

2019 Annual Report Waban Area Council

Members of Waban Area Council in 2019: Kathryn Winters, President; Rena Getz, Vice President, Dinah Bodkin, Secretary; Isabelle Albeck, Treasurer, Sallee Lipshutz, Bob Jampol, Patrick Maher, Chris Pitts, Joe Corkery.

Communication

A primary goal of the Waban Area Council is to keep Waban residents informed of relevant developments at the state and local levels. Meetings may include presentations by city council members, businessmen, real estate developers and local law enforcement. A website and email list is another mechanism whereby members are kept up to date. WAC policy for email blasts was reviewed and amended at the September 12 meeting. Updated policy was posted on WAC website under Bylaws and Policies.

Zoning Reform

WAC kept residents up to date on ward-by-ward meetings hosted by Newton Planning Department. Residents also kept up to date on Zoning and Planning Committee Meetings where Analytical Buildout of NZO was presented. Joint meeting held between WAC and NHAC Jan 26 at WLC to discuss New Zoning Ordinance in Village Districts.

At April 11 WAC meeting it was announced that the date for the new draft ordinance would be extended until the end of 2020. One reason is that Riverside and Northland Developments are higher priority for Planning and Zoning in 2019.

Charter Reform

Charter Subcommittee of the Planning and Services Department proposed setting up area councils by ordinance, as opposed to the current mechanism whereby the procedure is outlined in the City Charter. It was felt among WAC members that this would give area councils less independence and stability than they currently have. Several WAC members attended P and S meeting March 6 at City Hall. The item was taken off the table by vote of P and S at that meeting.

Riverside Housing Development

Liz Mirabile of Newton Lower Falls Improvement Association (NLFIA) attended WAC February meeting and brought members up to date on actions of NLFIA re proposed development at Riverside station and Hotel Indigo. As of that meeting NLFIA had put its action on hold awaiting the Riverside Visioning Process.

Condominium units at 20 Kinmonth Rd.

First discussed at May 9 meeting. Representatives of developer Northern Lights outlined the plans for the development of a 24-unit condominium which will stand where Waban Health Center (now closed) is located. Issues of common space and Kinmonth's status as a private road were discussed. Northern Lights stated intention to file special permit in September of 2019. At December WAC meeting traffic mitigation and sidewalk improvements proposed by the developers were presented. See WAC website for updates.

Wellesley Office Park (WOP)

Concern expressed re proposal that real estate developer Hanover Wellesley demolish one office building in order to build 350 luxury rental units at Wellesley Office Park. First discussed at September 12th meeting. In a letter to Mayor Fuller and all Ward 5 Councilors President Kathryn Winters expressed concern about the many impacts that such a change at WOP will have on Waban. She also sent a letter to Representative Ruth Balser. Dmitri Gridnev, Staff Director to Representative

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Ruth Balser was present at the November and December WAC meetings. At that point, the proposal was in front of the Wellesley ZBA and Newton residents had virtually no role. It was suggested that representatives of Hanover Wellesley, the residential developer, be invited to a WAC meeting.

Traffic and Transportation Safety

At March 14th WAC meeting Councilor Rice discussed Transportation Department's plan to improve sidewalks and traffic flow on the west side of Allen Ave at Pine Ridge and Plainfield Aves. Discussion of traffic safety at Zervas School followed. Special meeting held in July to discuss repaving of Chestnut St., which is due in the summer of 2021. The meeting was attended by all Ward 5 councilors and Director of Transportation Nicole Freedman. Traffic issues raised by community member at WAC November 14th meeting, following an accident on election night. Councilor Rice: traffic police have spoken at WAC meetings and should be invited again.

Medical and Recreational Marijuana

Union Twist presented their proposed Recreational Marijuana Dispensary at 1158 Beacon St at the June 13th WAC meeting. Meeting was well attended by members of the public. Concerns were expressed about traffic, and the appropriateness of a marijuana shop in a family-oriented neighborhood. Also addressed was Union Twist's relationship to Ascend, a corporation which owns marijuana stores throughout the country. WAC board member Patrick Maher attended a meeting hosted by Union Twist at 1326 Washington St on October 10 (the same night as the October WAC meeting). He reported that the meeting was attended by approximately 60 people and again traffic was the main concern. It was announced at the December 12th meeting that Union Twist will apply for a special permit in January of 2020.

Newton Wellesley Hospital Cogeneration Plant

This matter was first raised at the November WAC meeting. NWH's new power generating facility utilizes cogeneration, whereby generation of heat and power is combined. Two representatives of NWH spoke at the December WAC meeting in order to clarify the permitting and environmental review processes. Members of the community expressed concern about noise and particularly emissions of the new facility. The facility's location in a residential neighborhood and close to an elementary school (Angier) were a cause for concern.

Issues from the Community

NewCAL Bob Jampol kept WAC members up to date on NewCAL developments.

Solar Sites Phase III Carport at Newton Free Library with solar panels discussed at January WAC meeting. Community members present included Alan Noguee, Director of Climate and Energy Policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Friends of Quinobequin DCR announced \$50,000 of state funding secured by Rep Ruth Balser for maintenance and upgrading of river bank area along the

Charles River

Tot Lot Proposal Resident Kate Nyquist attended the April meeting to propose a play structure at junction of Waban Ave and Alban Rd.

Waban Village Day May 18 2019 WAC members staffed a "WAC" table on Waban Village Day, particularly to encourage residents to volunteer for WAC.

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Waban Common Sod laid in June by Eagle Scout Troop 209. Allowed one scout to complete community service requirement for Eagle Scout Badge.

Rte 128 sound barrier. Issue comes up periodically. Sound barrier constructed for Wellesley side of Rte 128, but not Newton side. Residents all express that noise from rte 128 has increased since Add A Lane was completed.

Election and Appointment of WAC 2020-2021 Board. On Election Day 2019, five individuals were on the ballot for a nine member board. An additional member was elected by write in. It was planned that three additional members would be appointed by the six existing members at the January WAC meeting.

Flag at Lincoln Field. At November meeting community member raised objections to flag being flown inappropriately at Lincoln Field. Issue resolved at December WAC meeting.

Candidate Debates WAC partnered with the other three area councils to host candidate debates October 20 and 27.

Respectfully submitted by Dinah Bodkin
January 21, 2019