

WABAN AREA COUNCIL

www.wabanareacouncil.com

January 20, 2015

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Aldermen:

On behalf of the Waban Area Council, I am pleased to submit this Annual Report of its activities for the calendar year 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sallee Lipshutz".

Sallee Lipshutz
President

WABAN AREA COUNCIL 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Members & Officers

2014 was the inaugural year for the Waban Area Council. The nine members of the Council were elected to two-year terms during the City elections on November 5, 2013 and were sworn in on January 9, 2014. The nine members of the Area Council are:

Barbara Bower
Joe Corkery
Andreae Downs
Matt Gardella
Rena Getz
Sallee Lipshutz
Maureen Reilly-Meagher
Christopher Pitts
Kathy Winters

Ward Five Alderman John Rice is an ex officio member of the Area Council and attends nearly every meeting. Ald. Brian Yates, Ald. Deb Crossley, and School Committee member Steve Siegel are also frequent attendees of the Area Council meetings.

The 2014 officers of the Area Council are:

Sallee Lipshutz, President
Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Vice President
Kathy Winters, Secretary
Rena Getz, Treasurer

Committees and Working Groups

The Area Council established a committee, **Friends of the Quinobequin**, to address issues and seek improvements relating to the Quinobequin Area. The activities of The Friends of the Quinobequin are discussed later in this report.

The Area Council also established several working groups to address specific issues:

- **Parking, Traffic, and Pedestrian Issues** – Andreae Downs, Barbara Bower, Joe Corkery and Kathy Winters
 - **Add-A-Lane** – Maureen Reilly-Meagher
- **Water, Sewer and Infrastructure Issues** - Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Andreae Downs
- **School Construction (Angier and Zervas)** – Joe Corkery, Barbara Bower, Rena Getz
- **Communication** – Sallee Lipshutz, Maureen Reilly-Meagher, Chris Pitts, Joe Corkery
- **Housing and Zoning Issues** – Rena Getz, Sallee Lipshutz, Chris Pitts, Matthew Gardella, Kathy Winters, Maureen Reilly-Meagher
 - **St. Philip Neri** – Sallee Lipshutz, Kathy Winters, Matthew Gardella
- **Community Building/Waban Improvement Society Liaison** – Chris Pitts, Rena Getz, Joe Corkery
- **Waban Future Vision Project** – Chris Pitts, Rena Getz, Sallee Lipshutz
- **Adjusting the WAC Catchment Area** – Andreae Downs, Sallee Lipshutz

Work of the Waban Area Council in 2014

By-Laws and Mission Statement

Early in 2014 WAC adopted By-Laws and the following Mission Statement:

The mission of the Waban Area Council is to hear, respond to and represent village concerns and issues, to provide a forum for Waban issues, and to encourage resident involvement in local government.

Communication

WAC seeks to communicate with residents on issues of importance to Waban in a number of ways:

Website – Councilor Chris Pitts designed and maintains WAC’s website at www.wabanareacouncil.com, where residents can get information about upcoming events, read about issues of importance and link to other sources of information, view WAC meeting agendas and minutes, and voice concerns or comments.

Monthly Meetings – WAC holds regular monthly meetings open to the public at the Waban Library Center (generally the second Thursday of the month). Each meeting provides time for residents to raise “burning issues” that they would like to see addressed or discussed at a future meeting.

E-Mail Alerts – WAC maintains an e-mail list that is used to send out important communications.

Friends of the Quinobequin

The Friends of the Quinobequin is a committee of WAC led by Council member Maureen Reilly-Meagher and including Council members Sallee Lipshutz, Barbara Bower and Andreae Downs, as well as the following other participants: Susan Cammer, Chrys Martin, Judy Kohn, Carole Grossman, Jeff and Katie Tumpowsky, Sumekh Tendulker, Seth Kosto, Bob Ellertson, Sharone Ben Levi, Deena David, Cecily Grable, Barbara Brustowicz, Lois Levin, Helen Ritenberg, Jim Lerner, Jerry Reilly, Aaron Frenz, Chris Steele, Joe Corkery, Rena Getz and Kathy Winters.

FOTQ held its first meeting in March with approximately 25 attendees. The focus of the meeting was on safety, maintenance and greater recreational opportunities. Two other meetings were held later in the year. Over the year FOTQ has worked on the following:

- Newton SERVES participation.
- First Saturday Program implemented where neighbors come out on the first Saturday of each month to clean up trash.
- Successful application to DCR matching grant program to repair two sites on the parkland. FOTQ raised more than \$1,667 that will be matched by a \$3,333 grant from the DCR.
- A \$250,000 line item in the state Environmental Bond Bill for development of a multi-modal path on the Quinobequin parkland was inserted by Sen. Creem. Sallee Lipshutz attended an October meeting with Rep. Balsler, DCR representatives and City staff to discuss the line item and the possible resulting improvements.
- FOTQ publishes an electronic newsletter which goes out to approximately 75 subscribers.
- In May, Newton police were empowered to write tickets along Quinobequin Rd.

Waban Future Vision Project

Councilor Chris Pitts, with the help of resident Chris Steele, started the Waban Future Vision Project to create an actionable blueprint for use by the city of Newton to understand the desires of Waban citizens covering: historic preservation, residential and commercial development, schools, transportation, town center, shopping, community programs, supports for elderly, special needs, youth, pets, parks and green spaces, and other yet to be identified issues. This blueprint will have direct correlation to city laws and will give clear direction to our alderman, committees, and Mayor, as to Waban's expectations. The first meeting for the Waban Future Vision Project took place in November and was attended by approximately 30 residents. Further open meetings are planned for 2015.

Forum on Permitting Process for Housing Developments

In response to requests from Waban residents for clear information about how developers receive permits for multi-unit housing developments in Newton, WAC hosted a forum at City Hall on May 1, 2014 titled "The ABCs of Zoning Relief for Housing Developments in Newton: A Residents' Guide to How Developers Get Permits and How the Community Can Have its Say." The panelists for the forum were Candace Havens and James Freas of the City Planning Department, Ald. Marcia Johnson, and ZBA Chairman Brooke Lipsett.

Improvements on Sudbury Aqueduct Trail

WAC has joined with the two other Ward 5 Area Councils in seeking a City Permit for maintenance and improvement of the Sudbury Aqueduct trail

through Newton. Council member Andreae Downs is reaching out to neighbors to seek their support for permitting of the trail.

Add-A-Lane Project.

WAC has worked to keep residents informed of the Add-A-Lane Project and the potential impact on Waban, providing updates throughout the year. At our May meeting, WAC heard from Newton Transportation Director Bill Paille and Bill Steffens and Erin Pacileo of McMahon Associates (consulting firm to the state that developed the traffic plan for Add-A-Lane from Kendrick to Rt. 9) regarding the project. WAC requested a number of traffic counts be completed prior to the project to help measure its impact on Waban. WAC also expressed support for Ald. Yates' Docket Item #310-14 requesting the development of a public outreach program in partnership with Mass. DOT regarding the Add-A-Lane project.

Zervas School Reconstruction.

WAC has provided regular updates on the status of the planning for the Zervas school reconstruction. At the December meeting, the Council heard from a number of residents regarding their concerns about the project and its potential impact on the Zervas neighborhood. School Committee member Steven Siegel was also in attendance.

Angier School Construction, Traffic Redesign, and Angier Sidewalk Improvements.

Angier School Project Update meetings occur every month immediately prior to WAC's regular meeting. At the September WAC meeting, Director of Transportation Bill Paille gave a presentation of the four options his department has considered to improve the Collins Rd./Waban Ave./Beacon St. area and informed residents of the preferred option. Many of the neighbors in that area attended the meeting and provided feedback. WAC members asked a number of questions as to how the redesign would affect the safety of children walking to school and how it could improve parking congestion on the Waban Ave./Collins Rd. triangles. WAC members Andreae Downs and Barbara Bower also worked with Newton Pedestrian Coordinator Alicia Bowman to draft a list of streets that could benefit from sidewalk improvements being made in connection with the Angier project.

Water, Sewer and Storm Water Rate Restructuring.

Throughout the year WAC meetings have included updates and discussion regarding Newton's Water, Sewer and Storm Water Rate Restructuring.

Zoning Reform and the proposed Demolition Moratorium.

Throughout the year WAC provided updates on the status of Newton's Zoning Reform Initiative and on other issues regarding zoning, such as the proposed moratorium on demolition delays.

Communication with the Developer of the St. Philip Neri Property.

Council members Kathy Winters, Sallee Lipshutz and Matt Gardella worked throughout the year to obtain information about the plans of the developer of the St. Philip Neri property and to keep residents apprised. They worked with the developer's attorney to set up small meetings between the developer and abutters at which the developer presented his preliminary plans and the neighbors gave their feedback and voiced concerns.

Traffic and Parking issues.

Over the course of the year, WAC provided a forum for residents to raise traffic and parking issues in Waban. Director of Transportation William Paille attended two WAC meetings at which residents had an opportunity to raise issues. In November, WAC submitted a letter to William Paille requesting the Traffic Council approve a study of possible traffic calming measures on Radcliff and Tamworth Roads. The Parking, Traffic and Pedestrian working group of WAC is also examining possibility of eliminating parking along sections of Beacon St. and installing a bike lane. An open meeting regarding this issue will be held in January 2015.

Voting at the Waban Library Center

Under the leadership of Ald. Rice, WAC helped to bring voting to the Waban Library Center for residents of Ward 5, Precincts 3 and 4. Previously those residents voted at the Zervas school. The Waban Improvement Society and the Zervas PTO were also key players in bringing about this change.

Fundraising

WAC receives no funding from the City and must raise its own funds. In May, WAC hosted a silent auction at Waban Village Day, which raised \$2,800 for the Council.