

Waban Area Council

Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2014

Members in Attendance: Barbara Bower, Joe Corkery, Andreae Downs, Matthew Gardella, Rena Getz, Sallee Lipshutz, Maureen Reilly Meagher, Christopher Pitts, Kathy Winters (members are referred to by their initials).

Aldermen in Attendance: *none*

Other Attendees: Gretchen Friend, Isabelle Albeck, Doris Robinson, Harry Robinson, Bill Renke, Michael Leslie, Monica Grinberg, Groot Gregory, Dianne Khalaj, Jerry Reilly, Marilyn Broyles, and Deena David.

1. **Minutes of February 27, 2014** meeting approved by unanimous vote.
2. **Issues from the Community.**
 - a. Gretchen Friend asked how she could pursue problem of increased parking down Beacon St. to Dorset Rd. She has observed commuters who park their cars there for the day. **AD will do some research on the issue.** JC suggested getting neighbors to petition the traffic council to put in parking restrictions.
 - b. Doris Robinson asked if there is a way to get merchants in the square to do a better job of cleaning up the snow on the sidewalks and ensuring access from parked cars to the sidewalk. AD said it is the responsibility of the businesses to keep it clear and suggested a call to 311 to resolve the issue. It was also suggested to contact business owners directly to ask that they do a better job of snow removal.
3. **Meeting Venue.** Discussed possible handicap accessible sites for WAC meetings. The Windsor Club boardroom is too small to accommodate us. **CP to continue to pursue use of Windsor Club ballroom.** BB reported that the elevator of the Union Church is not currently working properly. There is a \$300 fee to use Zervas. SL has lined up rooms at City Hall through the calendar year, and suggests that we could use Brigham House for meetings in between our regular meetings. Council members agreed. Discussion of improvements necessary to make Waban Library Center handicap accessible. **AD and MRM volunteered to write a letter to the Mayor asking to make Waban Library Center renovations a priority.**
4. **Information from Bill Paille, Newton Director of Transportation.** Bill Paille was unable to attend the meeting as scheduled due to a personal commitment. He submitted an email to respond to questions posed by SL. A copy of the email is attached. The Council discussed the need to have more

information about changes to the traffic configuration around Angier and the square. Bill Paille intends to come to our next meeting.

5. Updates.

- a. **Angier.** Isabelle Albeck reported that the Historical Commission wanted more from the current Angier building to be preserved and the architect has responded by incorporating certain elements from the old building into the design (i.e., signs, fireplace).
- b. **Zervas.** Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council has asked us to support them in asking for possibly having a 16th school, keeping Zervas smaller, and/or delaying the construction of Zervas as planned. NHNAC has drafted a letter to the School Committee (a copy of which is attached) and would like for WAC to join in the letter. SL reported on the Zervas Community meeting that took place Tuesday, March 11. SL also pointed out that we have not heard from Waban residents on the Zervas issue. There was a long discussion of various aspects of the Zervas rebuild and the overall school renovation planning in Newton. Discussed the fact that Upper Falls currently has no community school. Groot Gregory from Newton Highlands Area Council said that members of NHNAC feel there is a need for more community engagement on the issue. Some members of the Council expressed reservations about joining in the letter because they did not feel they had sufficient information to question the School Committee's decisions or to ask for the Zervas process to be slowed down. **Motion** not to take action on the letter and to write a letter to Srdj thanking him for bringing this to our attention but telling him we have decided not to act on it. RG asked that we not vote on that because she wants to support NHNAC on this issue. No vote was taken. **CP and RG agreed to reach out to the Zervas community to find out what they think about the issue.**
- c. **SPN Update.** SL reported that she received email from Ald. Deb Crossley stating:

Aldermen Yates, Rice and I are in receipt of a letter (US mail) from the attorney for the developer, Stephen Buchbinder, that says the developer is considering several development options, that he is interested in getting input from the Waban community and would like to hold a community meeting later this month.

They have also sent a letter to the Newton Historic Commission asking to have an informal conversation with the Commission at their April 24 meeting - after meeting with folks from Waban.

SL also spoke with Alexandra Ananth of the Newton Planning Dept. who told her she had also heard from the developer's attorney, who said the developer was considering three options: (1) development of single family homes by right, (2) multi-unit development through Special Permit, and (3) a multi-unit development through a [friendly] 40B permit. Under all three options, developer plans to demolish the church. (SL's summary of her conversation with Alexandra Ananth is attached).

d. **Riverside.** No update.

6. **Sidewalk Update.** BB met with Alicia Bowman, Pedestrian Advisory Coordinator, to discuss sidewalk improvements and safety. BB was told there are funds from the Angier project available to improve sidewalks, but if we are not organized with a list of improvements needed, that money may not be put to use. **BB will put a small committee together to work on the issue.**
7. **Friends of the Quinobequin.** SL discussed Friends of the Quinobequin. SL and MRM held a preliminary meeting on Thursday March 6 and provided a document summarizing that meeting (a copy of which is attached). SL suggestion for action on this is that on March 27th WAC hold a meeting of Friends of the Quinobequin. There was a discussion about composition of the committee. SL and MRM want it to be a committee of the whole council. KW expressed reservations about the efficiency of that, and suggested that it be set up as a subcommittee with WAC members and residents. Others suggested that WIS might be a better umbrella since it is set up to take donations.
8. **Fundraising.** SL and MM attended the NHNAC meeting where they discussed coordinating our silent auction efforts. Unanimous vote to agree to partner with the NHNAC on a silent auction effort. **SL will try to get someone to agree to chair the effort.**
9. **WAC Functionality.** There was a discussion about ways to shorten the length of monthly WAC meetings. AD suggested we only have items on the agenda that we are ready to address. RG recommended posting documents in advance of the meeting with the expectation that members will read the documents ahead of time and be ready to discuss. Members also suggested one or two people take the lead on issues and report back from time to time, but only if there is something relevant to report or discuss.
10. **WAC Info Session on Zoning Relief for Housing Developments.** KW reported on the progress of the WAC-sponsored informational session on how housing developers get permits, which is scheduled for May 1. Focus

will be on the process for permitting under Ch. 40B (regular and friendly) and Newton's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (Special Permit). Presentation will highlight opportunities for community input under each process. We have lined up panelists from ZBA, Land Use Committee, and City's planning department. We will post and email flyers to community as soon as details are finalized. **KW, MG, MRM and SL to continue to work on the event.**

11. **Next meeting.** April 10, 2014 at City Hall.

Adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Winters

Attachments:

William Paille email

NHNAC letter re Zervas

Sallee Lipshutz's summary of her conversation with Alexandra Ananth

Friends of the Quinobequin summary

From: rrcexec <rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com>
Subject: FW: FW: Waban Area Council Meeting March 13, 2014 Agenda
Date: March 20, 2014 9:26:11 AM EDT
To: 'Kathryn Winters' <winters41@me.com>

From: William Paille [mailto:paillew1019@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 10:14 PM
To: rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com
Subject: Fwd: FW: Waban Area Council Meeting March 13, 2014 Agenda

Sallee,

I apologize but I will not be able to make the meeting on Thursday. My youngest daughter plays basketball for the 6th grade Medway Travel Basketball Team and they are playing in the semi-finals Thursday night. I will do everything possible to be at the next meeting. Until then, I submit the following:

1. Add-a-Lane Construction Timeline: All I know is the project was advertised last fall which does not mean they are ready to break ground. I will ask Larry Cash from MassDOT and let you know before the meeting on Thursday.
2. The traffic counts performed last fall: Relative to the Route 9/I-95 corridor, automatic Turning Movement counts were performed using tubes laid across the roadway along Quinobequin Road at two locations, north of East Quinobequin Road toward the Rte 16 end and just north of the intersection with the Route 9 Access Ramp. In addition, ATR counts were performed on the Rte 9 access ramp, east of Chestnut Street. Manual Turning Movement counts were performed by technicians at the intersection of Quinobequin Road and Radcliff Road to better understand turning movements there.

I recall you questioned why counts were not performed on Chestnut Street. With the primary focus of these counts to serve as a baseline of traffic coming off the ramp to avoid Route 9 traffic and diverting onto Quinobequin Road and not Chestnut Street which is already a primary connection from Rte 9 to Commonwealth Avenue, I did not see the need to know the volume of traffic on Chestnut. Now, you know as well as I, that once construction of the interchange begins, traffic coming down that ramp is likely to increase and the City will have to work with MassDOT to address. However, should there still be a substantial increase in traffic down the ramp after construction is complete, then we will take a closer look.

3. Improvements along Beacon Street near the Angier School: The project includes funding for off-site improvements to improve roadway geometry, replace traffic signals, new sidewalks, new utilities, street lighting, etc along Beacon Street from west of the school site to Woodland and along Collins Road from Beacon Street to Waban Road. Also, improvements may include a new pedestrian activated signal (i.e. HAWK) at the T crosswalk on Beacon and new traffic signals at the Beacon/Woodland intersection. We are also looking at improving the sidewalks/parking along the section of Beacon Street from the bridge to Woodland. The city still needs to complete ground survey and finalize the design which is going to take all summer. When we have a preliminary design we will present to the community.

4. Implementing a temporary fix along the section of Beacon Street from the bridge to Woodland has been a challenge. It may be possible to install a temporary pedestrian activated signal at the T crosswalk...I started to investigate this last fall and ran out of time as winter set in. I will at a minimum repaint the crosswalks at the upper and lower end...the signage is already there...I am also trying to improve the lighting there as well and this summer all of the overhead lights will be upgraded to LED's.

5. Someone also asked about the Waban Library parking lot but I am not involved in that

and do not know the plan or funding. I thought public buildings was involved in that and will ask the Director Josh Morse about it and push as much as I can.

Again, I apologize for not being able to attend. I know these issues are very important to you and so many others. Not sure if you know but my Transportation Engineer, Patrick Baxter, left the city in January so not only have I been working double-duty but also trying to fill the position. The good thing is we found someone and he starts on Monday. His name is Zach Bosch and he is going to be a tremendous help to me and the Transportation Division to address some of these concerns.

Regards,

Bill

----- Forwarded message -----

From: William Paille <wpaille@newtonma.gov>

Date: Tue, Mar 11, 2014 at 8:50 AM

Subject: FW: Waban Area Council Meeting March 13, 2014 Agenda

To: paillew1019@gmail.com

From: rrcexec [mailto:rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com]

Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 6:50 PM

To: wpaille@newtonma.gov

Subject: Waban Area Council Meeting March 13, 2014 Agenda

Hi Bill:

I have attached a copy of the Agenda for the March 13 meeting of the Waban Area Council to take place at 7:30pm in Room 209 of City Hall. We will likely begin our Add-A-Lane discussion at approximately 7:55. As you can see from the Agenda, we would like to have you speak to 1)the current timeline for commencing the Add-A-Lane construction; 2) the traffic counts and the selection of the sites where counts were done; 3) your developing plan for Beacon Street through Newton (presumably with Angier mitigation funds) and 4) the possibility that there could be put in place a temporary "fix" for a visually impaired resident who is having tremendous difficulty negotiating the crossing between the Upper and Lower Squares of Waban on Beacon Street in the business district.

Thank you very much for agreeing to speak to these important Waban issues. We are looking forward to seeing you this Thursday.

Sallee Lipshutz

President, Waban Area Council

rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com

617-965-1379

When responding, please be aware that the Massachusetts Secretary of State has determined that most email is public record and therefore cannot be kept confidential.



Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

Memorandum

Matt Hills
Chair, Newton School Committee
100 Walnut Street
Newton, MA 02460

March 9, 2014

Re: Zervas Elementary School project

Dear Mr. Hills and members of the School Committee:

Members of the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council (NHNAC) have been contacted by a number of residents who are extremely concerned about the preliminary plans for Zervas school reconstruction and expansion. At our recent meeting (March 6, 2014), we heard from current parents and other community members who are opposed to having a new school for approximately 490 students built on the current Zervas site.

In addition, this past fall the NHNAC participated in organizing two candidates' debates where we had an opportunity to hear the concerns from a large number of members of our community. The issue deemed most important by many participants was that of our city's schools. In addition to the broad support that the community has to improving educational standards and the success of our students, many support the goal of having walkable, neighborhood-scaled schools.

As a result, at our March 6 meeting, the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council expressed a strong opinion that there needs to be a broad, inclusive process in determining the needs, scale, and location of infrastructure investments related to the Zervas Elementary School population.

We would like the School Committee to insure that there is full community awareness and substantive input from the citizens of Newton Highlands (and other areas) as part of the process of determining the options for Zervas reconstruction and expansion. The process must be one that respects the shared goals and vision of our community. Unfortunately, many feel that the process thus far has not accomplished this.

We are asking the School Committee to delay implementation of any "final decisions" regarding Zervas School reconstruction until the community has had an adequate opportunity to have its voices heard. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic, M.D.

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic, President
On behalf of the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

In a phone call on March 7 to Alexandra Ananth, City of Newton Planning Department Chief Planner, I verified the information sent to us by Isabelle Albeck in an e-mail about the St. Phillip Neri property

Alexandra stated that Steve Buchbinder was the developer's attorney. The developer was considering one of three ways to develop the property:

1. What could be developed "by right", without zoning relief, which would allow 4 or 5 single family houses.
2. What could be developed by "Special Permit" with a zoning change to the property from single family residential to a different zoning classification (multifamily?). This would allow a prescribed maximum number of units/site area and would allow fairly close zoning control over size and number of units. It would require 15% of the units to be affordable housing.
3. What could be developed by seeking a permit under 40B which would mandate 25% of the units would be affordable.

Alexandra indicated that all three routes of development would require demolition of the Church. She also indicated that the Planning Department was "pushing" for the 2nd option above: the Special Permit with a zoning change. I asked her why the Department wasn't also pushing the 1st option, the 4 or 5 houses that could be built "by right", her answer was that this was such a great location and would fill a need for smaller units for people in Newton. She added that the developer had indicated that he could make money on all three options. She encouraged me to call her before each Area Council meeting for current updates on the progress of the planning process.

FRIENDS OF THE QUINOBEQUIN

Preliminary Meeting:

A meeting was convened by John Rice on Thurs., March 6, 2014 at Newton City Hall in Law Dept. Conference Room to facilitate liaison points between City, State and Council/Friends of the Quinobequin personnel.

Attendees: State Senator Cynthia Creem, Catherine Anderson (Cindy's Legislative Asst.), State Rep. Ruth Balsler, Aaron Goldman (Newton Mayor's Asst.), Ana Gonzalez (Newton Community Engagement), Bill Paille (Newton Dir. Of Transportation), Ald. John Rice, Jennifer Steele (Conservation Commission Staff), Jerry Reilly, Maureen Reilly-Meagher and Sallee Lipshutz

Topic: Parkway and Riverbank along Quinobequin Road:

John explained that the Waban Area Council is forming "Friends of the Quinobequin" and seeking jurisdictional liaison between State and City to redress long-time parkway/riverbank neglect and to build a pathway along the riverbank for community enjoyment.

Rep. Balsler allowed that there is process in motion now for requests for bonding for projects in Newton (like Hammond Pond and Crystal Lake? Chestnut Hill Reservoir?). Request for funds needs to be developed and written very soon, because process won't be open again for 5 years!

Sen. Creem was on board and asked about outreach to the community to gain general community support for this project. Said that request should be a "place-holder", subject to change.

Jennifer Steele was asked to find the DCR proposal rejected by Con Com several years ago and forward to Ruth, Cindy and Jerry. (This has been done)

Marc Welsh, Newton's Tree Warden, has offered to identify trees on Parkway that it would be valuable to protect and save.

WAC is expected to photograph and document the riverbank pathway in its present condition and attempt to put a financial estimate on the project.

WAC is tasked with rapidly garnering solid community approval.