

# Waban Area Council

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April 14, 2017

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 2016.

Sincerely,

Sallee Lipshutz  
President

# Waban Area Council

## 2016 Annual Report

### Members & Officers

2016 was the third year for the Waban Area Council. The nine members elected to the Council in 2015 all completed their first in their two-year terms of office. 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 2016 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 2016

#### **Communication**

One of the primary goals of the communication committee this year was to raise awareness of the Waban Area Council among Waban residents. This included regular updates to the WAC Facebook page and the adoption of MailChimp to send blast emails to the community.

#### **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**

Waban Future Vision committee continued to meet regularly during this year to explore issues of concern to the village. The committee joined forces with Newton Highlands Visioning effort to generate additional input on common issues and hear from a larger group of individuals with diverse experience. The committee worked to develop a survey to obtain broader community feedback that it intends to distribute in 2017 pending approval.

### **Waban Historic District**

A subcommittee was formed this year to gather information about the pros and cons of forming a historic district within the community of Waban. A community event is planned and will highlight the developmental history of Waban, significant contributing properties and people that chose to reside within Waban.

### **Charter Commission**

The council provided regular updates on Charter Commission activities. In addition, the council worked together with the Newton Highlands and Upper Falls Area Councils to submit a letter in support of keeping area councils in the City Charter as well as soliciting community feedback to support the councils as well. Sallee Lipshutz spoke on behalf of the Area Council at a Charter Commission meeting.

### **Improvements on Sudbury Aqueduct Trail**

Throughout the year the council worked on opening the Sudbury Aqueduct for walking. This requires a permit from the MWRA, which the City must apply for. Newton is now the only community on the aqueduct that has not applied for a permit. At this time, the biggest impediments are lack of attention at City Hall and some abutters on the North End of the aqueduct that don't want people in their backyard. Many of the abutters on the Southern Side have signed on.

### **Traffic & MassDOT Engagement**

With regard to the Needham Street design, the council signed on to a letter to Newton Mayor, Setti Warren, asking that the street design be more welcoming to cyclists and pedestrians to unlock the area's economic potential and improve capacity.

The council also provided periodic construction updates to the community regarding the Add-A-Lane project and its impact on Waban.

## **Angier and Zervas Schools**

The council provided regular updates to the community as to the status, progress, and completion of the Angier School construction project.

The council provided regular updates to the community as to the status and progress of the Zervas School construction project. In addition, the council hosted a community meeting focused on traffic design issues.

The council delivered a letter to the School Committee to request that the School Committee take more active consideration of safe traffic design early in their planning process for new schools and to develop system-wide policies that would help alleviate city-wide traffic congestion issues caused by an overwhelming emphasis on drive-alone traffic.

## **Waban Common**

The council supported a community effort to design and develop a landscape plan for the island at the intersection of Beacon St, Collins St, and Waban Ave. Members of the council met with the Department of Parks & Recreation to obtain their support and willingness to maintain the Common as necessary. Two public hearings were hosted in 2016 to gather additional community feedback.

## **Civic Engagement**

The council hosted Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development, and Lily Canan Reynolds, Planning Department Community Engagement Manager to discuss the city's proposed housing strategy. The council also hosted Amy Zarechian from the Newton Housing Authority to explain what they are and how they operate.

## **Fundraising**

The council elected to not pursue any fundraising efforts in 2016 as the existing funds raised were sufficient for the planned operations for the council for that year.

## **Proposed Housing Developments in Waban**

In 2016 members of the Council were active in keeping the community informed and in encouraging constructive dialogue regarding the two potential 40B housing developments 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 two letters (one to the ZBA and one to the Mass Housing Partnership) expressing concerns about the proposed development at 1615 Beacon St (in particular about the historic nature of the existing home). We expect to continue to provide information to the community as this project progresses.

The council continued to provide updates regarding the proposed development at 1521 Beacon St including the fact that the developer decided not to appeal the city's assertion of having met the "Safe Harbor" status of 1.5% land area minimum of the city of Newton as being comprised of SHI Eligible Housing.