



**Meeting Date/Time: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 7:00pm**

**Meeting Location: Online via Zoom**

### **Attendees**

1. Incoming NAC Members: Jennifer Bentley, Carolyn Gabbay, Nancy Greenberg, Martina Jackson, Timothy LeBlanc and Aline Sammut
2. Outgoing NAC Members: Peter Bruce and Susan Reisler
3. Members of City Government: Councilor Tarik Lucas, WAC member Rena Getz
4. Members of the Public: Approximately 3 people

### **1. Confirmation of a Quorum:**

Outgoing NAC President Peter Bruce called the meeting to order and confirmed a quorum of the new members of the NAC, each of whom had already taken the oath of office in accordance with the City's protocols.

### **2. Thanking the departing members of the NAC upon completion of their terms of service.**

Martina expressed appreciate for the leadership Peter and Susan provided during their terms of service. Peter expressed pride in the accomplishments of the NAC, such as increased attendance meetings held over ZOOM, building a sense of community and having the NAC become better known, limiting the size and scale of some developments, closure of Bram Way to create the plaza, and the election of former NAC Vice President Tarik Lucas to the City Council. Thanks were also expressed to the other outgoing members of the NAC.

### **3. Introduction of new members**

Peter asked the new NAC members to introduce themselves. Martina, an active member of the Democratic party, noted that she will be the longest serving member of the NAC having first come on the NAC to fill a vacancy before being twice re-elected. Carolyn, a retired healthcare lawyer, noted that she is also looking forward to serving another term on the NAC. Jennifer noted her longstanding involvement in Newton politics and historic home preservation, and that she was looking forward to serving on NAC to attract more Newtonville area residents to NAC meetings. Tim, a software engineer, said that although this will be his first official role with the City, he has been an active voice on various issues. Nancy, a software executive, noted her 24 years as a Newton resident, her interest in historic homes, and her concerns about over-development in Newton. Aline, as special education teacher who grew up in Newton and returned in 2017 after raising her family, noted that her concerns include transparency in Newton, better rules enforcement and her desire to be part of the process with developments.

#### 4. Election of Officers

Peter presided over the election of the officers of the NAC.

Martina nominated Jenifer for the position of President, Carolyn seconded, and Jennifer accepted the nomination. The incoming members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To elect Jennifer Bentley President of the NAC.

Carolyn nominated Martina for the position of Vice President, Jennifer seconded, and Martina accepted the nomination. The incoming members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To elect Martina Jackson Vice President of the NAC.

Martina nominated Carolyn for the position of Secretary, Tim seconded, and Carolyn accepted the nomination. The incoming members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To elect Carolyn Jacoby Gabbay Secretary of the NAC.

Jennifer nominated Nancy for the position of Treasurer, Tim seconded, and Nancy accepted the nomination. The incoming members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To elect Nancy Greenberg Treasurer of the NAC.

Peter turned the meeting over to Jennifer who thanked him for his service

#### 5. Solicitation of applicants to fill Council vacancies

##### a. Discussion of procedures according to NAC by-laws

Martina introduced attendee Rena Getz, a member of the Waban Area Council.

Martina explained that there are 3 vacancies to be filled pursuant to the procedures in the NAC Bylaws. NAC Bylaws Article II, Section 5 provides:

##### **Section 5 - Vacancies.**

The Council shall notify the residents of the Area of the occurrence of a vacancy on the Council and such notice shall solicit applications for appointment to the Council. At its second regular meeting following the date of such notice, the Council shall elect, by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the remaining members, a person to fill such vacancy from among the applicants for appointment. Applicants must reside in the Area at the time of said meeting.

Discussion included the timeline to be used under this provision and to what extent executive sessions may be used for candidate interviews or deliberations. Martina agreed to consult the City Law Department for clarification. Peter outlined the process used for filling vacancies in the past, including posting notice and flyers and giving 2 weeks' notice before the vote. Jennifer expressed the intention to elect up to 3 individuals to fill the vacancies. Rena explained WAC's own recent process. Tim and Martina volunteered to post physical flyers in addition to the electronic notices that will be used.

Carolyn moved, and Martina seconded and the members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To give notice to Newtonville Area resident on the Newton Electronic Bulletin Board, the NAC page on the City website, via the NAC emailing list and such other media and communications vehicles as the President, in her sole discretion, deems appropriate that the NAC is soliciting applications of Area residents to fill the 3 vacancies on the NAC, with such applications be due on or before February 21, 2022 so that the NAC can conduct interviews of the applicants at a special meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 and can, at its 2<sup>nd</sup> regular meeting (i.e., March 10, 2022) following the date of publication, discuss in executive session to the extent permissible and vote on March 10, 2022 on electing, by the requisite 2/3 vote of the 6 current NAC members, up to 3 individuals to fill vacancies.

## **6. Vision for next term and initiatives to adopt**

### **a. Includes discussion from residents on what issues they want to see the NAC address**

Jennifer described some her ideas for the direction of the NAC and expressed interest in obtaining more community input. Her ideas included:

- Increasing communications and social media to bring in Area residents to attend, even more than the sometimes 50-70 that have been attending the Zoom meetings.
- Continuing efforts for communications with the Area schools and Area businesses.
- Becoming an educational venue on issues affecting Newtonville.
- Continue successful events (such as Village Day) and possibly partnering with others for more events.
- Focusing on issues facing Newtonville in terms of development and projects so that residents are proactively informed about upcoming projects and the NAC can be a conduit to speak with the City Council about them early enough in the project process so as to be able make a difference.
- Noting that the NAC conducted a survey/study in 2018 on what people want in Newtonville (mainly along the Washington Street Corridor), it might be time to revisit that survey to see how residents' opinions have changed over time.

Tim suggested including small scale surveys as an attachment to NAC emails on an ongoing basis. Regarding the 2018 survey, Peter explained that the cost at the time was ~\$6,000, mainly for printing and mailing costs, and that a working group was used for the effort with Fred Arnstein, Pam Shufro and Councilor Tarik Lucas working on the effort. Martina said that she has spoken with Councilor Lucas and he has agreed to explain the details of the last survey effort which reached out to ~11,000 people and garnered ~2,500 responses. Jennifer thought it would be good to follow the same footprint as a starting point. Peter commented on the possibility of using random sample techniques because of comments made about the prior survey, and he noted that the last survey included the Washington street corridor beyond the Newtonville Area.

Assignments for areas of focus were discussed. Tim to be reviewing website presence options and agreed to be the Zoom moderator/host, applying a 2-minute time clock to speakers as is done at the City Council. Aline will focus on outreach to schools.

Jennifer opened the floor and received the following comments from members of the public:

- Natalie Moran suggested Instagram and other social media presence. She volunteered to take a role. Joanna Mann volunteered to help.
- Joanna Mann mentioned traffic accidents as a concern. Jennifer suggested focusing on safety walking to school. Peter mentioned speeding on Walnut Street and others mentioned similar problems on Lowell and Newtonville Avenues. Aline noted that she is part of a Newtonville Avenue taskforce and that the City is looking at 40 locations with this kind of issue, with Councilor Lucas being a member of the Committee on Public Safety and Transportation and that there will be a City Council joint committee on traffic and how to track requests for traffic calming devices, etc.
- David Bronstein commended Jennifer’s list of focus areas and suggested prioritizing focus on programming and information on what is happening with a lesser focus on advocacy.

## 7. Administrative Issues

### a. Protocol for promoting non-NAC events or activities

### b. Approval of December meeting minutes

Jennifer suggested that it would be helpful to have an agreed protocol for the NAC to follow concerning using its City website page, Facebook page, newsletter, email list, etc., to promote events and activities that are not sponsored by the NAC. She noted a recent request to publicize a food drive for the benefit of Newton’s food pantries, but that the NAC did not promote it because there was no protocol in place.

Discussion included the distinction between emails and passive promotion on social media, how to decide what to promote, and that Jennifer and Aline might explore more student civic engagement involvement.

Jennifer moved, Martina seconded, and the members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To reserve use of the NAC listserv for NAC events, except where specifically voted otherwise, and to use social media for non-NAC events and activities.

The draft minutes of the December 9, 2021 meeting, having been circulated to the incoming NAC members for review and comment in advance of the meeting, and having been adjusted for minor edits, were presented for approval.

Martina moved, Carolyn seconded, and the members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the December 9, 2021 NAC meeting.

Aline offered to assist with publicity and outreach to the TAB, including a news release about the NAC membership and the identification of objectives going forward. In response to a question about what things WAC is working on that might suggest collaboration with the NAC, Rena suggested the possibility of a joint letter about the Area Councils to the TAB and the Area Council’s role as a portal to the City Council and the possible formation of additional Area Councils. Jennifer said she will be reaching out to other Area Councils, will attend their meetings, and will attempt to align where appropriate. Rena also noted that holding election debates is a joint function of the Area Councils and that they are known for

their Village Days, community building and making residents aware of issues that will become citywide issues. Jennifer also wants to reach out to the City Councilors from Wards 1,2 & 3 to attend meetings, as well as to facilitate information flow between meetings. Aline suggested assigning liaisons to different bodies like other Area Councils to share the burden with Jennifer.

## **8. Adjournment**

At approximately 8:45PM, Carolyn moved and Martina seconded, and the members of the NAC unanimously:

- **VOTED:** To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carolyn Jacoby Gabbay*

Secretary