

Waban Area Council

www.wabanareacouncil.com

January 11, 2018

Newton City Council
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Newton City Council Members:

On behalf of the Waban Area Council and in accordance with Article 9, Section 10, of the Newton City Charter, I am pleased to submit this Annual Report of the activities of the Waban Area Council for the calendar year 2017.

Sincerely,

Sallee Lipshutz
President

Waban Area Council

2017 Annual Report

Members & Officers

2017 was the fourth year for the Waban Area Council. The nine members of the Area Council are:

1. Isabelle Albeck
2. Pia Bertelli
3. Joe Corkery
4. Andreae Downs
5. Rena Getz
6. Sallee Lipshutz
7. Maureen Reilly Meagher
8. Christopher Pitts
9. Kathy Winters

Ward Five Alderman John Rice is an ex officio member of the Area Council and attends nearly every meeting. Ald. Brian Yates and Ald. Deb Crossley also attend Area Council meetings as necessary.

The 2017 officers of the Area Council were:

Sallee Lipshutz, President
Christopher Pitts, Vice President
Rena Getz, Treasurer
Joe Corkery, Secretary

Work of the Waban Area Council in 2017

Communication

One of the primary goals of the communication committee is to raise awareness of the Waban Area Council among Waban residents. This included regular updates to the WAC Facebook page and regular blast emails to the community highlight issues important to Waban.

Friends of the Quinobequin

The council coordinated a weekend of volunteer service through the CRWA as well as Newton Serves and continued to support ongoing volunteer work throughout the year.

Waban Future Vision Project

The committee finalized and distributed the community surveys soliciting broad community feedback (over 300 submissions) on a number of topics. The results have been collected, organized, and are available for public review at wabanareacouncil.com.

Waban Historic District

The subcommittee continued to gather more information this year. In particular, focusing on 155 homes that have been identified as being in the center or in historic/national register districts.

Traffic & MassDOT Engagement

The council provided periodic updates to the community regarding numerous constructions efforts and traffic planning.

Zervas Schools

The council provided regular updates to the community as to the status, progress, and completion of the Zervas School construction project. In addition, the council hosted a presentation on the administration's current approach to Beethoven St and the intersection with Beacon St as well as the city's plans for the Zervas project going forward from that time.

Waban Common

The council supported a community effort to design and develop the island at the intersection of Beacon St, Collins St, and Waban Ave. This effort led to the creation of Waban Common, Inc. a non-profit corporation (that is not affiliated with the Waban Area Council) to drive the fundraising efforts to raise the money required to develop the island as planned.

Civic Engagement

The council hosted two election showcases giving candidates from all contested races an opportunity to share their positions and respond to submitted questions. The second showcase featured a formal debate on the proposed Charter. These showcases were organized in partnership with the other area councils. Both showcases were recorded and the videos are available online at wabanareacouncil.com.

The council hosted representatives from the Newton Police Department on multiple occasions including David McDonald, Chief of Police, and Brett Ferolito, Community Outreach Officer. The council also hosted a discussion with John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services.

Fundraising

The council elected to not pursue any fundraising efforts in 2017.

Business and Economic Development

The council formed a new subcommittee focused on Business and Economic development in Waban. The subcommittee reached out to local businesses to invite their participation with the Council as well as to solicit any concerns that they might have that could be addressed by the Council.

Property Developments in Waban

In 2017, members of the Council were active in keeping the community informed and in encouraging constructive dialogue regarding the development of two properties in Waban: 1521 Beacon St (the former St. Philip Neri church) and 1615 Beacon St. (the Peck property). The WAC website has pages dedicated to both properties.

The council delivered one letter in support of the Suzuki School plans for 1615 Beacon St and continued to provide regular updates regarding the status of both properties. We expect to continue to provide information to the community as these projects progress.

In addition, the Council closely followed and provided updates to the community on the status of the demolition of the home at 37 Radcliff Rd that exceeded the scope of its permit.