

**Waban Area Council
Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2020
Held via Zoom**

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

City Councilor: Bill Humphrey

Community: Maureen O'Reilly Meagher, Sachiko Isihara, Tim deChant, John Mordes, Barbara Brustowicz

Burning Issues from the Community

Suzuki School of Newton is open and operating fully. All lessons are virtual. The school was able to host outdoor events over the summer. The school is currently at 65% enrollment, which is low. Sachiko requested that WAC members and others let it be known that the SSN is accepting new student. Chris proposed including that information in next email blast. Isabelle expressed concern that all Waban businesses be treated equally.

Tim deChant NWH still holding off on power generation using new Turbines. He was told by Justin Ferbert that noise mitigation procedures had been completed. Tim and neighbor Jake Flynn were still experiencing noise problems and a lot of vibrations. NWH has a community group and deChant and Flynn were planning to appeal to this group in order to discuss the noise pollution problem. NWH not terribly responsive to complaints from the community.

Friends of The Quinobequin

John Mordes, President of The Friends of Hemlock Gorge (FOHG), explained that there is no safe way to walk from Quinobequin Trail to Hemlock Gorge Reservation. Friends of Hemlock Gorge proposes painted zebra stripe crosswalks with ADA compliant curb rampings. Zebra stripe cross walks would be similar to those already in place at intersection of Rte 9 and Chestnut st. The Zebra stripes and ADA compliant curb cuts The zebra stripes would allow safer crossing of Rte 9 off and on ramps and Quinobequin Rd. There would be no crosswalks under the Rte 9 bridge where there are already sidewalks. At entrance to Quinobequin Trail, FOHG proposes cutting guard rail and finishing it off the allow opening for pedestrians to walk through. FOHG approved the proposal at recent meeting. John Mordes asked for approval from WAC/FOTQ. Bob Jampol moved to endorse FOHG proposal. Motion passed unanimously. Some discussion ensued about the extent to which Wellesley Office Park had pledged to fund some of the local improvement. RG emailed WOP permit to John Mordes and WAC members with the intention of holding them to their promise. Other discussion included whether traffic lights would be better than painted crosswalks and how they would be funded. BH reiterated that the properties in question are under state control and all matters have to be handled through Ruth Balser's office.

Bike Lanes

At traffic council meeting of September 17, discussion re changing parking regulations along Beacon St between Newton Centre and Washington St. to allow for painted bike lanes in both directions. Parking within painted bike lane will be prohibited, resulting in fairly long sections of Beacon St being without parking on either side. According to BH most residents along Beacon St had no objections to losing parking along Beacon St. Neighborhood immediately around Angier School, on both sides of Dorset Rd, WILL allow parking. Diagonal parking in Waban

Square will also be unaffected. According to BH, painted bike lane(s) is all that the city can afford right now.

Historic Plaques

Presented by Laura Foote, who also leads the effort. "Vision-a series of engaging interpretative sign in Newton Village Centers." Effort is grassroots and all interpretive signs will have same basic design so they can be easily recognized as part of the series. The series was conceived when the building housing the Railroad Hotel (now Sweet Tomatoes) became a local landmark last year. Many residents knew nothing of the history of the building. Horace Mann was associated with the hotel, as were other important Newton educators. The "Vision" effort coincided with West Newton Square enhancement, and will be placed in the small park where Washington St joins Watertown St. The effort is reminiscent of many wayside interpretive signs seen throughout the country, which recall the history of particular locations and aim to have visitors stop and learn about the places they are traveling through. Signs will focus on buildings that are still in existence, not buildings that have been demolished. Some signs are already present in Newton, but are not part of a series. Pannier Graphics in Pennsylvania is making the sign(s) using an outdoor-appropriate embedded laminate technology. Their signs are seen throughout the national park system. Laura displayed West Newton historic sign. Photographs from the Allen School in the 1870's showed black and white students studying together. The group is considering a sign for the Myrtle Baptist Church, the center of Newton's (now mostly gone) African-American community. The sign references a website for those with further interest.

The response of the meeting attendees was very positive. Much discussion ensued about doing the same for Waban Square and how WAC and WIS would coordinate the effort.

Zoning Update

RG presented ZAP fall calendar for redesigned building code. ZAP is currently working on the second draft of the residential component of the new zoning code. A public hearing will be held December 3.

Respectfully submitted by

Dinah Bodkin

September 23, 2020