

Waban Area Council

Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2016, 7:30pm

Members in Attendance: Joe Corkery, Chris Pitts, Sallee Lipshutz, Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Isabelle Albeck

City Officials: John Rice

Other attendees: Deena David, Meryl Miller, Anne S. Lee

- 1) **Meeting called to order at 7:32 PM**
- 2) **APPROVAL OF JAN 14, 2016 MEETING MINUTES AND SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY:** CP moves to approve the minutes as amended. IA seconds. Unanimously approved. JC reported on his email exchange with David Olson regarding the process of editing minutes via Google Docs. Determined that document can be captured and shared via Google Docs, but people can not be given editing permissions. MRM moves to approve the annual report as amended. CP seconds. Unanimously approved.
- 3) **APPROVAL OF FEB 11, 2016 TREASURER'S REPORT:** SL reports that nothing had changed with the report from last meeting include that we had not been paid by Upper Falls Council. SL spoke with UFC and they said they would send check right away. Once done we can submit annual report to the city.
- 4) **BURNING ISSUES:**
 - a) DD reports that at corner of Collins and Beacon St, not sure that everybody interprets a right red arrow in the same way. Some think stop and wait, some think stop and turn after waiting. SL says that she saw someone turn left on red. MRM have you spoken to Andreae about this? DD have not, but spoke with customer service person at City Hall today. IA says that sensors should kick in for turning. DD would like to see signage there. MRM encourages everybody to submit their concerns about this via 311. JC says that we should be clear that we want "right on red" allowed. MRM said people should be clear about what they want the city to do. MRM reports that she has asked about the HAWK light and that nobody has touched the light since the school started. MRM suggest that we sent a note to Shane Mark about this issue. Notes that city has become more interested in improving signage to address safety.

- b) SL would like the Charter Commission to attend the March meeting to share what they are doing and so that people can give them input. IA is this for this to learn about us or for us to learn from them? SL both. MRM reports that she was at Charter Commission meeting last night and says they are going to have meeting at end of February where they are inviting former mayors, so March meeting time would be good. SL moves that WAC invites CC to March Meeting. IA seconds. Unanimously approved.
- c) MRM reports that the city has a program called Newton In Motion which is transportation program which is part of a broader program. They've held a couple of information sessions so far. If you go to the planning website (http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/transportation_strategy.asp) under the transportation section there is a survey that she encourages people to fill out.

5) ELECTION OF WABAN AREA COUNCIL OFFICERS: SL notes that in previous meeting we did not officially elect the unopposed officers at the last meeting. IA moves to approve the slate of officers. MRM seconds. Unanimously approved.

6) ST. PHILIP NERI / 1521 BEACON ST: ZBA PUBLIC HEARING - JAN 26: SL states that she received an email from Alexandra included below:

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From: Alexandra Ananth [mailto:aananth@newtonma.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 4:52 PM
To: rrcexec <rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com>
Subject: RE: St. Philip Neri and Peck Property

Hi Sallee,

Mr. Argiros will not be filing an appeal to the ZBA's Safe Haven ruling, which I believe means that he is willing to work with staff and the ZBA to make some changes to the project. I can let you know when any revised plans come in and what the changes are. They will likely be presented at the meeting in March and I will provide an updated memo for that meeting. I also expect the City's peer reviewer for traffic to be there that night and that will be a focus topic.

The Englers have been in for two DRT's on the property at 1615 Beacon Street and I would say that that project still needs a lot of work before it is ready for prime time.

Thank you for your thoughts on my memo. Its always nice to receive a compliment.

Best,
Alexandra

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.

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As a result of developer not appealing the ruling, the ZBA has a stronger hand in their ability to work with the developer.

MRM states that in the last meeting she had some concerns about a proposed amendment with regard to the parking which is why she asked for a lot more detail in the meeting. Notes that we included something in the letter that went a lot further than other letters submitted to the city. Recommends that in the future that more time be given to consider amendments before voting. CP notes that KW had said that the letter had intended to be more general and that there was no ground lost or gained though. MRM as a process, in the future when we produce a letter, we should have greater preparation around it so that people have more time to think about it and have greater weight. SL we definitely should strive for this and introducing things at the last minute is not ideal, but we also need to recognize that sometimes it can't be avoided. It's a good observation and we should strive for it as best we can.

7) UPDATES:

1. **Report on planning meeting for Zervas traffic/parking/safe routes with NHAC:** SL reports that on Feb 4, the WAC was in attendance at the NHAC and agreed that we would work jointly to promote their upcoming meeting. SL reports that she is working on a letter to the Zervas working group and got a response from Ruth Ann Fuller. She also heard from JR and city councilor Crossley. Notes that the issue everybody is concerned about is that the traffic plans have not been made public to anybody. Our connection to finding this out in the past was through Bill Paille who is no longer with the city. SL says that RAF says that meeting in April may be too late, because it is being discussed now. SL reports that RAF would speak with Deb. SL reports that DC that the process would follow the same process as Angier process and that there would be plenty of time for public input. SL concerned that not clear where effective input could happen. Reports that AD and Srjdan (president of NHAC) would come up with suggestions and that they would be presented at that meeting. SL suggested that they send their designs to Josh Morse now so that even if they don't get incorporated, they get reviewed and potential concerns may be raised. (MM) concerned that as a neighbor that there is not a lot of traffic input that has not be captured or included. In particular, they have not looked at Allen Rd. Concerned that recommendations are being made with the name of the Area Council. SL that won't be the case, we would have to vote as a committee before they could do that. CP notes that people from NH were very tuned into the process but the city has a strong track record of not listening to us: they make plans and bring people in for public comment far too late in the process. MRM not clear why Josh Morse has been identified as this person. We need to press the ward councilors to come back with a name of who in the transportation dept in the city. SL says that she heard from the city and that Josh is the person. We don't have a transportation director any more which is why Josh has been pinpointed. Zervas working group will be meeting in a few weeks and DC has promised to get information from that meeting. (Community member)

says she is also on the working group and will send information to the WAC. SL says that if April is too late, we will call a special meeting if necessary. (Community member) it's really only Beethoven that is in flux right now. MRM best thing might be for community to reach out to Steve Siegel and get a timeline from him. MM says that Steve has been very responsive and will follow up with him.

- 2. Update on WAC and NHAC Visioning Efforts:** Meeting was relatively small. Presentation is up on the website. Scheduling is a little more difficult and has prepared an email announcing it. Proposed meeting is Feb 29 and focus is on village centers. SL reports that that conflicts with a Charter Commission meeting. CP there are no nights that don't conflict with something. Notes that at last meeting had people from Newtonville. Have people from Upper Falls also interested in attending as well. Says that we have more common than we have in differences. So much around housing, streets, parking, sidewalks are all in common. Amazed by how many surprises come out of these meetings. Notes that James Freas has been at almost all of the meetings last year which is encouraging because it means that we can be heard. Multiple councilors noted that they really like the new lights that were installed at the island. MRM reports that Bill Paille had mentioned that pricing had been an issue and that he had mentioned that there were types of lights that could be installed now and upgraded later. CP says that he'd like to see grates around the base of trees. JR says that there were concerns about them because of the way they affect trees grow. In particular, the one in front of Bread & Chocolate has not been well maintained. SL notes that at WIS meeting the issue of tree lights came up and that they will reach out to Lupien tree for free advertising in exchange for helping with the tree. CP reports that Galvin does not want a repeat of what happened this year and would like the chance to do it better. CP also has a plan to do a survey to send to the community for input.
- 3. Report on preliminary meeting of Angier, Union Church, Church of Good Shepherd, Waban Improvement Society, Urban Tree Commission, and Waban Area Council to develop landscape plan and implement it on island at Beacon St across from Angier:** SL reports that they were discussing a joint effort to develop the island. Notes that the island is under the jurisdiction of city parks & rec but that we wanted to adopt it jointly. Want each representative to go back to their institutions to gauge interest and look for interested parties. SL said that had been approached by a group that wanted to raise funding to name the island. Outcome of the meeting: Theresa Fitzpatrick volunteered to send out survey to WIS to address interest and desire for the island. SL said that she told Shane Mark about the mud at the cross-walk near Collins. Said that the city will be regrading the island in the Spring. Reps from WIS, WAC, and John Rice will meet with Elaine Gentile on March 3rd to discuss options. MRM says that there was a discussion around how you might name an island. Still a lot of options and undecided yet. Goal is to make it a public process. IA how was the bench named after the barber named? What was the process? JR Parks & Rec has a policy that if people give money they can name things. IA but what about to honor somebody. JR it's just a financial process. SL once we have a feel for what is being asked, we can figure out

how the process might work. MRM it's possible it could be done independent of WAC.

4. **Angier Open House:** SL reports that the open house was packed and was really happy to see the inside. One criticism is that when they asked to be shown the school at a slower space because many people can't walk that fast. For future open houses (especially for Zervas, Cabot, etc.), recommend that they have a better plan for people who are handicapped as well as have a second option for people who could not make it. Also need to have better communication to make sure people are aware of it. DD says that Loreta Lamberti said that if people really want to see it, people should come by at the end of school and ask if they could see it. MRM reports that she learned that the upper floors can be completely sealed off so that the first floor can be used as a community space. SL do we know what it costs to rent Angier? JR it's whatever the city sets for having the custodian cleaning up. JR looking at having more musical performances on the plaza. That would also be a great place for outdoor movies. IA this is a great spot because it also has electricity. IA maybe Zervas should have something like this but also incorporate into the design a covered area. JR when city plans building community planning doesn't always fall into it. However, that plaza was setup as a community place. JR at Waban Village Day could try to do a concert/movie. CP reports that for the month of May there will be a piano out on the patio by the library. MRM would like to suggest that as a council we send a letter of appreciation to Alejandro Valcarce for the work on the Angier school and keeping the community involved. SL offered to work on the letter with MRM. MRM also asks to work on a letter welcoming Principal Lamberti and school back.
5. **Add-A-Lane:** SL reports that we had relied on conversations with Bill Paille for a long time to get information about the project, but unfortunately he is no longer here. SL says that she (and Maureen separately) had written to Shane Mark to discuss concerns over the Add-A-Lane project and assurances that Bill Paille had made to WAC, in particular with regard to making the entrance to Rt 9 from Quinobequin safer. But has not had a response yet. MRM says that she saw him last night and he said that he was open to input. MRM reports that this important to address right away because this is a focus of Add-A-Lane in the coming week. JR thinks we should reach out to Mayor's office on Monday. MRM recommends going right down to construction and get involved with the work going on there. DD points out that Monday is a holiday, agree to go on Tuesday. Goal is to extend the barrier between Rt 9 and on ramp from Quinobequin to make the Wellesley Office Park access less challenging. SL somebody needs to look at this more closely to see what could be done. JR says that DOT is interacting more closely with Needham/Wellesley mayor's offices and agrees that working through our mayor is a good plan.

With respect to Elliot St bridge closing, SL reports that according to DC the bridge will likely be closed for 6 months. Also notes that there have been community business meetings to deal with the issue. JR the other options for traffic are to go

down to Oak St or to Rt 9.

- 8) **WEBSITE FUNDING & MAILCHIMP LESSONS FOR COUNCILORS:** CP reports that we need to have a fund set up to pay for website. It had been done for free for a while, but not a long term solution. CP says his host normally charges \$20 a month. Said that he was able to propose \$10 per month and that was agreeable to the hosting person. Also notes that there had been a problem with the website that prevented text editing. It has now been fixed, so people can upload information and work with it more easily. It would be good if we could establish owners for specific issues that could regularly update the pages to keep things more fresh. MRM is there a place for comments? CP yes, but they aren't very active. Might be due to the fact that we require people to register to prevent comment spam. Fresh content is important to getting people to visit the website. SL would like to have more training for the councilors on training for Mailchimp. MRM has volunteered to help SL with this.
- 9) **NEEDS AND METHODS FOR FUNDRAISING FOR WAC:** SL we need to define a budget first for activities. Items include community efforts to get more email addresses. Examples include: funding to open Angier for visitors, speaker series, etc. MRM recalls that we voted that we wouldn't do fundraising without a plan to spend. CP we do need to build up a war chest. SL understood, but we should have a plan for things we would do with that money. MRM could you put together a list of ideas and budgets. CP there are a lot of opportunities for us to raise money. Support speakers on issues on village. SL many of these don't appeal on a Waban specific idea, lots of these are city-wide issues. Would like to focus on more Waban-centric things. Could we sponsor having Waban residents with interesting ideas speak. CP one option that people are excited about is a dog show with some of the local veterinarians. MRM could you come back in March with a plan for this? CP possibly. IA loves what happens in the Highlands. They have movies on Friday nights. Concerts. JC I agree and would love to see that in Waban. Think everybody should think about what items/events they would like to see funded and bring ideas to next meeting. People should include budget, number of volunteers required with the ideas. Submit suggestions to JC who will put a list together for discussion at next meeting. MRM we should try to do something to raise awareness of WAC at Primary Day. Or do the activities at school support a table being setup? SL they do. MRM would be great to have a

presence at school events. JC could try to put something into the Greensheet to raise awareness and NextDoor Waban.

10)**NEW BUSINESS:** None

11)**ADJOURN:**

Next meeting will take place on March 10, 2016.

Adjourn. 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Corkery