

WABAN AREA COUNCIL AGENDA

www.wabanareacouncil.com

Wednesday, September 7, 2016, 7:30pm

Brigham House-20 Hartford St., Newton Highlands

RECEIVED

By City Clerk at 4:11 pm, Sep 02, 2016

*******PLEASE NOTICE CHANGE OF TIME AND PLACE*******

WABAN AREA COUNCIL MEETING: 7:30PM (FIRM TIME)

THERE WILL BE NO ZERVAS COMMUNITY/ CONSTRUCTION TEAM MEETING THIS MONTH

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 11 MEETING JC (4 min)

II. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 TREASURER'S REPORT RG (2 min)

III. BURNING ISSUES: Community comments for future agenda or immediate resolution. (5 min)

IV. WAC LETTER TO SCH. COMM. RE: SETTING SITE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (Attached)
PB (15 min)

**V. CHARTER COMMISSION – WAC ARTICLE 9 DISCUSSION FOR SEPTEMBER 14
PRESENTATION TO CHARTER COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING** JC, KW and SHL (15 min)

VI. ROLE OF WAC IN ZONING NON-COMPLIANCE BY DEVELOPERS IN WABAN IA et alii. (5 min)

VII. UPDATES: (35min)

- A. St. Philip Neri/1521 Beacon St.: Continuation of ZBA Public Hearing until Sept. 29 RG (5 min)
- B. Staples-Craft House at 1615 Beacon Street – KW (5 min).
- C. WAC Waban Historic District Sub-Committee Information Gathering Update RG (5 min)
- D. "Waban Common" (Island Across from Angier). SL (5 min)
- E. WAC Visioning Community Survey CP (5 min)
- F. Waban Parking Status – JR (5 min)
- G. 284 Woodward St. – Teddy Bear Club (5 min)

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: New items that may lawfully arise for discussion.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. State Primary Elections – Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016.
- B. Charter Commission Panel and Public Hearing on Area Councils –Wed., Sept.14., 7PM, City Hall
- C. ZBA Public Hearing on St. Philip Neri – (Continued from July) – To be resumed September 29.

X. ADJOURN. Next regularly scheduled Waban Area Council Meeting: **Thurs. Oct. 13, 7:30pm**, immediately following the Zervas Construction Team/Community Meeting at 7PM at Waban Lib. Ctr.

We encourage you to continue contributing to the Newton Food Pantry, now housed in the basement of City Hall, by bringing non-perishable food items to that new location.

The location of this meeting is handicap accessible, and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons requiring assistance. If you need a special accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. For Telecommunications Relay Service, please dial 711.

ATTACHMENT: FOR DISCUSSION---WAC LETTER TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Dear Chairman Hill and members of the Newton School Committee:

The Waban Area Council has now observed the site planning and construction of two elementary schools in our neighborhood. We have seen the School Department successfully plan and implement a terrific busing strategy to the Carr School for both the Angier and the Zervas populations, and lived through the periods when more children walked to the bus—often in groups--and few, if any, parents drove their children to school.

Our neighbors have commented on the pleasure they take in seeing kids out walking together, rather than coping with cars speeding kids up back streets and cut-throughs. With the re-opening of Angier, some of the walking has continued, but some of the driving has, unfortunately, returned and we have witnessed the bad behavior of caregivers in cars as they queue (mostly) for pickup—waiting a good half-hour (or longer) for school to let out in and before the drop-off zone, causing backups on Beacon Street and beyond.

We also have noticed that the conversations around school site design seem to be an afterthought in Newton school design. When these discussions have come up in Waban, we have seen a bias toward driving, rather than a gentle nudge toward healthier, and more community-sustaining modes like walking to & from the school site. In fact, we have witnessed the repeated introduction of a wider, faster Beethoven Avenue as a “solution” to congestion without much apparent thought as to the resultant effects such a widening will have on student safety or the residential street in the hours outside of school drop-off and pick-up.

Our understanding is that the School Committee sets policy—and in fact, we note that you do have a policy around busing.

We urge you be proactive and take the next step to a more complete policy, in light of and in line with the City’s draft Complete Streets Policy and Transportation Strategy. We know you are aware that walking and biking before and after school can give children an opportunity to exercise (which is shown to improve academic performance), meet their friends, and give their parents a chance to build community—one of the foundations of our Newton community. We hope this policy will also address what you expect from your school designs—so that as the building is designed with how children arrive at school in mind (incorporating, for instance, doors near where children will be walking from), prioritizing walking and biking over driving to school, and being a good neighbor to the residents who will live with any changes to streets near schools 365 days of the year.

In Waban, we are happy to assist in the implementation of such policy, and in helping to advocate for needed traffic calming and other infrastructure changes to make walking safer and more pleasant near and on the way to schools.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

The Waban Area Council
By Sallee Lipshutz, President

