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**Waban Area Council
Meeting Minutes
January 9 2020
Waban Library Center 7-9pm**

W A C M e m b e r s : Chris Pitts, Bob Jampol, Dinah Bodkin, Kathryn Winters, Sallee Lipshutz, Isabelle Ahlbeck, Ronald Marcus

C o m m u n i t y : Tom Elkind, Carole Grossman, Barbara Darnell, Gabriel Holbrow (Newton Community Planner), Gretchen Friend, Nancy Cohen, Harvey Cohen, Gene Kohn, Eric Jawnsky, Kathleen Hobson, Deb Crossley, Bill Humphrey, Nathaniel Lichtin, Megan Meirav, Dmitri Gridnev, Carol Todreas, Nancy Mansbach, Barbara Brustowicz, Rena Getz.

Wellesley Office Park Mixed Use Development David Hall and Attorney Peter Tam from Hanover Wellesley presented their residential apartment project for Wellesley Office Park (WOP), which is classified as a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District. The project was approved unanimously by the Wellesley ZBA on Jan 6 2020. One office bldg at WOP will be demolished to accommodate the residences. Residences will consist of 350 Luxury Apartments Units, of which 25% will be set aside as “affordable”, ie available at reduced cost for families earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income. The allocation will allow Wellesley to fulfill its affordable housing requirement as mandated by the State of MA. All units are rental units.

Hanover Wellesley submitted an Environmental Notification Form to the state on Nov 15 2019. The response of the Newton Planning Department can be read here <http://wabanareacouncil.com/sites/default/files/Newton%20ENF%20commments%20for%20Hanover%20Wellesley.pdf>. Of the multitude of problems presented in the letter, the attendees at WAC focussed mainly on traffic issues.

David Hall asserted that traffic impact would be minimal, resulting in 17 additional AM peak hour trips and 50 additional PM peak hour trips. The main concern of Waban residents is the “slingshot”, whereby traffic eastbound on Rte 9 must turn left on Quinobequin then left again to access Rte 9 West in order to enter the WOP. Under current conditions traffic backs up on Rte 9 East and the fear is that that situation will worsen at peak evening hours when there are residential units at WOP, which is borne out by traffic impact studies. Hanover Wellesley’s current commitment towards traffic mitigation consists of improving William St access, providing more and better pedestrian access and increasing signage and pavement markings. David Hall spoke of constructing, in the future, a direct off ramp from Rte 9 East to WOP. This would avoid the slingshot altogether.

WAC member Bob Jampol described the traffic challenge of traveling W on Rte 9 and being forced to cross several lanes of traffic if heading towards Rte 95 South ramp. This will worsen with the current project. No mitigation is proposed.

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WOP currently has a shuttle which goes to and from Riverside T Station. Residents will be able to make use of this shuttle. There is also a plan to improve the sidewalk along Rte 9 so residents can walk to the Eliot T station. WAC member Isabelle Ahlbeck did the walk the day before the meeting. It takes 15 minutes, but even with improved sidewalk is dangerous and unpleasant due to truck and large vehicle traffic on Rte 9.

Hanover Wellesley is aiming for the project to be LEED certified silver. All heat and utility needs will be met using electrical power from the town of Wellesley. The project will not use natural gas at all.

Srdg Nedeljkovic continued with his presentation about traffic impact of WOP. Proposes that a footbridge be created across the Charles which would result in Waban T stop being an easy walk from WOP. Councillor Humphrey states we have little leverage over the WOP residential project. Suggests that members of the community attend Public Safety and Transportation meeting on February 5 to discuss concerns and raise possibility of footbridge.

See WAC website for further discussion of WOP.

WAC Administrative Matters Meghan Meirav, Tom Elkind and Rena Getz appointed to WAC with unanimous approval. Slate of officers approved: Chris Pitts, President; Rena Getz Vice President; Dinah Bodkin Secretary; Isabelle Ahlbeck Treasurer. New members will contact David Olson in order to be sworn in.

2019 Treasurer's Report Approved with corrected dates. Isabelle Ahlbeck introduced Gabriel Hollow, new Community Planner focusing on Community Engagement for the City's planning department. SL asked that Planning Dept stay in touch re WOP.

Bill Humphrey-new Ward Councillor. Committee assignments are Programs and Services and Finance. Can be reached by email at bhumphrey@newton.ma.gov.

Issues From the Community Tri-Council Informational Forum on Northland Referendum. SL and RG will work with Nathaniel Lichtin and Newtonville Area Council to plan informational meeting. Details TBD. Northland Referendum will be March 3.

Recreational marijuana applicant Union Twist will make a public presentation January 13 7:30pm at WLC regarding proposed pot shop at 1158 Beacon St. Greg Schwartz will elucidate the permitting process.

Meeting adjourned 9:02 pm.
Respectfully submitted by
Dinah Bodkin,