

BLACKSTONE/FRANKLIN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
D4 Police Station, 2nd Floor Community Room
650 Harrison Avenue

Current Board

Eric Huang	President
Donny Gorbis-Kolb	Vice President
Lisa Jenks	At Large
Andrew Parthum	At Large
Michael Broderick	Clerk
Mark Ott	Friends President

1. Neighborhood networking session held from 7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Meeting was called to order at approximately: 7:15 p.m.

2. Board elections. Michael Broderick introduced himself as candidate for clerk; Matthew Mues introduced himself as candidate for treasurer; Mark Ott introduced himself as President of Friends; Andrew Parthum moved to elect all three candidates in one slate, which seconded and carried by a majority of members attending.

3. Treasurer's Report by Eric Huang, acting as Treasurer:

\$4,170.00 in the operating account
\$21,270.00 in the scholarship account

4. Public Safety: Officer Bill Slyne and Captain Ivens addressed two recent incidents involving shots fired and a robbery in sparrow park by four individuals who may have had handguns; 2 arrests made. Officer Slyne reviewed the current security camera situation: Shawmut and West Newton camera up and running; Tremont and West Newton camera up and running; Newland and West Newton camera is still a question which Sgt. Tax is working on. Maloney Property Management to begin managing O'Day Park, enabling Maloney to "no-trespass" the park; possibility of switching existing camera over to Newland in the works; flyers made available for members; BPD approaching Vila Victoria about assisting. In response to a member question, Officer Slyne explained that the cameras record but don't get watched unless there's been a report of a crime, at which time the footage is reviewed. The cameras act more as a deterrent.

On needles in the parks: Officer Slyne explained that BDP is speaking with Mass Dept. Public Health about placing needle boxes in the parks. This would not be a needle

exchange; merely a needle deposit. Locations where boxes have already been made available are being used.

On thefts, a member mentioned that Foodies and Olympia Flowers are accepting packages for residents to avoid delivery theft from stoops.

Captain Ivens described increased security in response to the recent Paris attacks, and that increased police presence at major events throughout Boston does not take away from typical police patrols. Rather, neighborhood patrol levels stay the same during a large event, as additional police are called in from other units.

On the Operation Safe Alley walkthrough program, Captain Ivens explained that Officer Richard Leto, upon request, will go through an alley with abutting residents and point out safety concerns. Residents should call D4's Community Service office to set up a walkthrough.

The 6 p.m., November 30 Neighborhood Watch discussion at the D4 station was announced and flyers made available to members.

Eric Huang announced the creation of Public Safety Committee, its focus on Franklin Square and West Newton/Shawmut, introduced Mark Howard as Chair and described Mark's involvement in replacing the West Newton/Shawmut camera replaced. Mark Howard introduced himself to members.

5. Committee matters, generally: a sign-in sheet and list of committees was passed around as Eric Huang described opportunities that will be available for members.

6. Development Committee matters (by Donny Goris-Kolb).

a. 35 W. Newton Street: proposed restaurant

Donny explained that the Committee is keeping tabs on the proponent's process, and held a preliminary meeting with the proponents. The Committee intends to set up an abutters meeting prior to the Committee's formal presentation meeting with the proponent, who is shooting for a spring opening. This abutter's meeting is styled as a listening session to articulate concerns without the proponent being present. Donny explains that the proponent supports this approach.

Eric explained only that the proposed restaurant will be a "fast-casual" concept, and that all other information is confidential at this time. Concerns of abutters to be discussed and collected by the Committee at the abutter's meeting, which the Committee will then present to the proponent. Eric expresses Board preference that this space, long-vacant, constitutes a prominent location in our neighborhood that should have some productive use.

Member Susan Batiste comments that all Committee meetings should be balanced by positive and negative voices, and that she wants to see a restaurant at this location.

Member Ann Lauer, being an abutter, commented that she is not averse to a restaurant here but wants one that fits into the neighborhood; asks when will the proponent make more details available to abutters.

Donny explains that this discussion is very preliminary and the applicant is just trying to develop a sense of the community's response before making the investment in permitting, approvals, etc., as part of the proponent's due diligence.

Member Justin Rice comments that, in light of the issues in the neighborhood, this issue is relatively minor but appears to draw the largest crowd, and that he'd like to see more positive participation from members on other matters.

Eric explains that the participation of "abutters" for the meeting purpose are those right around the premises, but that the definition will be flexible depending on concerns of members as we move forward.

b. E. Canton Street – E. Dedham Street: residential development

Donny explained that Leggat McCall Properties has filed with the BRA a Letter of Intent for a two building project between Harrison and Albany, and Canton and E. Dedham. Donny provided general overview for the 11 story and 19 story buildings; which could include a lot of open space, possibly a pocket park; possible retail space. The proposed project would require a zoning text amendment. Communication lines are open between the Committee and Leggat for our comments.

Members residing on E. Dedham street commented that there are the only 4 people that live on E. Dedham Street (all present at the meeting) who are very vested in the process as 700 rental units could be coming to the street, raised concerns about a vacant building on the proposed site that has had a history of problems associated with radiation from former medical waste.

A suggestion was made of reaching out and coordinating concerns with Old Dover Neighborhood Association.

c. 27 Wareham Street, Unit 401:

Donny describes the proposed renovation and conversion of 2 units into 1. Eric explains that it's not really the kind of matter to Committee intends to take a position on, and that the Board therefore deferred to the position of the condo trustees.

Justin Rice commented that he'd like to join the Committee and that, in light of the major development in the neighborhood, the Committee and the association should

consider developing a more organized plan instead of taking positions piecemeal in response to particular projects.

Donny spoke of the Harrison-Albany corridor plan that has been guiding the development of this area.

The purported pending sale of the Flower Exchange was discussed, and whether or not that property falls within the boundaries of our association.

d. BHA West Newton public housing: revitalization

Donny explained that BHA seeking to sell these properties to a management company who will redevelop and revitalize; that any transfer of management should include a host of concerns; that the association sent a letter to BHA expressing these concerns; and that Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA) (of Villa Victoria) has a memorandum of understanding with BHA regarding management of O'Day park.

Eric explained that BHA is currently putting bids out on 4 larger properties for revitalizing; IBA is bidding on the West Newton properties. IBA, who employs Maloney Management, who in turn uses Longwood Security, would have joint jurisdiction over O'Day Park with BPD. Properties will stay as public housing; park to remain open to the public.

Donny explained that the park and housing matters are two separate transactions.

7. Parks Committee/Friends matters

Mark Ott reviewed the Nov. 7 Fall Cleanup efforts and announced this weekend's cleanup as part of South End-wide cleanup; 100 volunteers from Kingsley Cares will join; Parks Dept. will bring bags. Friends is also seeking volunteers for regular trash pick-up. Friends will be raising money for new benches, which will be the subject of another meeting later on. Mark and Eric called for ideas for small, daily events to activate Franklin Square, particularly in light of the difficulty experienced by the square last summer and the failure of the food truck program.

The possibility of renewing Art in the Park and a relationship with MassArt students was discussed, along with picnics in the park.

Mark Ott discussed his experience of leading the initiative to create an off-leash dog park in Boston Common, which Parks Dept. has now made permanent, thereby leading the way for other parks, including Franklin, to consider.

8. Tree & Wreath Sale Committee matters

Eric explained that the website will be up in a day; and that the sale raises a lot of money for the association and Friends.

Member Jennifer Coplon raised the idea of giving hats and gloves to Hearth, a local non-profit; which could be donated at the time of the winter social or during the Dec. 5 tree and wreath sale. Jennifer agreed to take on this initiative.

9. Membership Committee matters

Lisa Jenks provided an overview of the Committee and called for volunteers; described the Committee's social media campaign; and presented new association business cards.

Lisa then discussed Sherwood Hughes contributions to the association and discussed how a photograph of the Blackstone fountain taken by Jennifer Coplon would be gifted to Sherwood as a sign of appreciation for his service.

10. Scholarship Committee matters

Andrew Parthum gave an overview of the purpose of scholarship, 4 to 8 of which are given to South End high school students per year in increments of \$1000 and \$25000. Andrew announced the tentative date for winter fundraising event as February 11, 2016, which is to be wine and chocolate tasting, location TBD. The scholarship announcement event will be Tuesday June 21, 2016 at ArtBlock. Applications are due May 15, with interviews in early June at the South End branch of the Boston Public Library.

11. Quality of Life & City Services

Sam Chambers, new South End neighborhood liaison, was introduced, wherein Sam explained his role in constituent services for Mayor Walsh, and his efforts to get people involved in their neighborhood associations.

In response to a member question, Sam confirmed that space savers are totally banned in the South End this winter regardless of conditions; this will be enforced by DPW, can be called in through the 311 app; flyers will be posted but that residents can post their own.

Mayor Walsh will help unveil the Roberto Clemente Statue at the Puerto Rico Memorial at 1 pm next Thursday, Nov. 19.

Sam and others discussed the new reporting app, Bos311, for report non-emergency city services

12. Final Thoughts

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Mary Grams provided excellent reflections, criticisms, and comments on gentrification in the South End and the new book “Good Neighbors.”

Michael Broderick noted that the Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2015 were not yet approved, and it was agreed that this matter would be taken up at the next general meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 9:07 p.m.