

Blackstone/Franklin Square Neighborhood Association

General Meeting

7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 19th, 2020

Via Zoom

AGENDA

Please join us virtually for this, our regularly-scheduled May 2020 general meeting. Our agenda is as follows:

7:00 p.m. Welcome and announcements (Board). Washington Gateway Main Street's Andrew Maydoney will briefly tell us about their "Blue Lights of Gratitude" campaign to offer every business in the WGMS district a blue light bulb, holder and timer free of charge to illuminate in honor of first responders and frontline workers of all kinds.

7:10 p.m. Discussion and vote on proposed BFSNA bylaws revisions (David Stone). Members will vote on a motion to adopt proposed revisions to BFSNA's organizational bylaws (an item originally scheduled for our cancelled March meeting), as previously discussed at our September and November meetings and in our April newsletter. We'll walk through the revisions prior to the vote, but interested members are encouraged to review the explanation below this agenda and draft document as available on our website.

UPDATE: This motion was unanimously approved by members voting at the meeting.

7:20 p.m. Annual election of BFSNA board (member vote). Members will vote on a motion to elect BFSNA officers and directors for 2020-2021. Those who have expressed interest in serving and the positions for which they will stand are: Jonathan Alves, for Vice President; Toni Crothall, for Secretary/Clerk; Heather Govern, for Board; Matt Mues, for Treasurer; Mark Ott, for Board; Andrew Parthum, for Board; and David Stone, for President.

UPDATE: This motion was unanimously approved by members voting at the meeting.

7:25 p.m. St. Stephen's Youth Program (Jen Cusack and Jeremy Kazanjian-Amory). Jennifer Cusack, Director of Leadership Giving at St. Stephen's Youth Program, and Jeremy Kazanjian-Amory, Director of College Partnerships and Program Development, will tell us about their programs and young people. SSYP began in 1999 as an effort of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (on Shawmut Avenue next to Blackstone Square) to provide neighborhood elementary students with a safe place to go when school is not in session and has since grown in size, scope and reach to serve 850 young people, promoting equity in education, employment and opportunity through long-term relationships with youth and their families and communities.

7:40 p.m. Speak for the Trees (David Meshoulam). Speak for the Trees is a Boston-based organization whose mission is to improve the size and health of the urban forest in the greater Boston area, with a particular focus on under-served and under-canopied neighborhoods. Co-founder and executive director David Meshoulam will talk about its efforts and the importance of trees in urban environments.

8:00: Adjourn.

Explainer: BFSNA bylaws revisions: As discussed at our November and January meetings and our April 2020 newsletter, the BFSNA board proposes to update our organization's bylaws so that they fully align with how BFSNA has evolved and grown in recent years. The purpose and effect of the revisions is not to change how BFSNA operates now, but rather ensure our formal rules---which were originally written in 1982 and last updated in 1994--match up with our organizational work and culture as it exists in 2020.

Altering the bylaws requires a vote of members, which we intend to hold at our May 19th meeting, and we'll walk through the details once again then. Meanwhile, for those who are interested, here are the key areas of focus (with links to the proposed revisions and current bylaws at the bottom of this section).

(1) Geographic boundaries. BFSNA's district has long included the blocks from East Canton to Malden Street between Harrison Avenue and Albany Street, as well as the area surrounding Blackstone and Franklin Squares. (A [map of our district](#) is [here](#).) Our current bylaws antedate the incorporation of this area into our district, an omission the update rectifies.

(2) Membership eligibility. Everyone is welcome to participate in BFSNA meetings and activities, and people who live outside our (inevitably somewhat arbitrary) "official" boundaries often do. Like most neighborhood associations, living, working or owning a business or property within our district is a basis for qualifying as a "member," a person eligible to vote when we have votes and hold office. The update explicitly confers membership eligibility to people living on, or in some cases just beyond, the edges of our district, to reflect the fact that many such people participate and are a valued part of our group.

(3) Governance. BFSNA elects its officers and board by annual direct election of members, an arrangement that is straightforward and democratic. Our current bylaws, however, describe a complicated process in which directors are selected from among block-level "area representatives" or drawn ex-officio from a welter of enumerated committees, little or none of which has existed in years, if ever, since our membership is not large enough to support or justify such elaborate arrangements. The update simplifies this and related anachronisms to agree with current practice.

Review the [proposed revised bylaws](#).

Read our [current bylaws](#).