

**Waban Area Council
Meeting Minutes November 12 2020
Held via Zoom**

City Councillors Present: Bill Humphrey, Pam Wright, Lisle Baker

WAC Members Present: Dinah Bodkin, Christopher Pitts, Isabelle Albeck, Megan Meirav, Rena Getz, Robert Jampol, Thomas Elkind, Ronald Marcus, Sallee Lipshutz

Community Members Present: Alice Ingerson, Debra Waller, Fred Hochberg, Henry Irwig, Janet Sterman, John Mordes, Karine Alexander, Kathy Pillsbury, Peter Bruce, Phyllis Scherr, Simon French, Tim deChant,

October Meeting Minutes Approved. Treasurer's Report: WAC account still at \$902.50.

Burning Issues from the Community: Tim deChant-nothing new from NWH.

Presentation of Zoning Redesign by Lisle Baker, Ward Councilor for Ward 7. As described by Councilor Baker, zoning codes specify how different tracts of land can be utilized, with the ultimate goal of reducing conflict between different uses and accruing the benefits that flow from mutually agreed upon limitations. Councilor Baker described the current principles that govern zoning in Newton. Ie, commercial separate from industrial and generally separate from residential. All information is available at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/aldermen/committees/zoning/>. The goals of the current Zoning Resdesign is to respond to the need for affordable housing in Newton, for environmental stewardship and to preserve and protect what is generally regarded as Newton's positive and unique attributes. A problem that was addressed by the Planning Department outside of Zoning Redesign was front facing garages that harm the streetscape. That ordinance will be amended Nov 23 and (presumably) voted on shortly thereafter.

The Planning Department has proposed changes to Newton Zoning that will generally allow more housing development in single family zones. This would include, among other changes, the elimination of a required minimum lot size to build and replacing Floor Area Ratio criteria with specific types of houses. Also possibly eliminated would be the requirement that single or two family homes provide on site parking. Total residential property value in Newton is 28 billion dollars and total non residential tax property values amounts to 3 billion dollars. On a per unit basis, single family homes generate far more tax revenue than any other type of dwelling. As Newton considers more housing development in single family zones, these fiscal realities must be taken into account. Green space (ie, trees, lawns, gardens) that generally is found in low density residential zones will be significantly compromised if there is more development in single family zones. Baker presented a rough calendar of upcoming Zoning Redesign events. Maps gave a comparison between current zoning and proposed new zoning. Bill Humphrey pointed out that the R1 neighborhoods in Waban will largely be unchanged. Discussion among participants about the need for greater economic and ethnic diversity in Newton. Lisle Baker: Zoning is not the correct tool for solving those problems. SL: would like a map showing changes to individual properties under the new Zoning laws. BH: a survey should be taken of what types of changes people favor most. WAC thanked Councilor Baker for his presentation.

IA: Why are there so few "Black Lives Matter" signs in Newton? How can we show solidarity with BLM? CP asked Tariq to answer the question. Tariq suggested supporting black owned businesses. IA wishes to do something formally as a council, and she will write to the Newton law department and explore the possibilities.

Announcements: As in Agenda. CP: Cultural grants available through NCC.

Respectfully submitted by Dinah Bodkin
November 23, 2020