

**Waban Area Council
Meeting Minutes
September 9 2021 7:30pm
Held via Zoom**

City Councillors: Andrea Downs, Bill Humphrey.

WAC members: Chris Pitts, Sallee Lipshutz, Bob Jampol, Ronald Marcus, Rena Getz, Megan Meirav, Tom Elkind, Dinah Bodkin

Community: Deborah Weinstein, Larry Epstein, Ted Kuklinski, Bob Burke, Eitan Bloostein, Henry Finch, Alice Ingerson, Diana Bailey, Megan Meirav, Jonathan Yeo, Margie Arons-Baron, Robert Jaffe, Chris George, Elisabeth Horwitt, Phil W, Charles Frankston, Nancy Mansbach, Kirsten Lahey, Kathleen Kraemer, Edward Lahey, Maureen Reilly Meagher, Kathleen Hobson, Amy G, David Shumway Jones, Eve Bould, Joshua Korzenik, Sumukh Tendukkar

Aqueduct Trail Block. Discussion centered on chain link fence installed by Cochoituate Aqueduct abutter on both sides of his/her property such that it was no longer possible to cross that property along the aqueduct. Jonathon Yo, attorney from mayor's office spoke first. He summarized the right of way, easement and private property ownership issues. Stated that a number of city officials had spoken with said owner to try and mitigate the problem caused by high volume of traffic through private property. Reiterated repeatedly that this segment of the aqueduct trail is private property and that the city has always treated it as such. The city has easement rights to maintain the sewer line and the aqueduct that are underground. That easement does not extend to the public's right to transverse the property. Much discussion re historic use of aqueduct trail, enormous popularity of aqueduct trail and the fact that aqueduct trail use has increased enormously in past several years, particularly during the pandemic. Larry Epstein, the individual who erected the fence, introduced himself and gave the reasons for his actions. Namely, huge overuse, invasion of privacy, rudeness of aqueduct users. Much discussion ensued about how to mitigate Larry Epstein's discomfort. Ie, proper trail signage, shrubs or vines to increase his privacy, closing the trail after dark. Ted Kulinski from Newton Conservators spoke and stated that the path has been used for many years with no problems, but that the Conservators would try to work towards a solution. Neighbors and abutters agreed that path use had increased and that the path itself was in poor condition, with exposed roots that create a hazard to walkers and bike riders. There is also an issue of improper dumping along the path. Comments in the chat box included abutters who disagreed with Larry Epstein, as well as those who agreed. Tom Elkind proposed that a small group form to work out some resolution. Henry Finch announced a guided aqueduct walk Sun 10/24 at 2pm. Chris stated that all who wish to participate in subcommittee seeking a resolution email him. Several stated that subcommittee should include individuals who do not necessarily abut the path but who do use it.

Issues from the Community Tom Elkind reiterated his concern re Beacon St in front of Angier School. Due to their being a left turn lane from Beacon St into Angier (traveling east) and from Beacon St onto Waban Ave (traveling west) the westbound lane in front of Angier is very narrow. The city allows teacher parking from Angier to Dorset along the North side of Beacon. The result is that bikers are directed into Beacon Street from Angier to Dorset. This is a dangerous situation that needs to be corrected, either by eliminating the left turn lanes and widening the westbound lane on Beacon to provide a bike lane, or by building a bike path between Beacon and the sidewalk on the north side of Beacon between Angier and Dorset. A number of people are aware of this situation and have expressed concern, ie City Councillor Andrea Downs and Jen Martin, who is organizing safe routes to schools. Several people in the chat box expressed an interest in forming a group to solve the problem. Tom Elkind would be happy to lead the group.

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Debates

the four area council debates to take place on October 16th and 17th for all contested races Marjorie Arons Barron will officiate.

WAC Elections

Sallee authored letter to Mayor Fuller pointing out that since area councils are not included in the municipal election process, there is no mechanism by which area council members can be elected via early voting or absentee ballot. This situation needs to be corrected for the benefit of voters and area councils alike. WAC voted unanimously in favor of sending said letter to Mayor Fuller.

Date for walk through Waban Square as part of Visioning Process set for Sept 18 11am.

Meeting participants entreated to run for WAC, engage with WIS, and/or volunteer their team for the numerous needs in the city.

Respectfully submitted by Dinah Bodkin

September 21, 2021