

Waban Area Council

Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2017, 7:30pm

Members in Attendance: Joe Corkery, Sallee Lipshutz, Chris Pitts, Kathy Winters, Maureen Reilly Meagher, Rena Getz, Andreae Downs

City attendees: Deb Crossley

Other attendees: Nanci Butler, Tom Elkind, Kathleen Hobson, Dinah Bodkins

- 1) **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:33 pm**
- 2) **APPROVAL OF MAY 11, 2017 MEETING MINUTES** - JC moves to approve. CP seconds. KW, JC, CP, SL, RG approve. AD abstains.
- 3) **APPROVAL OF JULY 27, 2017 TREASURER'S REPORT** - RG reports no change in balance.
- 4) **BURNING ISSUES:** SL reports that she received an email today from Anabel Cable about the security of the information collected in the surveys. SL reads the email to the community. CP states that this is a serious concern and that SurveyMonkey has been doing this a long time and the city uses them. He notes that no sensitive personal information was collected. They used a one survey to one email approach to ensure the integrity of the surveys. CP says that as the survey's administrator that he would not be sharing the results nor does he have the time or inclination to look at individual results. As stated from the start, survey results will be shared anonymously. Will continue to work with SurveyMonkey to ensure security. KW as the survey administrator is there an option to ensure that you can't see the emails. CP states that the results are displayed in aggregate except if you drill down into the comments. Talked with Joe Mulvey in the city about whether there was an option. Will work with SurveyMonkey to see if they could do something about it. Questions were not so personal that he didn't think that there would be any concerns about that. With respect to the city, there is a bit of the honor system involved. Kathleen Hobson says that somebody else appeared to have responded as her. KW says problem was that the email link was tied to the individual and sharing the email that was sent could

have triggered that experience of it appearing that somebody else had completed your survey. Kathleen says that you need to make sure anybody could take the survey. SL we can only survey the people whose email addresses we have access to. CP we have about 1000 people on the list. Have removed people that didn't have addresses in Waban. CM(?) disturbed that we are relying on the honor system to protect this information. Would be very hesitant to fill out another survey if there is the possibility if that information could be tracked back to the individual. CP next surveys that go out will have this issue addressed. AD data that has already been gathered contains very valuable information about your plans for your house. How secure is that data. What can we do to protect that information? RG city has quite a few surveys that are all stored locally. CP what's the most important thing that we can do going forward? Is it to make sure that they are totally anonymous. Consensus of the room is yes. Also will make sure that they aren't stored elsewhere so that people can't have access to it. KW is the city using exactly the same settings? CP I think so, but not sure. KW are they using one email address to one survey? CP if you can't forward to another person and have it take them twice, then yes. KW it is a little bit different if the city's IT director has this information. That would feel different to people probably. Not sure if there is a way around it. CM there is an issue of trust, why would anybody want to do that given the nature of the questions asked, why? Especially given what people put out there daily. CP there were no leaks of information to be clear. MRM support the concept of doing surveys. Extremely important that we can reach all of these people. Perhaps going forward along with KW's suggestions, if we were to put something out again we should include in more detail on the cover, for instance "do not forward." CP there was a time issue that prevented people from finishing the survey due to the link expiring. SL we were very fortunate to get 300 people to answer. JC we should be able to export the raw data now and anonymize and then delete the original survey. CP the anonymous results of the first survey should be available now. Will work to create an executive summary. MRM can CP provide a report on the answers to this situation next time. CP agrees.

5) UPDATES:

- a) **St. Philip Neri** - RG reports that there will be a public hearing (ZBA meeting) on Aug 9 at 7 PM in the Chamber. Meeting to request a change to the plan for 8 rental units (6 market rate, 2 affordable) to go from rental to ownership. Of note, the church is beginning to come down this week. MRM would appreciate if anybody could speak to how to evaluate what this change would mean. KW the builder sold the property and the new owner wants them to be ownership units instead of rental units. The 2 lots in the back were sold to other developers. CP It's possible that the sale might be contingent on the change. DC can say that we don't have an excess of rental units in the city. This is considered a substantial change because of the conditions of the original permit. Not sure why new owner wants ownership units, perhaps doesn't want to manage rental properties. CM(?) is there some risk that this change will result in them starting completely over. KW if it is denied it's possible. DC this is a specific vote either yes or no. DC if they say no? DC they have to comply but might have to go back to the beginning, but that is a huge investment. The property is worth a certain amount of money because it has its permits already. CP a question was raised whether there was even enough change here, but the conditions made it necessary. RG first determination in the previous meeting that the change in tenure was a substantial change. Kathleen - assume demographic is different, people who want to rent vs. buy. DC people might be eligible for first time homebuyer credit. Unfortunately don't have Newton Housing Partnership anymore that could provide advisory information on this.
- b) **Staples-Craft** - Developer reports that they are preserving the building. Going to be using the house for the preschool and the music school. Going to do very minimal changes to the site. Will be adding some parking and a curb cut on Beacon St to the east side of the property. Will bring interior up to code. SL reports that Suzuki school is looking for support of the community for the use of this building. The reason that this is being discussed now is that there is a purchase & sale in play and want to close on the property by Aug 8th. Basically want to know that they are unlikely to meet roadblocks from the community.
- c) **Waban Historic District** - RG reports that they are working with Doug Greenfield to do a presentation in the fall. Doug is in the process

to make interactive map to get additional information about properties. Creating web pages for Waban that would allow you to get historic information about specific properties. Creating narratives and uploading them to a database that can be pulled from the interactive map. CP have been going to lots of the old history properties in Newton to understand more about them. RG many residents have already done a lot of research on their properties that are in the records of their homestead. SL when filled out WAC visioning survey filled out a lot of information about house. A lot of it was hearsay from former owners. Is there a way that that information can be preserved as part of this effort. SL could we reach out to the list to see if we can use information. RG people can formalize this by putting the information in your property file. You can write a letter to the city of newton or hand carry it and get it into the public domain. DC have a great atlas that was put together that would be willing to share that covers all of newton, but there is another one that is specific to Waban. There was a series of books (walking tours of the villages), the author was named Theresa or something.

d) Waban Common - SL reports that the plan is in negotiation with WIS at the moment to come up with a proposed fiscal agreement. Tom Elkind says that working with WIS is only one of the options for fundraising. May or may not end up using them as the vehicle to collect. Can potentially set up a separate non-profit on that to do fundraising and manage the park. Have not reached a conclusion on this yet. CP as the VP of WIS, at last meeting the WIS unanimously voted to do this project as this is part of the mission of the WIS. Even put in \$4000 to kickstart the project. Know that there is concern that the elevated amount of money puts it into a higher standard of bookkeeping. Know that Monique Byrne who is the attorney involved with WIS has worked with others on related projects. Please don't set up another organization to do that. SL in an ideal world that would be the case, but the world is not ideal. Negotiations are going on. MRM this is an issue of how it would be structured and not who has an interest in this? SL there is a tone that is unpleasant that needs to be fixed. CP this should not be a problem. SL there will be a meeting of the committee tomorrow and will make a recommendation based on all the information at that time. CP I want to be present for that.

- e) **WAC Visioning Community Survey** - CP it is labor intensive to go through the material and pull out an executive summary but will produce those in time. The first things that will go up will be the anonymous results.
- f) **WAC Business Economic Development** - SL states that she and others had been talking with Tim Daly (property manager of the Strong building) about tenants concerns about the building. That came out of it that 1643 Beacon second floor has office space available. Details about the office were shared. MRM when we originally formed WAC we had talked about sharing information about available space in the community. SL at the meeting: Strong Building is maintained by management to keep its exterior consistent with historical view, interiors are less focused on, rents are comparable to Brookline office and retail rents. Management is Preferred Realty, established to manage the Sullivan Trust Portfolio. Daly has been manager of the portfolio since 2014. Building is the jewel of the portfolio and has been in the family for 4 generations. Beneficiaries of trust are of various ages, want to have a variety of tenants that have a positive impact on the community. Willing to consider temporary rent reductions for tenants engaged in substantive projects. Daly queried the tenants to see who would be willing to be contacted and provided a list of 6 tenants. We will try to work with them to perhaps address things like snow removal. Will also try to find out if there is anything that they would like from us. Reports that somebody reported that the new nail salon is very expensive. There is a place that could be available for baked goods, but not a bakery.
- g) **Election Showcases** - SL were going to have the 4 area councils to pay to use the Angier School on Oct 8/22 to host the showcases. In reading the paperwork, discovered that if the event raises to a high enough significance, it could be borne by the school administration. She reached out to school administration and they agreed. So will not have to bear the cost of the space, but will have to bear any refreshment costs. There will be 23 people speaking on Oct 8. MRM had originally been planned to have three area councils in Ward 5 to rotate hosting this, but for the first time we will have all 4 area councils participating. SL looking for people in the community to

submit moderators, format, and question suggestions. Please send to Sallee.

h) Results of Beacon St Meeting re: trees - SL reports that at last meeting talked about the trees to be taken down on Beacon St. Thought if they wrote a letter of objection to the tree warden that they might stop it. Turns out that others had written as well and the letters did stop it, and prompted them to come up with a process for how to decide how to remove trees. Final decision is that only 3 trees will be taken down. Today was the last day to write formally to save those three trees

- 1265 Beacon St - 16' plane tree
- 1275 Beacon - 23' maple
- 1392 Beacon St - 30' pine tree

MRM there are a lot of basic issues that need to be evaluated around street treatment and this was a good opportunity to highlight ADA issues along with desire to have a tree canopy and how tree warden weighs in. Don't know if there is anything that people may be able to add. Know that notices were sent out to abutters. SL tree warden has right to take down any tree that is dead. We are only talking about trees that might survive. DC provides an update of some of the efforts going on related to road work improvements and processes.

6) AREA COUNCILORS JOINT STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHARTER

CHANGES - SL shared a letter that we may want to discuss signing as individuals not as an area council. MRM would prefer that this not be included for discussion and that this not be addressed in the meeting. AD agree that this is something that we should not discuss if it is not to be signed as a council. KW to DC do you ever discuss items that you would sign as individuals. DC not normally except potentially when writing to our state delegation. Administration wrote the letter and people were given the opportunity to sign on, but that wasn't from the city council. AD would appreciate an opportunity to discuss at another time when have had time to read it.

7) AREA COUNCIL ELECTION INFORMATION FOR NOVEMBER 7 - SL
reports that papers are available for pickup on Aug 9 for area council
candidacy. Due on Sept 22 with verified signatures.

8) NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting: SL need to decide when our next meeting is. If we had our
regular meeting it would be two weeks from now. Would like to have the
meeting on either 17th or 24th. JC not available on 24th. MRM not
available on 17th or 24th. CP may not be available on the 17th. CP does
anybody have a problem with the 10th? AD no problem. CP might be a
slight advantage to meet earlier rather than later. KW cannot make the
10th. SL will leave the meeting as is.

9) ADJOURN: JC moves to adjourn. AD seconds.

Next meeting will take place on Aug 10, 2017 at 7:30 PM.

Adjourn. 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Corkery