

**DRAFT**

**WAC Meeting Minutes  
Nov 18 2021 7:30pm  
Held via Zoom**

**WAC Members Present:** Chris Pitts, Rena Getz, Isabelle Albeck, Tom Elkind, Bob Jampol, Megan Meirav, Ronald Marcus, Sallee Lipshutz.

**City Councillors:** Bill Humphrey, Andrea Downs

**Community:** Drake McCabe, Marjorie Arons-Barron, John Mordes, Maureen Reilly Meagher, "J" and "C" "image of Charles River" "blank person"

**Update on Hemlock Gorge:** John Mordes describes meeting today with Ruth Balsler and several execs of DCR. Meeting took place at Hemlock Gorge and at intersection of Rte 9 and Quinobequin Rd. John talked about Stone Building which is oldest or second oldest building on DCR property along Charles River. Very encouraging that three representatives of the DCR were interested not only in structural repairs but in restoring the second floor of the building. The Department of Transportation has completed the extension of the sidewalk in front of the Stone Building from the Route 9 off ramp to the intersection of Quinobequin Road and Ellis Street. There is now a safer way to walk from the parking lot to Stone Building entrance to the Reservation. Also a firm commitment was made by the DCR to upgrade the guard rails along Quinobequin. Details are described on the Friends of Quinobequin website. Also discussed was the impact that residential development at Wellesley Office Park would have. According to Maureen's research developers of Wellesley Office Park want to make the on ramp a two lane access, which will greatly increase the danger to pedestrians. The DCR will be taking that into consideration. Also discussed at the meeting were the ultimate plans for Quinobequin Rd with DCR tending to favor Plan 2. This would make Quinobequin a one way road. The trail in the park would be left as is, and there would be a sidewalk along Quinobequin Rd. Safety issues with Plan 2 were raised and DCR safety liaison promised to get back to representatives of WAC and Friends of Hemlock Gorge who were at the meeting.

**Area Council Elections:** Five people on the ballot received a large number of votes, followed by Sumukh M Tendulkar, Drake McCabe and Bill Bracken. Swearing in takes place in January. Bob Jampol, Ronald Marcus and Tom Elkind are coming off the council. Area Council accomplishments discussed, review of debates and other worthwhile activities of the Council. Process of voting for Area Council members discussed. Sallee described early voting for Area Councils at City Hall that was not done methodically, carefully or legitimately. It was not clear where to go for Area Council elections, nor was it clear that proper records were kept of voter participation in Area Council elections. Sallee suggested bringing in Ruth Balsler and having the area council elections put on the municipal ballots. Chris asked her to draft a letter to the mayor and city clerk. Sallee agreed to draft a letter that the four area councils can use. Isabelle raised issue of maps which make clear what the catchment areas are. Small area across from NWH is part of Waban and WAC ballots were not available at the Lower Falls polls and those residents probably do not know that they are part of Waban. One problem with forming ward and area councils is that the precinct borders are not followed. Rena: would have been helpful to have catchment area map displayed at polling places. Possibly in 2022 pamphlets showing catchment areas are dropped door to door. Chris suggested starting up the Welcome Neighbor program that was sponsored, then dropped by WIS. Rena and Chris suggested that Carol Moore, new city clerk, come to a WAC meeting to discuss area council elections.

**Bike Path** Tom Elkind expressed concerned for bike riders on Beacon St in front of Angier. There is no bike lane there and riders are forced into a narrow lane of traffic. Mayor has

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announced an \$80,000 project to have a citywide bike, pedestrian and accessibility plan done. Consultants are going to be asked to identify the major areas of the city that need to be addressed for this type of infrastructure. Agreed that at the appropriate time Tom Elkind will write a letter to Mayor Fuller addressing the Beacon St/Angier issue. Tom agreed even though he does not plan to continue as a member of WAC.

**Historic Plaques.** Group has determined that two are needed because we really have two village centers. We have the one to the East and the one to the west of the MBTA. Those in Waban will be similar to those in West Newton and Newton Highlands. Square codes at bottom of plaques will allow those with interest to access more information on their phones.

**Administrative Matters:** Committee has been formed to look at aqueduct trail. Andrea Downs, Rena Getz, Bill Humphrey all bring ideas for multiple strategies. Newton Conservators also involved. Also Jonathon Yeo from the City of Newton. No meeting dates yet. Chris notes that hybrid meetings, with both in person and Zoom participation, is likely to be the meeting standard for many years to come. He wants to make sure Waban Library Center has technical capacity for hybrid meetings.

**Treasurer's Report:** Debate expenses covered, leaving WAC with \$545.75. A fund raising party may have to be put off due to Covid. Chris proposed WAC paying for transcription service for WAC Meeting Minutes. Meetings have been recorded for the use of the WAC secretary when writing up Minutes. \$25 per meeting for transcription is too expensive for WAC budget. Rena will explore if possible to find less expensive service or whether city employs some entity that we can tap into.

**Further discussion of Phase Two of Wellesley Office Park** development and the extent to which WAC will monitor Phase Two construction. Remind individual who wrote to Bill Humphrey saying that we would like to be advised of progress as it occurs at the Wellesley Office Park because of its impact on Waban. All information will also be posted on WAC website.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.**

**Respectfully submitted by Dinah Bodkin, Dec 15 2021**