

# **Blackstone / Franklin Square Neighborhood Association**

**P.O. Box**

**Boston, MA 02118**

Minutes of Sept 11, 2012

Location: Las Ventas, 700 Harrison Ave.

Meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

## **Current Board**

Matthew White, President  
Jim Keeney, Vice President  
David Wisholek, Treasurer  
Justin Rice, Secretary

**Minutes** of June 12 accepted.

## **Tonight's Agenda:**

1. Blackstone Community Cter. & BU Fitness Partnership – Valeda Britton, BU Medical Campus
2. Zoning Appeals - El Centro, Mai Phung, Phung/Porzio Studio of Architecture about 474 Shawmut permit
3. Traffic light / Turn signals – Lee Coffin, Resident
4. Fountain/Barrel Updates – The Friends Group
5. Veolia Energy Project
6. Zoning for South End Wines and Spirits, Inc. @ 1750 Washington St
7. October meeting: City Council forum

## **Treasure's Report**

General fund = \$2,100

Scholarship fund = \$13 or \$14,000 given out \$2,300

Friends group = \$2,000 in general fund in CD

Capital improvement fund: \$96,000 in a CD

- 1. Blackstone Community Cter. & BU Fitness Partnership – Valeda Britton, BU Medical Campus**

Valeda Britton, executive director of community relations at BU's Medical Campus, introduced Ken Ryan, municipal liaison for BU government and community relations. Ryan said the plan to redevelop the Blackstone Community Center fitness center was announced by the mayor's office in July. He said the Boston University Health, Fitness and Wellness program will run a fitness program at Blackstone Community Center. He said the area hasn't been renovated in 30 years and they will make it state of the art.

He said BU is in the early planning stages of the project but he hopes they will have it open in early 2013. He said the hours are up in the air and residents will have to become Boston Center for Youth and Family (BCYF) members to use the facility but he said it's a nominal fee.

He also said for the next five summers they will offer 100 sports scholarships to students for BU sports summer camps.

## **2. Zoning Appeals - El Centro, Mai Phung, Phung/Porzio Studio of Architecture about 474 Shawmut permit**

Representing El Centro, Mai Phung said his clients want to convert a small basement storage area into a prep area. But they have two code violations. The first is the height of the basement ceiling. It is required to be 7 feet but they have 6-foot-9-inch ceiling. Also they need natural ventilation but they don't have it.

-He said there was no date for the board of appeals. He's looking for a letter of support from B/FSNA prior to the board of appeal meeting.

- Treasurer Dave Wisholek asked if they sought support from the neighbors in the building and Phung said they planned to do so.

-Dave recommended for them to show a letter of support from the neighbors before we made our decision.

-Dave made a motion to write a contingent letter of support based on neighbor condo board acceptance of approval

-Justin seconded the motion.

## **3. Traffic light / Turn signals – Lee Coffin, Resident**

Lee Coffin: lives on St. George St. He noticed traffic patterns have changed as condo volume has gone up.

-He wants to do traffic study. Seems as neighborhood is developed in the last 10 years, he said, traffic lights haven't changed. Now between pedestrian traffic, commuter traffic, he said, it's worth looking at a left hand signal or stop sign in a couple places in the neighborhood.

-There was an accident in front of Stella a few months ago when a car tried to turn in front of a Silver Line bus.

-Dave said he thinks it's a great idea. He said the crosswalk signal at E Brookline takes forever and he might support installing an advanced system for crosswalks like the one at Union Park. He suggested we write a letter asking the city for the traffic study and they might ask us to fund it.

-Motion to write letter to city requesting a look at possible traffic study in the area with possible implication for traffic signals was passed.

-President Matthew White will reach out to the Mayor's office to float the idea.

-Resident Nancy Farrington of the Penmark noted there is no stop sign at E Newton and Father Gilday.

-Motion two separate proposals

-Resident Christopher McBride of Art Block noted that a traffic study as part of the Harrison-Albany Corridor project was done. He said we should go back look back at the study and past conversations with the South End liaison to the mayor before we move forward.

-It was decided to hold off on a letter to the mayor's office.

-Lee Coffin and Nancy Farrington agreed to help take up the cause.

#### **4. Fountain/Barrel Updates – The Friends Group**

-Dave offered following update from Friends group.

-Arts sculpture opening from Sunday from 1 to 4 in Franklin Square.

-Fountain renovation and trash barrel replacement getting closer than ever on both. We are waiting for the mayor to approve the bid, which includes renovation of foundation in Blackstone and Franklin Squad. The fountains will once again recycle water in the basin so the fountain will flow.

-Trash barrels. Friends group has to get trash barrels that are accepted by the Landmarks and Parks departments. The Friends Group continues to work with the city on the issue.

#### **5. Veolia Energy Project**

Matt gave the following report on the construction project.

-Veolia owns and operates steam pipes underground from DT facility to BMC along Newton St east and west all way to the Pru. It provides steam heat for this part of city

-Pipes hot expand when cold contract pieces of them allow expand and contract joints haven't been replaced since 1970s modernizing them

-The construction will be done from Oct 4<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> but hope to be done by 18<sup>th</sup>

- They will only do construction from 7 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday

-They will block three car spaces on either side of site so traffic can get through. At 4 p.m. they will put a steel grate so parking resume and traffic can resume.

## **6. Zoning for South End Wines and Spirits, Inc. @ 1750 Washington St**

-Wednesday morning there will be Zoning Board of Appeals hearing about a new liquor store at 1750 Washington St. Where CRU used to be.

-It's out of association district but still of interest.

-Owners are seeking all alcohol license not just wine and beer but liquor store

-We can ask no nips to be sold

-The owners have not come to the association and it was noted that CRU came before the neighborhood association before opening.

-It was agreed to take official stance not to support expanding the license until the owners reach out, perhaps at the October meeting.

## **6. October meeting: City Council forum**

-One city councilor, Ayanna Pressley, had confirmed

-Sought input on what issues councilors should discuss.

**-Misc.**

-Before the meeting closed Karen Tow spoke in support of not closing the South End Fitness Center.

**Meeting closed 8:06**