

# Waban Area Council

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March 10, 2016

Board of City Councilors  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Ave.  
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Newton City Council Members:

On behalf of the Waban Area Council and in accordance with Article 9, Section 10, of the Newton City Charter, I am pleased to submit this Annual Report of the activities of the Waban Area Council for the calendar year 2015.

Sincerely,

Sallee Lipshutz  
President

# Waban Area Council

## 2015 Annual Report

### Members & Officers

2015 was the second year for the Waban Area Council. The nine members elected to the Council in 2014 all returned to complete their second year in their two-year terms of office. The nine members of the Area Council are:

1. Barbara Bower
2. Joe Corkery
3. Andreae Downs
4. Matt Gardella
5. Rena Getz
6. Sallee Lipshutz
7. Maureen Reilly Meagher
8. Christopher Pitts
9. Kathy Winters

Ward Five Alderman John Rice is an ex officio member of the Area Council and attends nearly every meeting. Ald. Brian Yates and Ald. Deb Crossley also attend Area Council meetings as necessary.

The 2015 officers of the Area Council are:

Sallee Lipshutz, President  
Maureen Reilly Meagher, Vice President  
Rena Getz, Treasurer  
Joe Corkery, Secretary

### Work of the Waban Area Council in 2015

#### **Communication**

One of the primary goals of the communication committee this year was to raise awareness of the Waban Area Council among Waban residents. This included regular updates to the WAC Facebook page and the adoption of MailChimp to send blast emails to the community. However, the largest effort was the creation of an informative mailer that was generated by the council and distributed as part of the Waban Improvement Society's annual newsletter.

#### **Friends of the Quinobequin**

As a result of fundraising efforts of the FOTQ to match a DCR grant, the first of two footbridges was installed on the footpath along Quinobequin Rd. FOTQ hosted two volunteer cleanup events.

### **Waban Future Vision Project**

Waban Future Vision committee continued to meet regularly during this year to explore issues of concern to the village. An initial meeting in 2014 identified 51 different topics and prioritized 4 areas as high priority for further exploration:

- 1) Housing
- 2) Sustainability
- 3) Parking, Streets, and Traffic
- 4) Community Building

The committee invited several specialists to participate including: Robert Garrity, Director of Sustainability, Bill Paille, Director of Transportation, Alice Ingerson, Historian, James Freas, Acting Director of Planning, and Henry Finch, Architect and preservationist. An online wiki of all the findings was made available as a public record and to allow residents to contribute beyond the meetings. The website also has collected pertinent content representing many points of view. Lessons learned from this first year have been incorporated into the agenda for 2016's meetings now being held jointly with the Newton Highlands Area Council.

### **Improvements on Sudbury Aqueduct Trail**

Throughout the year the council worked on opening the Sudbury Aqueduct for walking. This requires a permit from the MWRA, which the City must apply for. In the spring, the City held the first abutter meeting. WAC members continue to work with the city on a pilot opening.

### **Add-A-Lane Project**

The council identified a contact person (Joseph Graham) at the project with whom the community can engage if there are problems during the project. The council was active in providing and passing on community updates and alerts as to when the construction efforts might impact residents of Waban. The council also hosted Capt. Gromada from the Newton Police Department to hear about the impact of the introduction of lights at the intersection of Rt 9 and 128.

### **Angier School / Beacon St / Collins Rd**

The council provided regular updates to the community as to the status and progress of the Angier School construction project. Furthermore, the council twice hosted William Paille, Newton

Director of Transportation, to explain and receive feedback on the redesign of the intersection at Beacon St and Collins Rd. The council also worked with abutting residents to have their concerns about the level of vibrations from heavy construction vehicles or construction activity addressed by the city.

In November, the council held a well-attended meeting on how student arrival and dismissal would be handled at the new Angier. The meeting included presentations from the Angier principal, from City staff and police, and from Safe Routes to School.

### **Civic Engagement**

The council hosted Newton City Clerk, David Olson, to explain and answer questions about how the Board of Aldermen operates including the assignment of docketed items, the progression of the Annual Budget, and many others. In particular, he clarified many issues around how area councils can (and should) engage with the City government as well as other bodies. He also described the upcoming plans for the City Charter Commission election.

### **Fundraising**

The council elected to not pursue any fundraising efforts in 2015 as the funds raised in 2014 were sufficient for the planned operations for the council for that year.

### **Catchment Area Expansion**

In an effort to address the fact that there were streets that are considered to be part of Waban but that were not officially within the catchment area of the Waban Area Council, the council reached out to those communities via mail and door-to-door signature collection to petition the city to have them officially added to the catchment area. As a result, the catchment area of the Waban Area Council grew to include:

1. Warren Road (both sides)
2. Kippy Drive (both sides)
3. Beacon St (both sides from #1238-1299)

In addition, the portions of Winslow Rd and Puritan Rd listed below are considered “shared border” streets and each voting resident will be given the choice of joining either the Waban Area Council or the Newton Highlands Area Council catchment area, but not both simultaneously:

1. Winslow Rd (#75-149)
2. Puritan Rd (#73-89)

### **Tri-Council Candidates' Event**

The council jointly sponsored with the other Ward 5 Area Councils a “Tri-Council Candidates’ Event” to enable voters to meet candidates in contested races for School Committee, Aldermen-at-Large, and Charter Review Commission. The event was actually two showcases, one in the afternoon focused on the Charter Review candidates and one in the evening focused on the School Committee and Aldermen-At-Large races. The events were attended by approximately 100 and 75 people respectively. Both events were recorded and the videos were made available online for residents to review.

### **Proposed Housing Developments in Waban**

In 2014 members of the Council were active in keeping the community informed and in encouraging constructive dialogue regarding the two potential 40B housing developments in Waban: 1521 Beacon St. (the former St. Philip Neri church) and 1615 Beacon St. (the Peck property). The WAC website has pages dedicated to both properties.

The 1615 Beacon St. proposed mixed-use development is in its very early stages. In October 2015 a member of the area council met with Geoff Engler, one of the principals of the development team, to go over early conceptual drawings and to encourage the development team to meet with neighbors. The WAC website includes these early drawings and provides background information about the site's historic status. We expect to continue to provide information to the community as this project progresses.

The 1521 Beacon St. proposed development proceeded through the first phase of the 40B process in 2015. The Area Council was active in notifying the community of the developer's Project Eligibility Application to MassHousing and informing residents of the opportunity to provide comments to the Planning Dept. The Council also wrote its own comment letter (with unanimous approval) to the Planning Dept. regarding the proposed design (and raising concerns regarding (i) massing and scale, (ii) lack of open/green space, and (iii) traffic issues) and several members of the Council attended MassHousing's site visit.

### **Streets & Sidewalks**

In February, the council hosted a forum on Best Practices around Safe School Site design with Nick Jackson of Toole Design and Stacey Buetell of Walk Boston. This well-attended forum looked at the principles, policies and design that make for walkable schools.

Members of the council persuaded MassDOT to include sidewalks, crosswalks and ramps under Rt. 9 at Chestnut St. as part of their routine repaving of that section of street.

The council also facilitated neighborhood input and disseminated information about the Waban Parking Plan for Beacon and Dorset Rd.

