

# Waban Area Council

## Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2016, 7:30pm

**Members in Attendance:** Sallee Lipshutz, Andreae Downs, Chris Pitts, Maureen Reilly Meagher, Kathy Winters, Pia Bertelli.

**Other attendees:** Nathaniel Lichtin (NHAC), Nancy Greenwald, Sande Young, Jim Treat, Dinah Bodkin, and Betsy Hewitt.

1. Minutes of November 10th meeting approved by unanimous vote.
2. Treasurer's Report approved by unanimous vote. No change to balance - \$1747.53.
3. **St. Philip Neri Update.** Two lots for sale on Short St. Comprehensive permit issues for 8 townhouses on Short St.
4. **Update on Letter to School Committee re Transportation Policy.** TAG had a meeting with two school committee members (Siegel and Goldman) who reported that they are starting to develop pieces for a transportation policy and they reported that the Superintendent is open to developing a policy for arrival and dismissal.
5. **Discussion of city's efforts to reduce the amount of salt used for de-icing.** AD reports that DPW is looking into other alternatives for snow/ice melt.
6. **Proposed Letter re Cold Spring Park Route to Zervas.** AD proposes that WAC send a letter to Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner of Newton Parks & Recreation Dept., supporting maintenance and enhancement of the Life Course Trail in Cold Spring Park prior to opening of the new Zervas School. Zervas Safe Routes to School has identified the paths as a quick and safe way children can access the school. **Unanimous vote in favor of approving the letter as drafted but subject to minor edits by other organizations that may co-sign.**
7. **Staples/Craft Farmhouse.** ZBA invoked the 1.5% safe harbor. The developer is expected to appeal. The Mass Historic Commission consultation process was triggered in October and should be taking place. KW reported that the Planning Dept. and Newton Historic Commission have heard nothing yet about the consultation process. There is opportunity for public comment. SL and KW will continue to work to get information on where the process stands.
8. **Waban Historic District Sub-Committee Update.** Mid to late January Rena will hold a meeting. RG could use some help with the research.
9. **Waban Common Update.** SL reported that plans are on hold because at one of the public meetings many residents raised safety concerns with the southwest corner of the island. Traffic department will look into the safety issue. SL presented four different designs under considerations. SL reported that Alternate C seems to be the preferred

option, but things may change depending on the traffic. CP will put the proposed designs on the website.

**10. WAC Visioning Community Survey.** CP distributed a draft transportation and survey and asked for feedback.

**11. Charter Commission.** Nathaniel Lichtin of NHAC provided an update on the Charter Commission's work on area councils. The CC made a change to clarify that the city council ordinance has to include a minimum size of area council establishment areas. The CC made another change to the language to state that the City Council can determine the "structure" rather than the "membership" of AC's. NL isn't sure what "structure" means in that context. The law department is taking a look at the language. The CC also took up indemnification of AC's. According to the law department, AC's are covered under state law regardless of the charter. CC discussed whether to make AC's "city agencies." That would mean, among other things, that AC's would need mayoral approvals for expenditures. They decided not to make AC's city agencies for that reason.

**12. School Committee Plans for School Rebuilding and Future Overrides Predicted.** Combined meeting of School Committee and City Council took place and there was some indication that there may be an override in 2020. Still very uncertain.

**13. WAC Letter to Mayor and State Reps re Funding a Plan for Undergrounding Wires on Needham St.** The Needham Street reconstruction project is ready to move forward, but there is no plan in place to underground utilities. AD explained that undergrounding utilities will improve pedestrian access and safety and improve overall traffic. There is a concern that anything that slows down the project might kill state funding entirely. After a discussion regarding the need for a plan to underground utilities before work is completed at Needham St., 5-1 approval of the proposed letter (with a few edits removing the first sentence of the penultimate paragraph and revisions to the last paragraph).

Attachments:

CSP Trail Letter

Needham Street Letter