

To: Nicole Banks, Luis Perez DeMorizi, Gregory Mellett, Robin McLaughlin;
Parks, Recreation & Culture, City of Newton
From: Lisa Dady, Director, Historic Newton
cc: Laura Foote
Date: August 5, 2022
Re: Waban: Historic Interpretive Signs

Historic Newton has been working with community members in Waban on the outdoor educational sign project since we submitted this memo/application to you in February. Since then, we have revised the credit area of the sign and slightly revised text and images, which is visible on the new drafts (PDFs attached). We also adjusted how the signs will be paid for. (Donors and community groups have and will cover the costs of development, design, and fabrication while Historic Newton is still committed to paying for installation costs (and coordinating the installation with P,R,C).

This memo and the attached PDFs represent Historic Newton's application to the Parks Commission for permission to the install the signs. The PDFS represent the **FINAL** proposed designs. We hope that this application will be considered at the September meeting.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached for questions at ldady@newtonma.gov or 617-796-1451.

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To: Nicole Banks, Luis Perez DeMorizi, Gregory Mellett, Robin McLaughlin;
Parks, Recreation & Culture, City of Newton
From: Lisa Dady, Director, Historic Newton
cc: Waban signs working group (Laura Foote (project coordinator), Chris Pitts, Barbara Brustowicz, Sachiko Isihara, Rena Getz, Sallee Lipshutz)
Date: February 27, 2022
Re: Waban: Historic Interpretive Signs

Historic Newton is proposing to install two different outdoor interpretive signs next to sidewalk locations in the village center of Waban. The signs represent a new way to connect with people outdoors, offering a colorful focal point to reach passers-by, families, and shoppers where they are. People will be able to learn about the history of their neighborhood, notice the architecture around them, and find out about people who lived here. The hope is that they will connect more with their neighborhood and be curious to find out more.

The Waban signs were prepared with input from many residents, including members of the Waban Area Council, the Waban Improvement Society, Waban Common Inc., and neighborhood churches. Historic Newton provided research, images, and guidance on content.

Historic Newton is developing a comprehensive plan for a series of future outdoor interpretive signs in roughly 20 locations around Newton. Like the proposed Waban signs, future signs will serve Historic Newton's mission to connect our community with its history in order to enrich future generations.

Content of signs:

The Waban signs will combine narrative and maps with historic and contemporary photographs. The signs will have a URL and a QR code to access more information, via more detailed articles and background information on Historic Newton's website.

The versions of the signs shown with this note are advanced drafts incorporating several iterations of review in the community. They are still subject to some fine-tuning and Historic Newton's final sign-off. We look forward to sharing the latest versions at our March meeting with you. The sign content will be finalized before the Parks and Recreation Commission's April meeting.

Mission:

This proposal fits with several City-wide goals in the master Arts & Culture Plan, including:

- Promote art and community-building activity in the villages
- Highlight the unique qualities of neighborhoods
- Encourage community use of public spaces
- Provide family-friendly learning opportunities
- Foster grass-roots initiatives

Process:

An initial brainstorming session, about city-wide outdoor signage, with Bob DeRubuis, Lisa Dady, Anne Larner, and Katy Hax Holmes took place in mid-2019. Signs similar to the proposed Waban signs were installed in West Newton Square (2020) and at the Hyde Center in Newton Highlands (2021), also on a pilot basis. Responses to those pilot signs in the community have been very positive.

Waban neighbors have been working together on content and placement of the two signs since April 2021. They determined that separate signs in two locations about two blocks apart were needed, highlighting different themes and places. The working group includes officers and members from the Waban Area Council, the Waban Improvement Society and Waban Common Inc. The project coordinator is a community volunteer.

Historic Newton has provided expertise and guidance on content and access to images from its archives. Volunteer photographers have also contributed time and talent.

Costs and specifications

The costs of design and fabrication will be covered by Historic Newton, along with donations from community members and others. We will coordinate with the Department of Parks and Recreation as appropriate on installation and maintenance of the signs. Signs will be City-owned, with Historic Newton responsible for the panels themselves (text and images, future reprinting to replace worn or illegible panels or to incorporate any needed updates or corrections), and the Department of Parks and Recreation maintaining the physical structures (exhibit bases and posts) and the surrounding landscape.

The fabricator, Pannier Graphics, is experienced in supplying long-lasting outdoor exhibit signs for the National Park Service (NPS) throughout the country. Signs are built to high-quality NPS specifications. The weight of each sign including the posts is about 50 pounds. The estimated cost per sign paid to the vendor will be approximately \$1100. The sign panels can be replaced independently of the frame and posts, should the need arise in the future.

- • \$330 - Fabrication of 36" w x 24" h x 0.90 Fiberglass Embedded (FE) panel. Matte finish.
- • \$620 - Rust-free aluminum cantilevered exhibit base for FE panel with two 2" x 4" posts measuring 60" long in powder coated textured black finish
- • \$150 - Shipment & delivery - forklift truck required for unloading crate

Additional costs of preparing the signs, which have already been covered by individual donors and community organizations, include professional fees for graphic design, expenses to access images, and printing of draft posters for review and discussion.

Locations

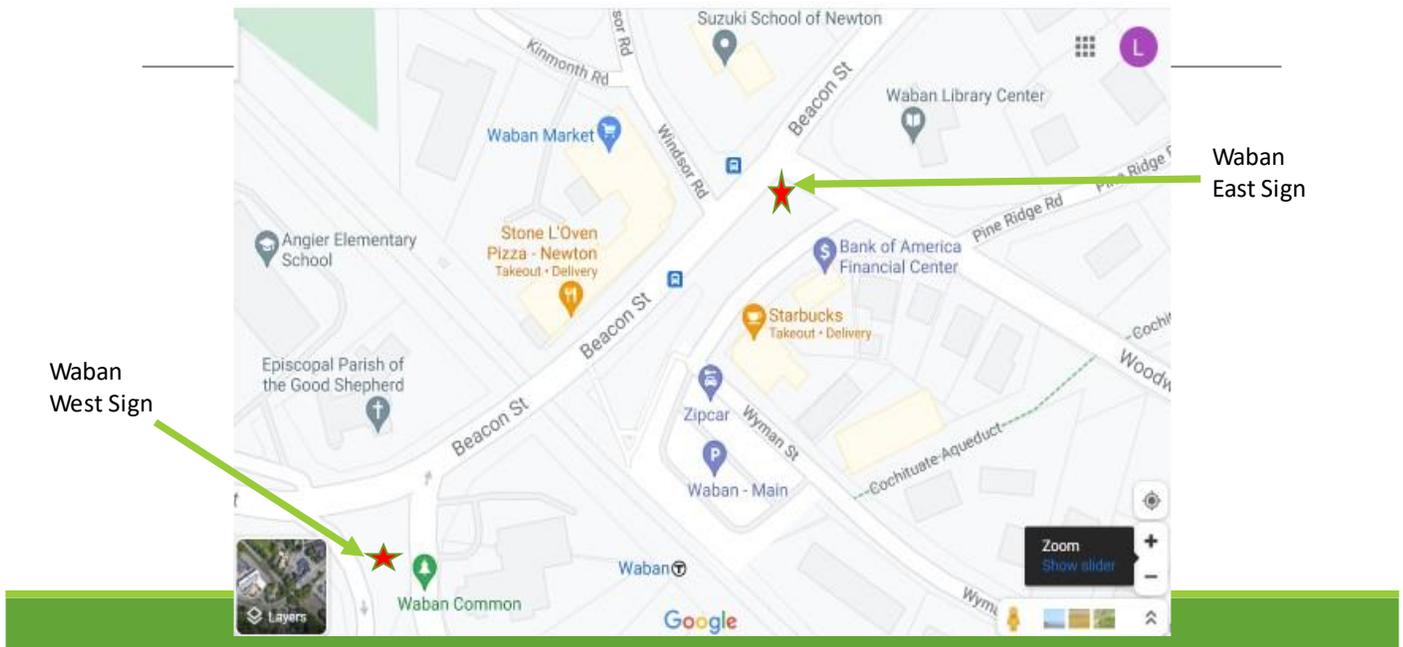
Proposed locations are based on pedestrian flow and visibility of buildings mentioned in the narrative and photos. These have been reviewed with Luis and Gregory in a site meeting on February 2. See maps on following pages.

We look forward to collaborating on this initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding any questions or follow-up steps. Thank you for your consideration.



Photos above: Interpretive signs in West Newton (2020) and Newton Highlands (2022).

Waban: Locations for 2 Village History Signs



WABAN
WEST SIGN



THE VILLAGE OF WABAN

How families have shaped this community

WABAN WEST SIGN
For Submission to Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture
AUGUST 1, 2022

**“THE CHARLES RIVER,
WITH ITS CRYSTAL CURRENTS,
WINDS AROUND THE
TRANQUIL BEACH BETWEEN THE
UPPER AND LOWER FALLS,
AMID THE MOST IDYLIC RURAL SCENERY.”**
— M. F. SWETTER, 1889
Eng’s Handbook of Boston



EMERGENCE OF THE VILLAGE

The Charles River area provided fruitful fishing and hunting for indigenous people in this region. The Massachusetts people called the river Ouinobeguin, meaning “meandering.” Now Oudnohequin Road runs alongside the Charles River at the southwest edge of the village.

By the early 1800s, several large family farms were established here. Those family names became street names: Collins, Wyman and Hoftas. More than 50 acres were set aside by the town for an almshouse and “poor farm,” a place for indigent people to live and work.

Running beneath where you are standing the Cochituate Aqueduct (1848) carried water from Natick to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. This massive civil works project supplied water to Boston for a century.

With the opening of rail service in the 1880s, this pastoral hamlet evolved rapidly into a thriving suburban village.



ESTABLISHING HOUSES OF WORSHIP

As more families settled here, they built places of worship that became signature buildings in the village.

Local architect William Goodwin designed the Parish of the Good Shepherd (1896), incorporating fieldstone walls and Gothic arched windows. This church joined the Episcopal Diocese.

A non-denominational Protestant congregation formed to build the Union Church (1912). Architect James H. Ritchie, who trained in Scotland, designed its tall spire to be visible from afar.



REMEMBERING A LOCAL HERO

Members of the Angler family were partitioners at the Good Shepherd church. Albert Angler left Harvard College to serve in World War I. Lt. Angler showed great courage on the battlefield in France, dying at age 21, just two months before the Armistice. More than 100 Newtonians gave their lives in that war.

Named to honor his memory, the first Angler School opened in 1921. The current building first welcomed students in 2016.



IMPROVEMENTS LED BY THE COMMUNITY

Wabanites frequently band together to enhance village life. In 2018, under the City’s Adopt-a-Space program, families and businesses joined to transform two traffic islands into this park, carefully preserving the old oak tree behind you. Waban Common Inc. continues to steward this green space.



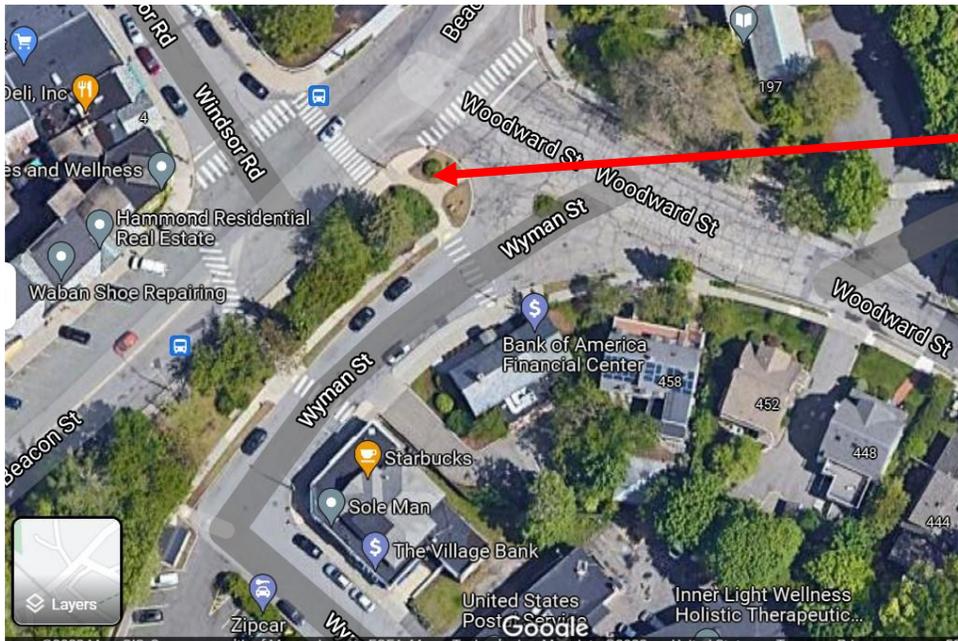
LEARN MORE: www.newtonma.gov/history/signs



City of Newton

The sign was created through a collaboration of the Waban Improvement Society, the Waban Area Council, Waban Common Inc. and historic Newtonians. Discover a second sign a few blocks to the east.

WABAN WEST –to be located on Waban Common



WABAN EAST SIGN

THE VILLAGE OF WABAN

A farming area transitions to a community crossroads

WABAN EAST SIGN
For Submission to Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture
AUGUST 1, 2022

This village is named for Waban, a 17th century leader of the Massachusetts people. His ancestors had lived in this region long before the arrival of European settlers. In 1886, William Strong, a prominent community leader, proposed the name Waban for this village.

EVOLUTION OF A FARMHOUSE

In 1688, English colonists John and Mary Craft Staples built their farmhouse on what is now the corner of Beacon Street and Windsor Road. A weaver by trade, John Staples also served as schoolmaster, town clerk, and deacon.

This property with its 100-acre farm was acquired in 1875 by William and Mary Strong, who expanded the nurseries. Later they subdivided their land, opening up lots for new families.

The original farmhouse continues to be adapted for new uses in the community.

EARLY INFRASTRUCTURE IN WABAN

The Strong family was instrumental in bringing the Circuit Railroad here in 1884, now the D line. The original station (since demolished) was one of a series designed by renowned Waban-based architect, Lewis H. Bacon, who worked for H.H. Richardson.

Rail service sparked rapid growth. The village grew from 20 families in 1885 to 350 in 1915. In 1889, residents formed the Waban Improvement Society with William Strong as President. They called for gas lines, street repairs and wooden sidewalks. They secured financing for the first commercial and community building, Waban Hall (1890).

The Strong Block* (1896) is one of Newton's few intact 19th century brick commercial structures. With its distinctive stepped gables, it forms a visual anchor for the village.

CULTURAL LIFE AND OPEN SPACES

In 1918, social clubs combined efforts to build a Craftsman-style clubhouse, now the Windsor Club.

Demand for public libraries burgeoned in the US in the early 1900s. Residents joined together in 1929 to donate land and raise funds to build the Waban Library.* Dr. Fanny McGee, a qualified physician, served as the long-standing village librarian.

Open space became a priority. In the 1950s, textile industrialist Warren Lincoln championed the purchase of land behind the Windsor Club to remain open in perpetuity as a park.

City of Newton

*The sign was created through a collaboration of the Waban Improvement Society, the Waban Area Council, Waban Common Inc, and Historic Newton. Discover a second sign a few blocks to the west.

LEARN MORE: www.townofnewton.org/history/signs
 *Waban Library: 1000 Beacon St, Waban, MA 02455
 *Waban Area Council: 1000 Beacon St, Waban, MA 02455
 *Waban Common Inc: 1000 Beacon St, Waban, MA 02455

WABAN EAST – to be located on landscaped area near corner of Beacon & Woodward