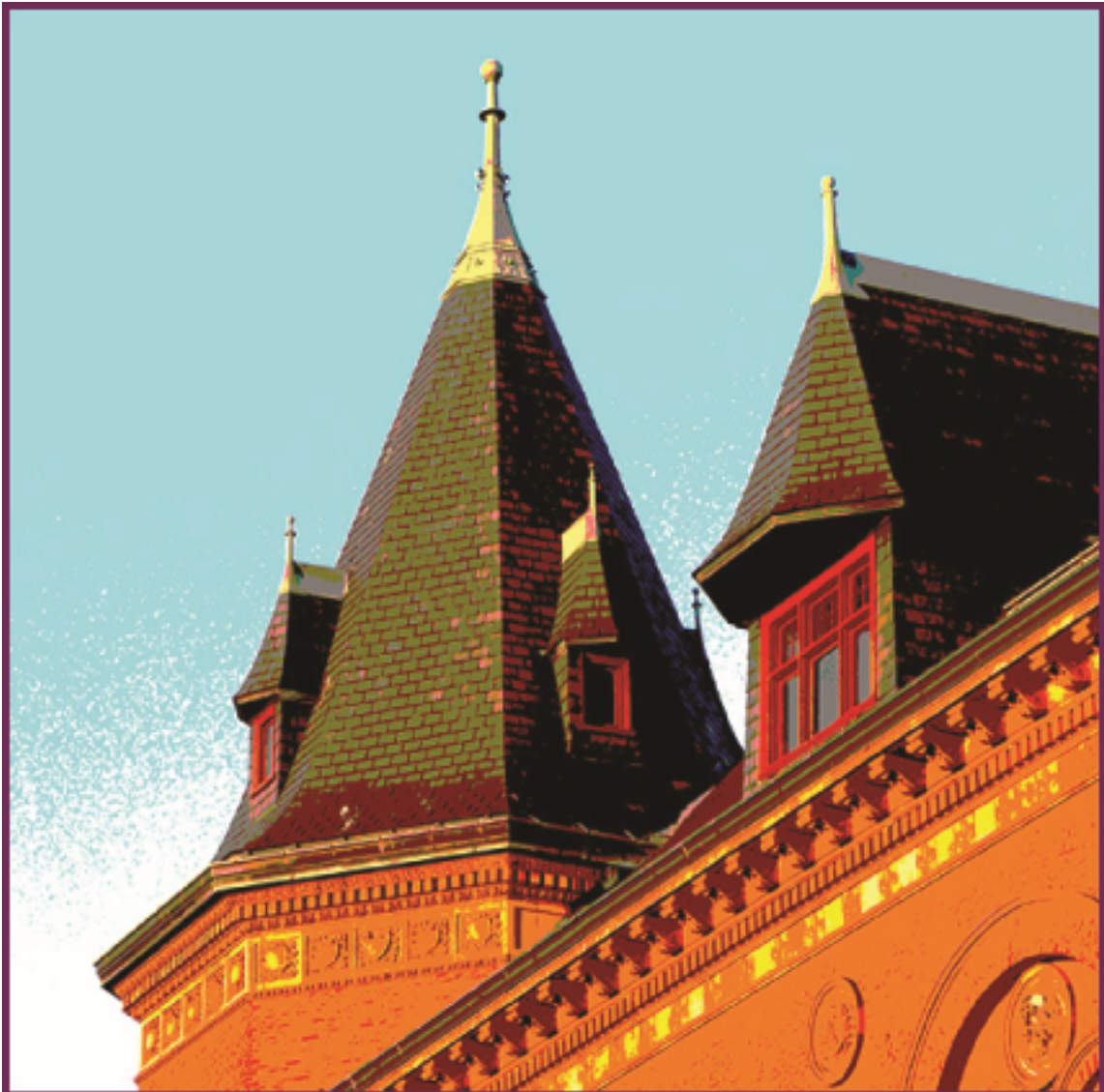


**Newtonville  
Area Council  
2014 Annual Report**



**NEWTONVILLE  
AREA COUNCIL**

December 31, 2014

Board of Aldermen  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton MA 02459

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Aldermen:

Pursuant to Section 9-10 of the City Charter, the Newtonville Area Council is pleased to provide you with this Annual Report of its activities for the calendar year 2014.

Sincerely,

Joy Huber  
President

## **About the Newtonville Area Council**

The Board of Alderman approved the creation of the Newtonville Area Council on March 18, 2013, as an auxiliary means of communications between the city and residents. Nine members were elected in September of 2013 and were sworn in on January 9th of 2014. Our members are Stephen Bart, Newtonville, Jacqueline Freeman, North Street, Joy Huber, Whitney Road, Marc Kaufman, Walnut Street, Wayne Koch, Greylock Road, Thomas Kraus, Walnut Street, Barbara Perlo, Gibson Road, Helene Sroat, Wildwood Avenue, and Tim Stone, Briar Lane. Ward 2 Alderman Emily Norton is a member, ex-officio.

In January of 2014 the following officers were elected by a vote of the Newtonville Area Council:

President — Joy Huber

Vice-President — Marc Kaufman

Secretary — Jacqueline Freeman

Treasurer — Stephen Bart

Members drafted and adopted by-laws in January, 2014. The council has spent time discussing the best way to adopt motions, and draft and send letters. Currently, the Area Council has no Subcommittees.

### **Beautiful Newtonville**

Several of the people who worked to collect signatures and navigate the channels of creating the Area Council are also members of Beautiful Newtonville, a volunteer, grassroots, non-profit group of local residents, businesses, commercial property owners and non-profits committed to revitalizing the village of Newtonville and fostering a renewed spirit of civic engagement. Over the last year, Beautiful Newtonville and the Newtonville Area Council have worked to support each other on overlapping issues and share resources, such as their e-mail distribution list, while still working to maintain clear and separate identities.

### **Communication**

The Area Council generally meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Newton Senior Center on Walnut Street, at 7 p.m. All of the Area Council meetings are open to the public. President Huber uses our

email distribution list to let residents know about important events and meetings.

Secretary Freeman maintains the council's webpage on the city's website.

(<http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/neighborhood/newtonville/default.asp>)

On it you can find upcoming meeting times, agendas, minutes, by-laws and other materials. It also lists contact information for all members.

## **Work of the Area Council**

### **Austin Street**

A majority of the work of the Area Council in 2014 has focused on the Austin Street Development Project. When the council was formed, the mayor was considering six potential bidders and proposals for the surplus site on Austin Street. Early in the year, members gathered a group of architects and landscape architects to help vet the proposals and wrote and disseminated an online survey to gauge public opinion about the development with regards to scale, density, parking and other issues.

In order to understand the city's decision making structure, the council heard presentations from Director of Community Engagements Ana Gonzalez, new Director of Economic Development Nancy Hyde, Chief Planner Alexandra Ananth, James Freas, chief planner for long-range planning for the city, Chief Procurement Officer Nick Read and former Director of Planning and Development Candace Havens.

Members also thoroughly evaluated the Austin Street parking study released in early summer and participated in the city's Austin Street Visioning meeting.

Once the mayor chose Austin Street Partners to develop the site, members entertained the idea of working with the city to co-sponsor a public meeting. In the end, the city and the council did not see eye to eye on the timing or format of the meeting and we did not sponsor it.

### **Walnut Street**

Plans to widen the sidewalks and repave Walnut Street have been pushed back one year. Parts of Walnut Street up to Cabot Street have been repaved but the Newtonville portion will begin this spring. Members have written to the mayor to express opposition to the idea of angled parking and widening only one side of the street. The council supports widening both sides. With the help of landscape architect Natalie Adams the council has presented the city with a concept for the renovation with regards to choice and placement of lighting, trees, and benches.



Beautiful Newtonville Planter Sketch

### **Washington Street**

Several council members have attended the Washington Street Corridor Study meetings. The Massachusetts Planning Organization has committed approximately \$80,000 to study the corridor from West Newton to Newton Corner.

### **Marijuana Dispensary**

Members attended the public meetings to learn about Garden Remedies' proposal to open a marijuana dispensary on Washington Street. The council agreed that the public process has been open and accessible thus far, giving residents an opportunity to voice support and concerns.

### **Court Street**

Members attended meetings on the Court Street development and listened to a presentation from neighbor Bob Kavanaugh on the project. Members drafted a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeal requesting the parking study completed for the project be expanded to include more hours and a more in-depth evaluation of the car dealership parking in conjunction with the potential marijuana dispensary traffic.

### **Transportation/Special meeting with Kay Khan**

The council made an effort to learn more about how to get involved in federal, state and city opportunities for transportation projects in Newtonville. We hosted a special meeting for state Representative Kay Khan and representatives from the Department of Transportation and the MBTA. The council is in the beginning stages of planning a forum on smart growth and development.

### **Support Development of the Indigo MBTA Line**

Attend meetings of the DOT I90 Interchange Task Force and Public Meetings. Encourage active participation by the city in these meetings to ensure that Newton has a voice in the location of future Indigo Line train stops on existing Purple Line tracks and to encourage the construction of West Station in Allston as the central transfer point for the new train service.

## **Village Day**

The Area Council has reached out to Linda Plaut, Newton's Director of Cultural Affairs, to learn more about the cost and revenue of running Village Day. The council hopes to take the lead in planning future Village Days.



## **Area Council Finances**

The Area Council does not receive any direct funding from the city. We currently have no funds.