

East Berkeley Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Location: [Zoom](#)

Time: 6:30 PM

Attendance:

Executive Board Members:

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

Government Representatives:

Kim Crucoli, Neighborhood Liaison
City Councilor Ed Flynn
Sophia Wang, Policy Director for Councilor Ed Flynn
Stefanie Seskin, Active Transportation Director, Boston Transportation Department

Agenda

Welcome, announcements

- Leslie welcomed everyone and introduce the executive board.
- Announcements:
 - Jane Brayton, long-time neighborhood resident died last week. Condolences were extended to Chris, Jane's husband, and their family.
 - There is no update on the proposed cannabis dispensary at 1220 Washington St. Last week's Boston Cannabis Commission meeting was postponed and has not yet been rescheduled.
 - Friends of Peters Park are holding a planting of petunias and park clean up Saturday, May 6 from 9:00 AM to noon. Refreshments will be donated by Dunkin Donuts on Washington Street. Tools will be provided. The rain date is the Sunday, May 7.

- EBNA will have an in-person social event on the patio at Yellow Door Taqueria on Tuesday, June 13 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This will be in lieu of our June meeting.
- There will not be a July or August EBNA meeting. This is our regular summer hiatus. If anything significant comes up, the executive board will be available by email and will deal with issues as needed.

Safety and Security Update - Boston Police Dept. D4

- There was no Safety and Security Update. Captain Sweeney and Sargent Hogardt could not attend due to other commitments.

Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn

- Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn gave an update on some of the major issues that the City Council is focused on.
 - The city budget - Mayor Wu released her budget in the beginning of April. The City Council is in the process of having hearings to discuss the budget.
 - Some of the capital projects currently in the budget for the South End include:
 - \$2.4 million for a design study for a park to be built on a deck over the Mass Pike Extension between Shawmut Ave. and Washington Street. (Between Chinatown and the South End)
 - \$2 million for road improvements for Washington Street
 - \$2 million for the Harrison Ave. redesign
 - \$2.5 million for improvements to O'Day Playground (next to Villa Victoria) including play lots and basketball courts.
 - \$300,000 for District D4 for an elevator
- Other major issues:
 - Councilor Flynn emphasized the importance of public testimony and contacting city representatives with issues and concerns.
 - Public safety is a major issue. We need more police and bicycle patrols. They work and are effective.
 - Pest control is a major problem for residential and commercial and restaurant properties.
 - The problem has been exacerbated by takeout and food delivery, outdoor dining, and construction activity.
 - Pest control is currently managed by many departments across the city. Councilor Flynn's proposal is for one major department to deal with pest control, similar to the program recently announced in New York City.
 - Expanding composting is a part of this effort.
- Questions:
 - A question was asked regarding the vacant lot on Washington Street (between The Lucas and the Druker projects at 1033-1055 Washington Street).
 - Druker has offered to develop the lot as public open space and maintain it in perpetuity.

- But the BPDA wants Druker to purchase the property outright.
- The question was, how do we get beyond this purchase requirement?
- Councilor Flynn has weighed in with the BPDA on this issue. He recommended that people contact his office as well as our at-large councilors with our position. Councilor Flynn shared a copy of the letter he sent to the BPDA. (Copy embedded here in.)



Flynn Letter re 1033
-1055 Washington Ne

Pine Street Inn Update

- Kate Chang, Vice President, Community & Government Relations for the Pine Street Inn gave an update on current operations at the Pine Street Inn.
 - The biggest change over the past decade at the Pine Street Inn is that, while they continue to provide emergency shelter, they now offer almost as many permanent supportive housing beds as they do shelter beds. These are small apartments that they rent to people who are formerly homeless. Pine Street provides wrap-around services and helps these residents connect to social services and get on with their lives. Supportive housing is located at various locations throughout the city. They currently have approximately 300 and are looking to bring an additional 600 more in the coming years.
 - Pine Street is going green. They have put up solar panels at 444 Harrison Ave., and they getting new windows at both the men's and women's inns to help with heat retention.
 - iCater, which is Pine Street's in-house job training program and business, is up and running again. They are bringing back their visiting chefs program. This program is available for tenants and guests. There are two programs - culinary crafts and housekeeping. They also provide a series of soft skills for life and employment. Pine Street works with various partners, including SEBA, to place people following the training programs.
 - Kate has a team from Pine Street coming to Peters Park this Saturday for the cleanup.
- Questions:
 - What follow up services do you provide to people once they have the permanent housing?
 - There are people on-site to provide continuing services. This protects the tenants as well as helping them comply with tenant rules and provides supportive social services. They also provide community and social support and amenities. Addiction support is provided if needed.

- What kind of opportunities are there for neighbors to get involved at the Pine Street Inn?
 - Pine Street is still not at full capacity post-pandemic for volunteers.
 - They do have dinner service at both the men's and women's inn, which is incredibly helpful.
 - They have gift wrapping around the holidays.
 - Kate really hopes to partner with the neighborhoods for different holiday celebrations so that tenants and the communities can begin to talk about different holiday traditions and build a neighborhood bond.
 - They are restructuring how their houses work so that each facility has a neighborhood point person who has a relationship with local police and fire departments. They hope to increase neighborhood involvement and familiarity in coming months.
- Pine Street Inn is for individuals only, but they work closely with many other providers throughout the state who provide support to families.
- Pine Street Inn does not have a position on the 1220 Washington Street cannabis dispensary proposal.

Harrison Ave. Redesign - Update from the Boston Transportation Dept.

- Stefanie Seskin, Active Transportation Director, Boston Transportation Department, gave an update on the Harrison Ave. Redesign Project. Stefanie manages a team of planners and engineers working on street design projects.
- BTM has finished the 75% design stage and is close to final design on the project. Once those final changes are complete and the plans are approved, they will be sent out to bid.
 - They expect the plans to go to bid in the fall and shovels in the ground in the next construction season, i.e., 2024.
 - When construction actually begins is up to Construction Management and the contractor.
 - If the project begins by July 2024, it should be completed by the end of the year.
 - The project was expanded to include some additional elements such as coordinating the lighting styles along the street and building out the sidewalks between Traveler Street and East Berkeley Street to match the design of the sidewalks along the newer sections of Harrison Ave. (i.e., behind Ming's Market on Harrison Ave.).
- Stefanie shared the plans and reviewed the major components of the design. She will forward a simplified copy of the design to EBNA.
 - Elevated medians will be removed along the entire street. In some places they will be replaced with painted medians. (Elevated medians interfere with emergency vehicles.)
 - Parking is changing from individual meters to a multi-meter system. There are no plans change any of the parking to resident only.

- No other pavement repairs for Harrison Ave. are planned for this year and would not be completed before the redesign project begins.
- People can send additional comments to Stefanie.
 - Stefanie will follow up with a simplified version of the plan and a schedule update when she receives it from the consultant.