

BLACKSTONE/FRANKLIN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 7:00 p.m.
D4 Police Station, 2nd Floor Community Room
650 Harrison Avenue

Meeting starts at approx. 7:07

Treasurer's report read.

Two prior meeting minutes approved.

Greg Ruffer introduces self; president of Boston Center for Arts for past 4 months, wants to say hello, take part in our programming and give us feedback about how we can help the community. We want to be a more integral part of what's going on.

Proposed siting of GE Helipad. Eric provides background. One of the promises for their move by Boston was the helipad. Speculation as to where it would be. Possibly the South End. SEForum has asked all associations to get a sense re: helicopter noise. BMC has helipad, do you notice, etc.?

Potential spot could be expansion of the Boston helipad, another between 93 on and off ramps, closest to Ink Block area. Sea Port is another area rumored for consideration.

Comment/Question ("C"): Do we add to the one that's there? Is this for the same purpose?

C: Did they indicate what kind of volume? A: No, being a commercial airport, it would not be limited to GE

C: Important distinction as to whether it is open for commercial purposes or just GE

C: I see the helicopters go up and down a lot. Corporate helicopters have a tendency to linger and wait. There should be some kind of idling restriction. News copters tend to hover over BMC, which generate most the noise, not the medical helicopters themselves.

C: I hear them quite a bit but usually when there's a news event. We have a fair amount of noise.

Proposed move of the Hubway station across Washington Street onto the sidewalk against the burial ground wall to extend the amount of time that the station can operate (snow removal is hindrance to keeping it on the street), and removal will free up some parking spots. Are we receptive to this being a permanent move? They are willing to come out and present at our January meeting.

C: Completely in favor

C: Also in favor

C: I've long felt that the present location is an accident waiting to happen due to proximity to Silver Line busses. Putting it on sidewalk would eliminate that problem

C: Pro as well. A number of abutters were concerned that delivery trucks would back up there. This would help that

C: As long as it is not obstructing pedestrian traffic. Is the sidewalk wider there?

Eric: See maps, show compliance

Any concern about detracting from the South End Burial Ground Wall?

Resounding No.

C: Would it help them if they pass it now? We don't need them to come back and present?

Formal vote in support held.

Parking Task Force Recommendations. SEForum had convened PTF summer of last year composed of NA leaders, mission to examine the issues surrounding parking in the neighborhood; car sharing, space savers, temporary permits, etc. Early May, came up with list of recommendations, June hearing with neighborhood, resulting in Version 2.0 to gather feedback for final approval and presentation to the City for examination, and the City will then decide what they want to do, what they don't want to do. Broadly the recommendations have a few topics, big one is allocation; all unsigned streets shall receive some kind of designation; certain streets have no signage whatsoever. South End is part of a resident parking program. Residents will have to Petition the City to change a designation. The current state of the South End is that these streets are unsigned. So do we go with Petition process or another process? The PTF recommends a highbred process that takes into account both neighborhood input rather than a street by street process, which can result in a patchwork of designations. The reality is that no one is parking just on the street where they live, so we need a more global planning perspective. Another recommendation has to do with permits. There are more permits issued than there are spaces on the street. Proposal is to reduce demand by assessing nominal fee for a permit and graduated cost for additional permits. Cambridge and Somerville do it as do other cities, including Chicago. We have said anything about the specific fee other than to recommend the concept of a fee and a limit on the number of permits per household. Proposal to shorten renewal period to annual basis to avoid nonresidents maintaining permits.

Q: Would that include an annual fee?

Y: Yes.

Creation of visitor parking program. Cambridge and Somerville allow this. Recommendation is to study the feasibility of this here.

Car sharing. North End allowed City to lease on-street spaces to zip car. Zip cars are typically in private garage or surface parking lot. In the event that the city wants to expand to the south end, we recommend a community process. Recommendation to implement universal parking pass while you are out with a zip car.

Maintain South End as space-saver free zone, improved signage, and limitations on construction permits. There's a sense that some contractors are abusing the permit system.

C: I'm completely in favor with all aspects.

C: I wouldn't be in favor of the fee for applying for a parking space. We already pay excise taxes

C: I think the fee will not deter people. I think the limitation per household makes sense.

C: I echo those sentiments. Alternatively, if we thought that fee would be applied towards something meaningful. But it will go into a bucket for other things to be spent. All we talk about is fees and we don't get a meaningful benefit.

Eric: Fees would be reinvested back into the South End

C: How do we know that it would be earmarked for the South End?

C: What about a high royalty fee for those visitor permits? Those could otherwise be easily abused.

Eric: There would be subcategories, i.e. home healthcare workers. We can prevent abuse by monitoring use. We aren't trying to micromanage the specific rules, just to recommend it to the transportation experts to come up with the best practices.

C: June meeting, very strong opposition to the fees. I'm curious to know how that piece survived

C: what was the year round street sweeping recommendation?

Eric: reads recommendation. Year round where feasible

C: Sweeping is a cash grab for the city, so increasing street sweeping just increases the City's coffers. Would increase ticketing.

C: Have you thought about asking the City not the issue moving permits on street sweeping days?

Eric: No. We will take under advisement.

C: Any studies about City's that have implemented fees?

Eric: Don't know that there is this study out there.

C: How about diagonal lines on the wider streets?

Eric: The recommendation was against that even though it might decrease capacity, bc that space could be used for bike lanes.

Sounds like the most controversial part is the permit fee

2 in favor of the recommendations with the permit fee

14 in favor of recommendations without permit fee.

Objection to year round street cleaning. The only way that you can have year round street cleaning is for. A couple of people happy with street sweeping as is.

Mike Ross and Jamie Golden: present on their proposal for a fitness studio at 1525 Washington Street, former law office next to Stella; located in an area where zoning is such that fitness studio is not an allowed use. We need to go to ZBA to get a permit for the use. Jamie is a three year resident of the South End. Barre and yoga type fitness. The only other thing you should know is that South End has restricted access, and HVAC has to be appropriately screened. We have not yet filed for the HVAC on the roof. We don't anticipate any other relief needed for this.

Barre 3 is a franchise, approx. 100 across the country, one in Needham. Barre 3 is community oriented, into getting to know everyone, usually family centric. Parents and kids, multi generations.

Plan to be open from 6 to 9 p.m., more abbreviate schedule on the weekend. Room for a very small retail for things people may need, fitness apparel; local artisans that we can team up with. Is there is any restriction on opening this because it's near a school. We are meeting with WGMS next week, and landmarks about the signage. Pricing is TBD, there are a variety of access points, from \$17 to \$27.

Eric: WGMS has explained that most things are conditional use, such as Anoush'ella, which was conditional.

C: Is this high end?

A: Yes.

C: I'm in support.

Vote in support passes by great majority.

Lisa Jenks presents on Scholarship meeting on 2/9; explains purpose of the scholarship, this will be the 10th year. We get corporate and individual donations.

Nancy Farrington on public safety. The momentum of Friends of O'Day have slowed a bit. Impromptu Halloween festival. Should anyone be interested, please join us at our meetings.

Toni Crothall on Blackstone and Franklin Squares, amazing Halloween festival. This Saturday is Boston shines. Holly has organized about 100 volunteers for Saturday to clean up the leaves. Please please please support our Xmas tree sale.

Vadim Kuksin on Developmenet Committee – been busy over last couple months. 2 projects: (1) 46 Wareham Street approved by BPDA in Sept.; awaiting approval from SE Historic Commission (2) 771 Harrison Ave – developer recently revised from 63 condos to 63 rental apartments, has held 2 community meetings, now owns 25 parking units in the neighboring, now he has come back and proposed 40 parking spots. Will be presenting for approval on Thursday.

Last on our agenda, Bill Gause of Leggat McCall. Raul our project manager is here. Comment period ends 12/1. We have further revised our last plans. What we heard: bring mass down, reduce number of units down to 650 units. We have also looked at lowering the wings of one of the buildings closest to Harrison Avenue. We have an IAG tomorrow night, here, getting into community benefits with IAG members. Height was also an issue; now scale. Residential v. commercial use. Traffic is a huge concern.

Presentation given followed by comments on project.

Meeting ends at approximately 9:15