

# East Berkeley Neighborhood Association

## General Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Tuesday, March 2, 2021

**Location:** Zoom

**Time:** 6:30 PM

### Attendance:

#### Executive Board Members:

Aimee Coolidge,  Chris Johnson, Secretary,  Frann Bilus,  John Connelly,  Ken Smith, President,  Leslie Fine, Vice President,  Sabrina Sanz,  Sarah Hutt,  Steve Berns,  Stuart Rose, Treasurer

#### Members of the Press:

Seth Daniels, The Boston Sun; Lauren Bennet, The Boston Sun

#### Government Representatives:

Ed Flynn, City Councilor; Sophia Wang, City Councilor Ed Flynn's Office; Kim Crucoli, Neighborhood Liaison; Cheri Hill, Constituent Services Liaison, State Rep. Aaron Michlewitz

#### Other Notable Guests:

None

## Agenda

- **Neighborhood Announcements**
  - Welcome new members
  - A Zoom tutorial has been posted to our website.
  - Reminder to sign up and pay dues for 2021.
  - Next meeting will be April 6, 2021
  
- **Safety and Security - Captain Sweeney**
  - Captain Sweeney reported that crime is down 40% in every major category except auto thefts
    - Auto thefts remain high due to people leaving cars running in the cold
  - Captain Sweeney provided a series of recent crime statistics
  - Captain Sweeney reviewed a list of several specific recent incidents
  - Bike patrols are being proposed again for this year. Final decision has not been made.
    - Citizens can contact the Mayor's office and their city Councilors' offices if they would like to advocate for bike patrols.
  - Illegal activity typically picks ups in parks as the weather improves. D4 will be keeping an eye on that.
  - Mass / Cass continues to be a hot spot. BPD continues to work with outreach providers and city services to address issues there.

- An attendee raised concerns Captain Sweeney about JJ Foleys and whether or not they are following the COVID protocols. Patrons of the restaurant must be eating and not just drinking. The attendee asked if someone from D4 could reach out to the management at JJ Foleys.
- **Harrison Avenue Re-Design - Boston Transportation Dept.**

Representatives from the Boston Transportation Department discussed the reconstruction of Harrison Avenue between Herald and East Berkeley Streets.

  - A representative of BTM was not able to attend. BTM said they will have more information and be able to provide a better update at the April meeting.
  - Kim Crucoli, Neighborhood Liaison, reported that BTM hopes to begin construction on the Harrison Ave. redesign this year, 2021, but an exact date is unknown at this time.
  - Kim also reported that repainting the bus lane on Washington Street is expected to be done in the spring
- **321 Harrison Ave. and 1000 Washington St. Update - Biomed Realty**
  - Sal Zinno and John Heffernan from Biomed Realty gave an update on the 321 Harrison Ave. and 1000 Washington St. project.
  - Biomed Realty is in talks to buy 1000 Washington St. and the unfinished 321 Harrison Ave. buildings (located across from Whole Foods).
  - They are proposing a change in use from office space to life science.
  - They expect to close on purchase soon.
  - Change of use from office to life science will require expanding the mechanical elements on the roof. The proposed mechanical penthouse is within the approved heights limits.
  - No plans at this time to make changes to exterior of 1000 Washington St.
  - Traffic impact should be less than the original proposal because lab space usually has fewer employees than office space.
  - Plan to move forward with Harrison Ave. site work and retail space on Harrison Ave.
  - They will reach out to BTM to coordinate impacts to Harrison Ave remodel.
    - The retail space and site work should be completed by the fall.
  - There are no changes proposed to parking. Occupants of both buildings will continue to use the garage at 321 Harrison Ave. (The new building at 321 Harrison Ave. is built on top of the existing garage.
- **City Councilor Andrea Campbell - Candidate for Mayor**

Mayoral candidate City Councilor Andrea Campbell joined the meeting to talk about her platform, meet our members, and answer questions. Councilor Campbell bio and background and her motivation for running for mayor. She is a Boston native.

  - Also with her was Nicole Serrano, Deputy Campaign Manager.
  - Questions pertained to issues surrounding the opioid crisis and the situation around Mass and Cass.

- Councilor Campbell would assign a coordinator to take ownership of the problem.
  - She would create a response unit to respond to emergencies and events.
  - She would explore short term solutions for Long Island such as ferry service.
  
- **Business Spotlight: Otto Pizza**

Otto's Pizza will be moving into a space at 345 Harrison Ave. They discussed their schedule and plans. They are applying for a common victualer license. Their hearing before the licensing board is scheduled Wednesday, March 3, 2021 @ 1 PM (tomorrow).

  - Sean Ryan is the Chief Operating Officer for Otto Pizza.
  - Nick Zozula is their attorney representing them in the licensing process.
  - The location is on Washington St. between Chase Bank and Loyal Companion pet store along the courtyard between the two buildings.
  - Restaurant is an allowed use under the 345 Harrison St. PDA. No variance is needed.
  - Otto Pizza is a gourmet pizzeria.
  - They will sell food only. A liquor license is not part of this project.
  - They have several other locations in Boston and Massachusetts. They originated in Portland, Maine.
  - Their business is set up for takeout. They will only have seating for 14 inside with six tables in the courtyard accommodating 18 customers.
  - The planned on requesting a 3 AM closing time.
    - There are several other restaurant take out establishments with 3 AM closing in the area including Alex Pizza on Washington St. (across from Peters Park) and El Triunfo on East Berkeley Street (between Washington St. and Harrison Ave.).
  - The hearing before the licensing board was scheduled much sooner than they anticipated.
  - There will be no valet parking request because they are not a dine in restaurant. The expect there is ample parking in front of the building to accommodate customers who are only coming in to pickup their food. Their business model emphasizes online ordering and payment. Customers will receive a text message when their food is ready for pickup.
  - Several objections and concerns were raised about the proposed 3 AM closing. They would not start with the 3 AM closing but would like it as an option if there is enough business.
    - Note: Otto Pizza responded in a follow up email that they were going to change their application to request a 1 AM closing.
  - They hope to open in April.