

East Berkeley Neighborhood Association Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Location: Zoom

Time: 6:30 PM

Attendance:

Executive Board Members:

Aimee Coolidge
Chris Johnson, Secretary
Frann Bilus
John Connelly
Leslie Fine, President
Nancy Farrington
Paul Lewis
Sarah Hutt
Steve Berns
Stuart Rose, Treasurer

Members of the Press:

Lauren Bennett, The Boston Sun

Government Representatives:

Captain Sweeney, BPD
Kim Crucioli, Neighborhood Liaison
Sofia Wang, Policy Director for Councilor Ed Flynn

Agenda

- **BPD neighborhood report & Q+A**
 - Crime is up 3% from the same time last year but down from the beginning of the year.
 - There has been an increase in property crime and auto thefts. Larceny from motor vehicles has also increased.
 - Residential burglaries are down from this time last year. There has been little increase in commercial break ins.
 - Non-domestic aggravated assaults have increased.
 - Note: Detailed information is available online at <https://bpdnews.com/news/category/Crime+Stats>
 - BPD is entering a busy season with the build up to the Boston Marathon and upcoming Red Sox opening day.

- **Business Spotlight: Rockland Trust Bank, 1134 Washington Street.**
 - Jonathan Towslee, Branch Manager of the branch on Washington Street, presented information about the bank including an over view of the products they offer and their community involvement.
 - Dan Johnson, a financial advisor located in the Washington Street Branch, discussed the services provided by Rockland Trust's Investment Management Group such as investment management, estate planning, and retirement planning.

- **Pine Street Inn Program Update**
 - Aimee Coolidge, Vice President of Community and Government Relations at Pine Street Inn, gave an update on the Pine Street's efforts during the pandemic.
 - In the beginning of the pandemic, Pine Street had a high positivity rate and did their best to spread guests out among college dorms and hotels in the area. During the pandemic, there have been fewer guests at the Harrison Ave. location. This strategy has been beneficial to both staff and guests at the shelter, and they plan to continue to spread guests among different locations going forward and keep the number of guests at the Harrison Ave. shelter as low as possible.
 - Pine Street is focusing their strategy on long term homeless clients who have been homeless for a year or longer and trying to get them off the streets and into housing.
 - They currently manage approximately 850 housing units across Boston and Brookline, rooming houses as well as efficiency units. Their goal by the end of 2025 is to have approximately 1,000 units. They have a current project in JP to develop 220 units. The project will be 100% affordable with 140 units for homeless men and women. In the Back Bay on Clarendon Street, Pine Street is developing the old YWCA as affordable housing. They continue to look for opportunities to create more housing.

- **Mass/Cass update: Dr. Monica Bharel, Senior Advisor to Mayor Wu**
 - Dr Bharel gave an update on the city's efforts at to address the opioid and homeless crisis Mass and Cass.
 - The city used a public health approach to determine best way to handle the encampments.
 - They conducted a survey of the people who were sleeping in the encampment (not including people who came to the area only during the day). They found 146 individuals were actually sleeping there.
 - They identified six viable alternative programs and spaces for people to move to.
 - 3 low threshold shelter based clinics
 - 3 additional temporary shelters

- The goal was to bring people off the street and provide shelter and get them out of the encampment, which was unsafe, unsanitary, and increasingly violent.
 - The placed 154 individuals, and by Jan 12, and the tents came down.
 - The city-wide policy is no encampments or tent structures. A team meets daily to discuss any encampments or complaints in order to provide outreach to people to get them into one of the other viable options. The city works with its partners to proactively look for individuals who need assistance.
- **SoWa Restaurant Update: Jeff Gates SoWa Dining Group**
 - Jeff Gates presented an update on the restaurants in SoWa
 - Construction has started on Roma 500 (in the former Cinquecento space).
 - Construction work has been challenging due to both material and equipment supply chain problems.
 - The restaurant is on track to open this summer.
 - Brasserie is going great and had a great winter. Vax card was not a big issue. Everybody was supportive. Brasserie patio opening soon, weather permitting.
 - Thayer street project not expected to open until 2023.
- **65 Wareham Street: Life Science Development Proposal**
 - Marc LaCasse presented a preliminary proposal for a life sciences building at 675 Wareham Street.
 - The project is in its preliminary stages and has not yet filed a letter of intent with the BPDA.
 - The developer plans to maintain the historic facades of the buildings.
 - The building will contain first floor retail.