workers call for support to stay in Somerville.

Bill Cav reports:

60 workers from Royal Hospitality were present in the chambers. Translation was provided by a Union officer, and a description of the arrangement the City has with Royal Hospitality. The city reports: RH rent the land and the building from another party.

The City has an agreement with RH that the laundry was granted a special permit which expires in 2022 that includes an option to extend the permit twice.

The implication of this agreement is that Royal has a lease until 2024 if it chooses to exercise its available options, and it has the ability to expand during the period covered by the permit.

The City would make every effort to keep the laundry in Somerville.

Ben Bradlow: Opportunity Zones

Final regulations governing opportunity zones have not been released. The sense that Director of Economic Development for the City, Tom Galligani, gives is that investors are excited, but others are unclear about what benefit opportunity zones might afford for other stakeholders in areas so designated. Another dimension of the matter is that there is a meeting we are asked to send a representative to, with SCC, the City, and some city councillors to consider how the designation of certain areas as being opportunity zones might impact Union Square. We are being asked to send a representative to this meeting.

Ben Bradlow volunteers to attend the meeting to represent USNC.

5. Built Environment Committee report

Discussion of meetings with mayor postponed to next USNC meeting.

6. Extension of DEIR deadline until March 1st and strategy for a more complete response

The Built Environment Committee met on Monday and discussed the MEPA report. Andy has sent a spreadsheet about who is commenting on what parts. Wig recommends reading the first chapter and picking a chapter to focus on. Paola is sending a letter. Steve Kaiser. Rachel is working on the greenhouse gas chapter. We should point out the things they ignored.

Does the Board want to submit something on behalf of the USNC? Should we send a summary of other letters?

Ben Bradlow feels it is important that the Council send a letter, and that the BEC should prepare a draft. **Bill Cav** seconds the motion and says that organizational responses are important.

Public pressure is needed to get US2 to either commit or not commit to the alternative designs proposed by Tim Talun and others.

Discussion of timeline for letter writing.

Andy says that if letter drafts are to him by Sunday morning, he can synthesize comments into a single letter the Board can sign onto.

Wig Zamore wants to meet this weekend; may get sent out if there is interest.

JJ Sullivan development (mostly studios) is coming under some scrutiny.

Jacob to put out an email to the Board and membership for weighing in on nominations for USNC officer positions.

Ben Bradlow: Names are put on the agenda of a regular city council meeting, then referred to appointments.

7. Public Comment

Joe Beckmann: Other appointments are open as well; to ones that have less power.

Rachel Weil: Michele Apigian and Paola alerted us to a meeting on March 13 about PasiveHaus; try to get US2 to send a representative.

Gary Trujillo: I had a conversation with Paola regarding the meeting sponsored by the City at which US2 was to present its plans for the D2 development that was postponed due to a snow storm. The two of us agreed that lacking information as to how the developer has taken previous comments and criticisms into account, it seems appropriate to request that they at least make available the slides they had planned to use at that presentation so that we can look at them prior to the deadline of submission of comments on the DEIR.

8. Executive Session vote (unanimous): Strategy around negotiations with US2.