

# **Blackstone / Franklin Square Neighborhood Association**

**P.O. Box**

**Boston, MA 02118**

Minutes of June 11, 2013

Location: District 4 police station (650 Harrison Ave.)

Meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05

## **Current Board**

Matthew White, President

Jim Keeney, Vice President

Erica Rice, Treasurer

Justin Rice, Secretary

\* Minute approval from last meeting / special meeting excepted

## **\* Updates from the Friends Group (fountains, events, etc.)**

Friends Group president Courtney Trautman updated the group on the squares. The fountain rehabilitation is taking longer than anticipated because the basins have to be redone. They were originally supposed to be done by the end of May. The city said they hope the fountains are done by July 4 but Courtney asked that the Blackstone fountain be complete by the June 21 Summer Soulstice event. The Friends Group will also pay for the repaving of the asphalt pathways in both parks.

Additionally, the Friends Group budgeted \$10,000 for new trash cans in the park but the city has found the money to replace all the trash cans in the parks. They will be one concrete basins, similar to the ones on Commonwealth Ave. but will be a couple inches shorter.

The new developer of the Harbor Lights building on Shawmut and West Brookline will also provide 10 new benches in the park. Not sure when those will be installed.

The Parks Department has also decided to put the dog issue in Blackstone Square on hold until they finish their trial of a rotating dog area on the Boston Common.

## **\*Events committee update**

Events Committee Chair David Whisholek said the Friends Group is working with Washington Gateway Main Streets on a free Make Music Boston event in the squares at 4 p.m. on June 21. It will include five bands and food trucks. There will be no beer area. They are looking for volunteers to help conduct a survey during the event. There will also be a movie night in the park in August. Dave is also looking to schedule an Events Committee meeting.

A country music group is also looking to do a free concert in the park.

Sculptures in the Square will return in September to coincide with Open Studios.

### **Scholarship committee**

Scholarship Committee chair Christopher McBride said that there are 16 applications for the scholarship this year. In the past the scholarship was only for high school seniors but this year the rules were changed so that people already in post-secondary programs could apply. There are two \$1,000 scholarships and one \$2,500 community service scholarship in the name of past president Andrew Parthum.

The committee is interviewing half of the applicants on Thursday June 13 at Blackstone Community Center and the remainder of the applicants will be interviewed on Monday June 17.

We might announce the scholarship winners at the June 21 Soulstice event in Blackstone.

We will try to have a July reception for the winners.

### **\* Treasurer's report**

Starting Balance for March 14, 2013	\$16,254.45
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#### **Deposits:**

#### **Withdrawals:**

Scholarship Withdrawals	\$440.59
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Ending Balance for June 11, 2013	\$15,629.27
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#### Break down of \$15,629.27:

General Fund:	\$2,961.68
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Scholarship Fund: \$12,667.59

**Scholarship Money Outstanding (Not Used):**

Lexis Salters 2012: \$75.92

Daniel Liang 2012: \$40.55

Gregory Nuzzo 2010: \$477.40 (approved to use after 2010)

**Total                      \$593.87**

Never Used: Jaime Ye 2011 (\$1,000)

**\* Expansion of association boundaries - discussion and vote**

B/FSNA has received requests from neighbors on Wareham St, and Plympton between Harrison and Albany Streets, to include them in the neighborhood association because they don't have a neighborhood association.

Everyone seemed to be in support of this idea at last month's meeting so this month we invite people from the community give feedback.

The group voted unanimously to expand the neighborhood association.

Treasurer Erica Rice noted that we need to revise the bylaws to reflect the changes of the neighborhood association. The board will spend some time modernizing the bylaws and we will talk about it in next meeting and vote on them.

**\*75 E Dedham St. development**

The new owners of a dilapidated building at 75 E. Dedham St — V. William "Will" Avanesian - Founding partner of BREC, LLC (Boston Real Estate Collaborative, LLC) — are proposing building rental apartments there. They bought the structurally unsound building last June. The address falls into the expanded area of the neighborhood association. The developers have also presented to the New Market Business Association. The developers need several variances. While the developers asked for the group to write a letter to the ZBA in support of their project, the group voted unanimously not to write the letter until we have more information from the project. They are going before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on Tuesday.

We will write a letter to that group suggesting our concerns but that we're in support of some development at that site.

The variances they need include: groundwater conservation, 8 foot setback in the back of the building, parking requirement.

Their Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will be 5600 ft on a 1200 square foot lot.

They plan to demolish the building and replace it with a five and a half story building with seven market rate rental units. The developers own 13 buildings in the South End and Fort Hill and Back Bay. They live at 237 North Hampton St, a building that they own. They also own a building on East Springfield St and one at 785 Tremont across from the new Parish Café.

Some of the apartments will be furnished rentals marketed to hospital associated people and they will be 90-day plus stays. There will be no parking, which they need a variance for.

They presented to BRA and the Worcester Square neighborhood association knows about the project but they don't need to get their approval.

After ZBA approval they are subject to BRA design review and then Landmarks has to OK the demo.

They hope to be done with the building by October or November but maybe not until the spring.

The group agreed to write a letter to the ZBA saying that we appreciate that they are trying to be good neighbors by coming to on their volition and that we are encouraged that they are planning to fix a structure that is so visually unappealing and structurally unsound. But we have additional questions and need more time to gather more information.

Our concerns include lack of greenery, lack of parking, large FAR and a lack of documents on the historical integrity of the building. We would also like to see a rendering of their proposed building and to look at work they have done in the past.

We would also like to ask them to consider a community benefit toward our parks.

We are willing to hold a special meeting to take up this matter further.

## **Expanding board**

The group voted 9 to 1 to add three new board members. The three new board members will have an advisory role. They will come to both at large and board meetings but not be officers. There was considerable discussion about making the new board members “Area reps.” After a while the group decided to revisit the idea at a later date.

## **Board elections**

Matthew White was reelected as president for a one-year term. Vice President Jim Keeney did not except a nomination to run again and Nancy Farrington was voted as vice president. Erica Rice was reelected as treasurer and Justin Rice was reelected as secretary.

Sherwood Hughes, John Wolfarth and Donny Goris-Kolb were also elected to the board to fill the three newly created positions.

We will update the website to reflect the new board.

## **St. George St. development issue**

Sherwood Hughes brought it to the groups attention that the developer of the new building at 5-10 St. George St. is changing the scope of his project from condos to rentals. Several condo associations oppose this change, including 1 & 11 St. George St, the Penmark and ArtBlock, as they agreed to significant variances when the project was passed on the condition that the project would be condos.

The three groups sent a letter to the BRA on June 23.

A community meeting will be held on the subject on June 19.

B/FSNA will have an inquiry into this issue before it takes action.

Meeting close 9:10