

East Berkeley Neighborhood Association

General Meeting Minutes

MEETING DETAILS

Date: September 3, 2019

Location: AC Hotel, 225 Albany 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: Councilor Ed Flynn, Jim Greene (Department of Neighborhood Development), Captain Steve Sweeney (BPD), Sgt. James Freeman (BPD)

Press: Boston Sun – Seth Daniel, Boston Guardian – Joe Walsh

AGENDA ITEMS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next meeting, October 1st at Project Place
- SoWa First Fridays – September 6
- New team member at AC Hotel - Michelle
- Alex Tisserand – art show opening at Laconia Gallery – September 6
- Request for volunteer(s) to help manage neighborhood planting of daffodils

DISCUSSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Presenters: Jim Greene, Captain Steve Sweeney, Sgt. James Freeman, Ed Flynn

Notes:

- Buddy Christopher appointed as special advisor for Mass + Cass services.
- City wide uptick on homelessness and related issues.
- Recent clean-out of Atkinson street has displaced a number of homeless into D4.
- 2 dedicated officers from 7:30-11:30am on Mass + Cass and bike officers.
- BPD approach is to get individuals help first, but not tolerate crimes.
- Quality of life issues must be addressed for residents and business owners.
- Under Mayor Walsh and from advocacy by BPD, mental health clinicians now embedded in D4 force.

- BPHC shelter at 112 S Hampton sees 500 guests per night.
- The engagement center sees 180 people per day (many are shelter guests).
- Please call 911 for all emergencies, not 311.
- Q&A
 - The city needs a centralized location to send folks.
 - Reopening Long Island (bridge) is being obstructed by Quincy, but the buildings are being maintained. Ferries are not a practical solution – need ambulatory and 24/7 access.
 - Peter’s Park closes at 11pm. BPD does regular rounds after close.
 - Suggestion to create more 311 category options under public health concerns.
 - Officer Litto was praised for his strong work in the community.

Actions Taken: None

SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

Presenter: Captain Sweeney

Notes:

- Assault at Kingston Gallery. Suspect apprehended next day.
- Crime is down 10% for the year.
- 3 shootings YTD in D4, down from 6 last year.
- Robberies, larcenies and assaults all down.

Actions Taken: None

MODERN RELIK – NEW BUSINESS AND PROPOSED CAFÉ

Presenter: Meg Kimball and John Dransfield

Notes:

- Set to open at 485 Harrison in October 2019.
- High-End furniture retail to include flower shop.
- Seeking approval for in-store coffee bar.
 - No cooking or alcohol.
 - Seating for 15 people.
 - Breakfast items, snacks, coffee, summer ice cream.
 - 7:30 AM open for coffee bar.
- Members were supportive, no objections raised

Actions Taken: Board to provide support letter

THE ABBEY GROUP (THE EXCHANGE) – CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Presenter: Jason Epstein, Brian Beisel

Notes:

- Project allowed to move forward on phase 1 without Frontage Road connection.
- The connection was not rejected, just a lengthy process.
- Will NOT get approval for phase 2 without the connection.
- If they get approval, would construct concurrently with phase 1.
- Mitigation strategies
 - Road safety audits and recommendations for safer intersections
 - New Albany street cross section (between Frontage + Brookline). Will include northbound BRT bus lane and protected bike lanes. Has to be done before open. City plan was for nicer street rather than higher capacity.
- Building B – possibly starting late fall.
- Approximately 7 years until project complete.
- Opposed marijuana dispensary on Albany, but seems to be on the way to approval.

Actions Taken: None

RELATED BEAL (THE QUINN) – CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Presenter: Matt Coughlin, Related Beal

Notes:

- 172 rentals, 101 condos, 174 parking spaces.
- 3 retail spaces (range of 4-8k sf)
- Have been under construction for 20 months now.
- Concrete up to the 7th floor, topping out on the 15th floor by approximately November 1.
- Apartments open August 2020
- Retail spaces not yet leased out, likely to open Fall 2020.
- Exterior siding going up later this month.
- Rentals done at the field office – 401 Harrison Ave
- Condo show-room at 460 Harrison Ave
- Air horns are safety signals for loads in the air. Likely to continue through end of year when the crane comes down.
- Sidewalk will not reopen until the end of the project – Mid-late 2020.
- Have NOT coordinated with city regarding Harrison Ave redesign.
- Members expressed gratitude for Related Beal's proactive communication, keeping pedestrian walkway safe/clean, and buying us pizza.

Actions Taken: None

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT – CUPPA COFFEE

Presenter: Todd Moore

Notes:

- Owner Todd Moore introduced himself to the group and spoke briefly about their offerings at their South End location – including a variety of espresso drinks and Australian meat pies.