

# EBNA Hears from Councilor Flynn; Discusses Request for Beer and Wine License

by [Lauren Bennett](#) • January 7, 2022 • [0 Comments](#)

The East Berkeley Neighborhood Association (EBNA) met virtually for its first meeting of the year on January 4, where members and neighbors heard a safety report from Boston Police D-4 Capt. Steve Sweeney, updates from new City Council president Ed Flynn, and a licensing request for Modern Relik. They also heard from Heather Thompson of Myers+Chang for this month's Business Spotlight.

Ken Smith, who has been EBNA's president for six years, announced he will be stepping down from the role, though he will remain on the board and will continue to facilitate the meetings. Leslie Fine will assume the presidency moving forward. Many people expressed their thanks and gratitude for Smith's dedication to the organization over the years.

## Safety Report

Capt. Steve Sweeney said that 2021 was "one of the best years crime-wise since I've been down here." He said that overall crime is down 14 percent, while violent crime is down 30 percent.

Robberies are down 33 percent from 2020, aggravated assaults are down, and residential burglaries are also down 33 percent. He said that the numbers for commercial break-ins are "a little skewed" with the looting that happened in 2020, but the five year average for the district is 81 and there were 48 in the past year, which he called "a huge drop."

Larceny from motor vehicles is down 24 percent, and seven people were shot in 2021, which is down from 13 in 2020. There was one homicide last year, and two in 2020.

Overall he said that these are "great numbers. Obviously, those are tragic numbers, those last two, but for the year great work in the offices here at the station."

## Ed Flynn

City Councilor Ed Flynn was elected City Council president on Monday by his fellow councilors, and he dropped in to the EBNA meeting to talk about his goals for this year.

He said that "what I'm concerned about and what I hope to work on" is continuing the work he's done over the past four year: "working hard, being accessible, trying to resolve constituent requests; quality of life issues. It's about clean parks, safe streets, treating people with respect."

Flynn has been a huge proponent of public safety issues, and vowed to continue working on those. He said he would like to "see a portion" of federal funds go towards pedestrian safety, such as "making changes to streets" and adding stop signs. He also talked about his desire to lower the city's speed limit, which is currently 25 miles per hour (mph).

"I think the speed limit is too fast, too high in the city," Flynn said. "I would like to see it go towards 15mph," but said he would "support" lowering it to 20mph.

Additionally, he said that “more enforcement” is needed when it comes to the current speed limit. He also said that infractions should “go on insurance” as well.

A resident, whose Zoom name was Leigh W., told Flynn that she is “glad to hear you’re concerned about the speed limit in the neighborhood,” and when she reaches out to the city with issues like this, she gets “something very dry” in response.

Flynn said that the public needs to be educated about the speed limit to protect residents of the city’s neighborhoods. He asked for residents’ help during the city’s budget season with “advocating for infrastructure improvements in the South End.”

Residents had questions for Flynn as well. Ken Smith asked about the City Council’s role in creating more housing and support for those living at Mass and Cass.

“The City Council plays a critical role,” Flynn said. He said that Roxbury and the South End “have supported the homeless community for many years,” while “other cities and towns provide very little.”

He said that the city is engaging with state officials on this issue, as it is not solely Boston’s responsibility.

### **Licensing Request**

Meg Kimball of Harrison Ave. furniture store Modern Relik came before the EBNA with a request for a beer and wine license at the store, which already offers coffee and tea, along with breakfast and lunch foods.

“If you’re familiar with Modern Relik, we have a little cafe inside,” she said, that seats about 20 people. “We have a nice little regular crowd from the neighborhood that comes in on a regular basis.”

She said that the cafe is not making much money, but she does not want to have to close it. “It’s actually what really makes our store unique,” she said. “People come in, look around, they’re kind of enthused. People feel it has a great vibe.”

Kimball said that she believes the addition of wine and champagne will help the business. She said that on Saturday and Sunday mornings, she could offer things like mimosas, and in the evenings, people might enjoy a glass of wine with a charcuterie board.

“I don’t think it will be a massive part of our business,” she said. “We’re not going to do anything wild and crazy—we’re not going to be staying open until 11 at night.”

She said that right now, the hours are a bit experimental to see what traffic the space can get, and have been staying open with the hours of the Van Gogh exhibit. She said this isn’t really bringing in any more customers and the cafe is “not looking to be an evening restaurant. It’s just really a supplemental service to a furniture store; a breakfast or lunch.”

Kimball said that the regular closing hours are 5:00 or 6:00, but the store will “probably never be open after 8.”

Resident Barbara Corkey said that she thinks this is an “interesting and creative idea,” and she would be interested in sipping a glass of wine while furniture shopping.

In the chat, Joe Greene and Danielle Butke said that “We love Modern Relik and the food is great. We are very supportive of the expansion. Look forward to enjoying a glass of wine while shopping for furniture!”

Frann Bilus said, also in the chat: “I think it’s a lovely store, the food is great, I’m supportive of expanding to have wine and champagne as an enhancement.”

Jayne Brayton said to Kimball, “I think you need to be a little more specific about what your hours are going to be.”

Smith said that EBNA “will be in touch” on the licensing request.

### **Business Spotlight: Myers+chang**

Heather Thompson, who has worked at Myers+Chang for about 12 years, said that she is “so grateful that this is our neighborhood.”

Myers+Chang was started by Flour bakery chef Joanne Chang and her husband Christopher Myers in 2007, and is located at 1145 Washington St. in the South End.

“The wonderful thing about Myers+Chang that we try to do is to always be warm and welcoming in a place where everyone can feel a welcoming presence and a friendly smile,” Thompson said. “That is reciprocated by the people who come in. We feel really lucky to be a part of this neighborhood.”

Much of the food served at Myers+Chang “is inspired by Joanne’s family recipes,” she said. Chang grew up in Texas but her family is Taiwanese.

Thompson said that the restaurant has been excited to “celebrate special occasions—we have missed that so much over the year.” She said some holiday parties and weddings that had to be postponed in 2020 were able to happen this year. “It’s been so delightful to have that back.”

She also talked about an initiative at Flour and Myers+Chang called JEDI, which stands for “Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion” and provides opportunities for employees of both establishments “to discuss issues they’re concerned about.” She added, “this is a place where they can learn things and be inspired to grow, even if their dreams are not restaurant dreams.”

Lastly, Thompson talked about hope heading into the new year with the city’s new vaccine mandate for certain indoor spaces, called B Together, taking effect on Jan. 15.

“I hope this will give people a lot of confidence to go out and eat in restaurants,” she said. She also said that the restaurant has an air purifier “that runs continuously,” and doors are opened weather permitting to allow for better airflow.

For more information about Myers+Chang, visit [myersandchang.com](http://myersandchang.com).