

East Berkeley Neighborhood Association

General Meeting Minutes

MEETING DETAILS

Date: November 5, 2019

Location: Project Place, 1145 Washington Street

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Ken Smith (President), Chris Johnson (VP), Bradley St. Amand (Secretary), Stuart Rose (Treasurer), John Connelly, Aimee Coolidge, Leslie Fine, Frann Bilus, Geoff Palmer, Sarah Hutt

City Representatives: Faisa Sharif (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), Aaron Michlewitz (State Representative)

Press: Boston Sun – Seth Daniel

AGENDA ITEMS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Today is election day - get out the vote
- Board elections will be held in January – two seats will be vacant
- Renew your membership for 2020
- The EBNA holiday party will be December 10 at Fuji, 5:30-7:30pm. Will include food, cash bar, and a Toys for Tots toy drive.
- Rescheduled hearing on Ming's conditional use permit – December 17 at 10:30am
- Love Your Block – Saturday, November 16. Meet at 9:30am by the tennis courts. Friends of Peter's Park will also have an additional 100 daffodil bulbs to plant. Sarah Hutt, with help of Pine Street Inn and Elizabeth from AC Hotel led planting of 800 already.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, December 3 at AC Hotel

SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

Presenter: Officer Chris Schuler

Notes:

- Late substitution for Office Pagan, so did not have stats available
- Comments and concerns from members:

- Silver Line bus stop across from the Residence Inn on Washington St / Melnea Cass – individuals shooting up, etc
 - Officer Schuler noted they have bike units and 2 officers in the Mass/Cass area, and have been moving and displacing individuals.
- Effectiveness of Mayor’s Plan
 - Aimee Coolidge from Pine Street noted that the city is targeting resources that will provide outreach and identification to the addicted and homeless, employing a similar strategy that is used with chronic homelessness - a working group of specialists to get folks off the streets one by one. Will take time.
- Increase of activity along Paul Sullivan Way

Actions Taken: None

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE AARON MICHLEWITZ

Presenters: Aaron Michlewitz – State Representative

Notes:

- 10-year anniversary of being elected as State Rep
- In February, he was named House Chair of the Ways and Means Committee – responsible for crafting the States \$43 billion annual budget. Highlights include:
 - Education funding – investment of \$270 million to Chapter 70 funding, which is the largest increase ever.
 - Community Preservation Act – which provides matching funds to participating cities for open space, affordable housing, and preservation. Boston joined in 2015-2016. Through a \$25 increase to a Registry of Deeds fee that had not been raised in 30 years, a projected \$30 million will be added. This will allow the State to match up to 36% of city contributions, up from 11%. These funds are generated via 1% of city property tax. The State is supposed to match 1 for 1, but the program has been underfunded.
 - Including language that will allow the State to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies to obtain rebates for MassHealth, saving over \$30 million annually.
 - Increase in funding for housing homelessness through shelter beds to \$52 million, one of the largest increases ever.
 - Education Reform Act – changed the formula on Charter School reimbursement to public schools. Noted it was not properly funded over time and gave credence to the idea that Charter Schools drain funding to public schools. Should not be the case.
 - Short Term Rental legislation was enacted on July 1 that requires operators meet certain consumer protection standards and implements taxation. Early numbers are encouraging. Boston begins their registration program on December 1. The policy gives flexibility to cities and towns in how they choose to regulate. Boston would only allow for short term renting of one’s occupied unit or an adjacent unit in an occupied 2 or 3 family, without a lodging license.
 - A concern was raised regarding wide-spread short-term housing at 345 Harrison via “Churchill Living”. If true, they may not be in compliance, assuming the property is zoned for residential and not lodging.
- Current areas of discussion include the growing vaping issue and legal sports betting.

- Concerns from members were raised regarding the Long Island bridge, Mayor Walsh's dialogue with Quincy and a lack of State involvement.
 - Rep Michlewitz noted that Quincy is not sold that the site would be strictly for recovery services or the long-term plan for the island, rather than a NIMBY response to an undesirable element driving through the area.
 - State can't simply overstep in regards to city land or decisions. Mayors of Boston and Quincy need to discuss.
- Member noted that while the area along Fort Point Channel managed by GTI is kept immaculate, the State land beyond the wall is a mess. Rep Michlewitz will address.
- Rep Michlewitz's annual fundraiser and toy drive will be held December 5 at Wink & Nod, 5:30-7:30pm.
- Rep Michlewitz's Coffee Hour at Café Nero will be held on December 7, 10am-12pm.

Actions Taken: None

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT – MORE THAN WORDS

Presenters: Erin and Justin

Notes:

- Erin and Justin reminded everyone of the work being done at MTW and shared upcoming events and sales, which can be found on their website: <https://mtwyouth.org/>

Actions Taken: None