

Waban Area Council

Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2014, 7:30pm

Members in Attendance: Rena Getz, Sallee Lipshutz, Christopher Pitts, Kathy Winters, Andreae Downs, Joe Corkery, Maureen Reilly-Meagher and Barbara Bower.

City officials: Steven Siegel-School Committee, Srdjan Nedeljkovic-Newton Highlands Area Council

Other attendees: Mark Shooman, Julia Golden, Bonnie Glickman, Jean Hosseini, Patrick Maher, Meryl Miller, Cindy Kaplan, Rebecca Cohan, Deena David, Fran Godine, John Tourtelotte, Marilyn Broyles.

1. **November Minutes. Minutes of November 13, 2014 meeting approved by unanimous vote.**
2. **Treasurer's Report.** Nothing new to report.
3. **Burning Issues from the Community.**
 - Question regarding what's happening at former Pillar house site. MRM informed that DOT is constructing a retention pond there for storm water.
4. **Newton Solar Challenge.** John Tourtelotte of Rivermoor Energy and Bonnie Glickman of Green Decade Newton provided information about the Newton Solar Challenge. The Newton Solar Challenge is a community initiative consisting of nonprofit organizations, community organizations and for-profit companies to direct resources towards producing more clean energy locally. Goal is to double the amount of residential solar power in Newton. NSC has scheduled a solar workshop at the Waban Library Center on Wednesday January 21. NSC materials will be posted on the website. **Unanimous vote in favor of promoting the January 21 workshop through blast email alert.**
5. **Add-A-Lane Update.** Newton Director of Transportation, William Paille, provided WAC with an email update about Add-A-Lane construction. See attachment for details.
 - WAC has not received a response from October 1 letter seeking more information from DOT. Councilors agreed that we should reach out to Rep. Balser's office for assistance in getting a response.

6. **FOTQ.** FOTQ committee meeting held last month. Minutes will be posted on the website.
7. **Waban Future Vision Project.** Initial meeting was held on November 20, 2014. CP reported that it was a brainstorming session where participants came up with a list of issues of importance to Waban. Tentative date for next meeting is January 22, 2015. CP will post a report on the website.
8. **Zervas.** RG gave an update on the Zervas project and invited a number of residents to speak to the Council about their concerns regarding the planned rebuild. The residents who spoke accepted the fact that the 490 student, 24 classroom school is now set to be built, and were focused on having specific concerns about the new school addressed. Concerns generally fell under the following categories:
 - **Traffic.** Traffic is currently bad around pickup and drop-off times. Cars consistently clog Beethoven and block residents' driveways. Children are dropped off in an unsafe manner. Residents want to be sure the new design addresses and anticipates traffic problems. One resident raised four specific traffic problems: (1) Drop-off on Beacon, (2) Pedestrian crossing at Amy Circle, (3) Intersection of Beethoven and Puritan, and (4) the bend in Beethoven near 64 Beethoven (where people headed southbound have trouble seeing cars headed northbound). Some residents suggested having no parking on Beethoven and a drop off loop on Beacon. AD suggests having Walk Boston come in and look at the plan for Zervas and make suggestions.
 - **Trash.** Residents complained of trash being left around school grounds and Richardson field. They would like to see this issue resolved now, and also want it to be addressed as the school increases its capacity.
 - **Trees.** Residents would like to see more trees and better landscaping around the school.

School Committee member Steve Siegel also spoke about the project and the School Committee's plans regarding enrollment increases. He said that the intent for Zervas is that enrollment will be in the mid-400s, but that it will have the capacity for up to 490 students.

After a lengthy discussion with the residents present, the consensus among the Council was to help residents see that their concerns are addressed. RG suggested that WAC generate a document detailing the immediate concerns of residents. RG asked residents to email her with their concerns for that purpose.

9. **Angier.** BB gave a brief review of the Angier update meeting that took place that evening.

10. **Zoning Update.** RG reported that Zoning and Planning is currently going through the phase 1 zoning reform document and editing it.
11. **1.5% Land Area.** Director of Planning James Freas emailed KW earlier this week and said they are still working on determining whether the City has met the Ch. 40B 1.5% land area safe harbor.
12. **Wells Ave.** SL reported that the ZBA denied the comprehensive permit application on the grounds that it does not have the authority to waive the deed restriction.
13. **Water, Sewer & Stormwater Rate Restructuring.** MRM provided an update on the proposed rate changes. To learn about the proposed rate changes, see our website for links to League of Women Voters and Green Decade. MRM also recommends looking at Village 14 website for information. An email update from Ald. Crossley regarding water and sewer issues is attached.
14. **WAC Logo Research.** In response to a resident who raised concerns about the appropriateness of WAC's logo, CP went to the Praying Indians of the Natick Praying Indians and wrote to Chief Praying Hands to ask if he thought the logo was offensive (it is not an image of Waban, there are no known images of Waban). Chief Praying Hands wrote back to say he did not find the logo offensive and was pleased to see our attempt to honor Waban through the use of a representative image. **AD motion that CP work with WIS to figure out an appropriate way to bring communities together. Unanimous approval.** The issue of the use of the logo was not resolved, CP will send the initial letter from the resident to Council members and **we will put the issue on the agenda for January.**
15. **CIP and Waban; Annawan and Varick.** Angier and Zervas are both included in the capital improvements plan. Annawan and Varick are both slated for street repaving. Traffic light for Angier school is also included. AD would like to start a process where the users/residents of Annawan and Varick can let the City know about issues with the road (i.e., sinkholes, pedestrian problems, missing sidewalks) before they start the repaving process.
16. **Evaluation of Snow Ordinance.** Ald. John Rice has requested input and documentation from the community about what problems they see this winter with plowing.
17. **Council Borders.** SL is meeting with Chris Steele on Friday to get the paperwork prepared to adjust WAC catchment area.

18. **Sudbury Aqueduct Trail.** AD is seeking support from the abutters for the permitting of the trail.

19. **Nomination of Waban Area Council Officers.** KW nominates JC for Secretary. AD nominates CP for President and SL for VP. After some discussion council members agreed to make further nominations by email between now and our next meeting. Vote will occur at our next meeting.

Next meeting will take place on January 15, 2015.

Adjourn. 10:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Winters

Attachments:
William Paille e-mail
Ald. Deb Crossley e-mail

Attachment 1: William Paille E-Mail

From: William Paille [mailto:wpaille@newtonma.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2014 6:04 PM
To: rrcexec
Subject: RE: Invitation to Visit Waban Area Council

Hi Sallee,

Although I was not at the meeting with MassDOT, my Transportation Engineer as well as a representative from the Engineering Division was. In addition to the City of Newton, several folks from MassDOT (Headquarters & D6), the design consultant (EK/HDR) and the General Contractor (Barletta Heavy Division) were in attendance. They reviewed the scope of work for the project but more importantly the schedule:

Notice to Proceed: November 17, 2014
Contract Duration: 1620 Calendar Days
Final Completion: April 25, 2019 (Kendrick Street Bridge to be completed Dec. 26, 2016)

Key notes:

- Construction of the proposed noise barrier to be completed as soon as practical
- The Contractor will be required to hold a briefing for the community thirty days prior to the commencement of construction activities and major traffic changes. The briefings shall address traffic management, upcoming construction activities and other issues as needed.
- Over the next 120 days, construction signs will be installed, construction of a manhole along Freemont Street, and temporary barriers (jersey) on Kendrick to allow for installation of stormwater pollution prevention devices and clearing/grubbing
- Public meeting scheduled to be held at Needham Town Hall on December 22, 2014.

I will do everything possible to be there on January 8th if you decide to have the WAC meeting. Once the construction begins, I will provide monthly updates and attend the WAC meetings to keep the community informed. I would also like to get either MassDOT or the contractor to attend periodic meetings as well.

Regards,

Bill

Attachment 2: Ald. Crossley E-Mail

From: DEBORAH CROSSLEY <djcrossley26@verizon.net>
Subject: Re: Comments on Public Facilities Public Hearing
Date: December 7, 2014 12:57:19 PM EST
To: rrcexec <rrcexec@regulatoryresearch.com>
Cc: Maureen Reilly-Meagher <mreillymeagher@gmail.com>, Barbara Brustowicz <brustowicz@verizon.net>, rfuller@newtonma.gov, 'Christopher Pitts' <cbpitts@gmail.com>, 'Barbara Bower' <bdbower123@yahoo.com>, Andreae Downs <andreaedowns@gmail.com>, 'Rena Getz' <rl.getz@verizon.net>, Kathryn Winters <winters41@mac.com>, 'Joe Corkery' <jcorkery@gmail.com>, Matthew Gardella <mgardella@mintz.com>

Hi Sallee et al.

I will do my best to begin to answer your questions - but a discussion may be helpful.

1. Harry Saunders was the speaker. He is an active citizen and has raised these concerns with the administration over the last few years. My understanding is that in response to Harry's concerns, DPW tested the meters (and had an outside group test the meters) and they are sure the meters are accurate. This was discussed several times in PF when Ald. Salvucci was the chair, and Fred Russell the Director of Public Utilities. This is why the city literally pulled a couple dozen meters to have them independently tested. The results were superior at the time.

I heard Mr. Saunders suggest that he now believes the meters are underreporting water used. We have no evidence this is so - but In fact, I remember learning that it is a mechanical impossibility for meters to over count water. Because what happens is that the mechanics loosen up over time - like any machine. So this is one reason why meters have about a 10-12 year life expectancy we are told.

Harry was right when he noted that the city was ten years behind in replacing the previous meters.

The city does have a very high rate of "unaccounted water" - that is water that we pay to purchase from the MWRA but which doe not get metered. We do leak detection and repair every year, but remember our system is very old - underground leakage will improve greatly as we advance our restoration program. We also lose water flushing hydrants, and fighting fires (hydrants are not metered). The WSS group had the city commission a "water Audit" which has not revealed a one point source as yet, though we are now testing the large MWRA meters coming into the city and as well the reservoir.

2. I will ask about this again tomorrow at our working group meeting (though the focus is stormwater tomorrow).

However - I do not think 'bias' is the correct word - If the meters are failing early (which again we have no evidence to suggest) I will ask whether this would be a condition that would likely be uniform or not.

I can say that our water usage matches our metered water very consistently over the years relative to changes in our household.

3. This next item may require a discussion.

There is always water underground. Groundwater finds its level ("water table") based on many factors - proximity (elevation) to water bodies, topography, geology, soils. When we develop property it is important to know the groundwater table. In a very ledgy area normally the groundwater runs on top of the ledge which can be quite high. Many old basements with ledge outcroppings can be very damp or even wet. If clay soils, groundwater can be trapped at a high elevation as well. If well draining soils, groundwater may be twenty feet or more below grade.

Rains elevate ground water naturally. So we look for what is the high groundwater mark when we build, or "high water table". Not advisable - but one can build in a high water table using certain techniques for dewatering and waterproofing.

Infiltration is groundwater seeping into sewer pipes. If leaky sewer pipes exist above groundwater - the flow would be in the other direction, contaminating soils with wastewater. Many are below ground water only during high water table - caused by rain events, not irrigation systems. An important point - we WANT rainwater to seep naturally into the ground, creating a 'slow recharge' of the groundwater... which is nature's way of filtering water on its way back to the river... - and less so to runoff into our storm drains, which carries street pollution to our streams and rivers, and takes capacity from our storm drain system. Lawns are better than driveways but gardens better than lawns for capturing and making good use of rain.

Irrigation systems have little effect on the ground water table. They exist to nourish plants and lawns and unless neglected for very long periods of time (which would be very, very, very expensive!) would not contribute the volume of water necessary to raise the ground water table.

A more important factor is the condition of the private sewer line running under a person's yard, which each property owner owns to the street main - and which comprise a large percentage of the total underground system in Newton. These (old lines) are replaced with new construction and major renovation, but otherwise, especially on older properties may well be leaking in or out and a source of infiltration. Stay tuned.

Hope that helps....

Best,

Deborah J. Crossley
A L D E R M A N
dcrossley@newtonma.gov
617/ 775-1294 cell phone

When responding, please be advised that the Secretary of the Commonwealth has determined that email may be considered a public record.

On Dec 4, 2014, at 11:10 AM, rrcexec wrote:

Hi Deb:

Last night's Public Hearing was extremely useful and I, personally, am appreciative of the efforts that you and Ruthanne have put forth to focus attention on and to document our declining water/sewer/ storm water infrastructure.

A couple of questions remain for me:

1. A gentleman named Howard (I didn't catch his last name) spoke of information a group of engineers had gathered about the validity of the meter readings installed in the City. If that citizen's description of the state of the water meters and the company that supplied them is valid, what effect will that have on actions to be taken by the BOA, since any systematic bias in the readings could make the charges more "unfair and inequitable" than they currently might be?

2. Will you and the Public Facilities Committee report to the BOA on your assessment this week of the meters' possible biases in light of his information? If the vote moves ahead at BOA, will you stipulate that the rate structure could be reversed as soon as next year if further study leads to proof that there is, in fact, bias in the readings? While unpopular a thought, perhaps the double meter vote should be pushed out another year so that people don't install second meters only to learn that the rate structure might be reversed because of meter reading biases.

3. My next question has to do with storm water and its relationship to irrigation use. While researching the connection of storm water to groundwater, I became confused as to how they mix. Since water, like money, is fungible, I began to ask whether both ground and storm water contribute to "I and I" and the burden on our sewers. I read this quote from King County, Washington's Department of Natural Resources and Parks Wastewater Treatment Division:

"Excess water that flows into sewer pipes from groundwater and stormwater is called Infiltration and Inflow, or I/I. Groundwater (infiltration) seeps into sewer pipes through holes, cracks, joint failures, and faulty connections. Stormwater (inflow) rapidly flows into sewers via roof drain downspouts, foundation drains, storm drain cross-connections,

and through holes in manhole covers. Most I/I is caused by aging infrastructure that needs maintenance or replacement.”

I don't know what percentage of the I/I is from groundwater (or if any studies have been carried out on this subject), but clearly, irrigation systems put some additional burden on the sewers and the storm drains. Maybe we can address this extra burden by assessing an extra charge on irrigation systems that do not recapture and re-use stormwater and ground water on site. Also, since well users also contribute to I/I to some degree, they should be charged a fee as well.

Any insights you can provide would be greatly appreciated!

Sallee Lipshutz