

East Berkeley Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Location: Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89892332403>

Time: 6:30 PM

Attendance:

Executive Board Members:

Leslie Fine, President
Stuart Rose, Treasurer
Chris Johnson, Secretary
Frann Bilus
John Connelly
Kate Chang, Pine Street Inn
Paul Lewis
Sarah Hutt
Steve Berns
David Fine
Li H.

Government Representatives:

Captain Sweeney, BPD
Sargent Matthew Hogardt, BPD
Lt. Detective Thomas Hopkins, BPD
Kim Crucoli, Neighborhood Liaison
Laura Toledano on behalf of Council Flynn
State Rep. Jon Santiago
Nick Bornstein, Legislative Aide to Rep. Santiago
Sofia Wang, Policy Director for Councilor Ed Flynn
Patrick Lyons, Director of Constituent Services, Rep. Michlewitz
Brianna Millor, Chief of Community Engagement for the City of Boston for Mayor Wu

Agenda

- **Welcome and Announcements**
 - Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the executive board.
 - Everyone was encouraged to join and pay their dues.
- **Safety and Security-- Boston Police Dept. neighborhood report & Q+A**
 - Captain Sweeney and Sargent Hogardt gave the police update.

- District YTD crime statistics:
 - In district D4, part one crime is down 2% YTD compared to last year
 - No homicides
 - 11 robberies, up 2 compared to last year
 - 7 assaults YTD vs 12 last year, all known parties
 - 2 residential B&Es this year vs 4 last year
 - 7 commercial burglaries vs 10 last year
 - 49 larceny from motor vehicles vs 35 last year, cars being broken into and items stolen
 - Don't leave anything in your car.
- EBNA YTD crime statistics:
 - EBNA has had 2 assaults - one between guests at The Pine Street Inn and one between two siblings.
 - 8 reported larcenies YTD. Shop lifting has decreased at Whole Foods.
 - 2 larcenies were bicycles stolen from within common areas inside buildings
 - 3 package steps from the mail room in one building
- Lt. Det. Commander Hopkins joined the call and introduced himself.
 - Lt. Det. Hopkins spoke about the recent break in theft from the SoWa Vintage Market.
- Questions:
 - A caller asked about the possibility of installing traffic cameras at the corner of Washington and East Berkeley Streets.
 - Traffic cameras are not authorized in the Massachusetts.
 - A caller wanted to spread the word about recent assaults on Harrison Ave.
- **State Representative Jon Santiago**
 - Rep. Santiago introduced himself and his background.
 - Current legislative issues.
 - They are looking forward to working with the new governor.
 - Rep. Santiago gave a primer on how the legislature works.
 - They are currently waiting for the governor to submit the budget.
 - Everyone is busy filing bills that will be sent to committees.
 - Rep. Santiago and Rep. Michlewitz both care very much about constituent services. Feel free to reach out.
 - Regarding the cannabis dispensary proposal.
 - Rep. Santiago was recently made aware of this.
 - There are strong issues on both sides.
 - If you feel strongly about a certain position, write to city representatives and cc: Rep. Santiago

- The best way to advocate on this issue is to send letters to elected officials.
 - Rep. Santiago answered questions.
 - As an emergency room physician, what types of patients do you see with addictions to cannabis and how has cannabis availability affected this?
 - BMC is the busiest emergency room in New England. Opioids and increasingly methamphetamine is a problem. Rarely has he ever taken care of a marijuana overdose. There have been cases out of Colorado where children have ingested edibles and become intoxicated. It's very rare.
 - On the whole, cannabis addiction or psychosis has not been an effective argument against cannabis.
- **Proposed Cannabis Dispensary**
 - Kim Crucoli, mayor's liaison to the South End, reviewed the process for the proposed cannabis dispensary at 1220 Washington Street.
 - Kim began by presenting and reviewing the process flow chart that is attached at the end of these minutes.
 - The process takes a year to 18 months or longer.
 - Questions:
 - Does our neighborhood zoning make us light industrial instead of residential and causing this sort of activity.
 - Cannabis dispensary is not an allowed use anywhere and would require zoning waiver.
 - The proposed dispensary would have to have a lease or a lease agreement in place.
 - How do host community agreements come to fruition and what language goes into them? Does it involve the neighborhood association? What if any role does the community play in the language that goes into the agreement?
 - The agreement is a contract between the establishment and the neighborhood and all involved parties. It is the terms necessary for the establishment to operate.
 - The agreements are not usually available until agreed upon and signed.
 - Examples of others can be seen on the city website.
 - Neighborhood participation can be worked out with the applicant.
 - The BCB takes community feedback very seriously if there is overwhelming opposition. Concerns need to be serious. For example, parking is an issue everywhere in the city.
 - Bob Barney, President of the Claremont Neighborhood Association, summarized their experience with three cannabis dispensary applicants in the last five years.
 - Two proponents withdrew their applications. One was not approved by the BCB. Ultimately decided that the proposed sites were inappropriate.

- Kim Crucioli and Rep. Santiago were both helpful in navigating the process.
- Bob's recommendation is communicate, communicate, communicate. BCB hearings are available on YouTube, and Bob recommends viewing them if you haven't attended a meeting.
- Important to be in contact with elected officials.
- A caller expressed concern about the proximity of the proposed dispensary to the dog park, Peters Park, local day cares, and Cathedral High School.
 - Kim C. noted that the buffer zone is a state regulation and only applies to schools.
- Petitions and letters hold the same weight.

Process Flow to Cannabis Licensing

