



GMNC Monthly Meeting
April 1, 2019 6:30-8:00pm
Mildred Community Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
June Joseph
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
David Lopes
Lenore Pereira
Ruby James Saucer
Cynthia Beckford-Brewington
Mirlande Joseph, Asst Treasurer
Nichelle Nicole Purvis- Donnell (arriving late)

II. Presenters

a) Bryan Glascock, BPDA – Deputy Director of Regulatory Planning & Zoning

Zoning 101

- Zoning can be complex, with many terms of art. Boston zoning code is 3500 pages, NYC is only 1500, one of the most complex in the world.
- The benefit of learning more about zoning is that when the community reviews projects and hearing from developers we'll know more about the process going into it.
- Zoning is a power given to the City by the state government to regulate size, shape, density, height and use for health, safety public welfare and norms.
- It empowers local governments to protect the citizenry and make sure that disparate uses do not put people in danger.
- An "as-of-right project" complies with the zoning for height shape and use. Otherwise, the project needs a conditional use permit to say it's generally okay but may need conditions, or it might be forbidden in which case it would require a variance.

The Zoning Process Visual aide:

1. A proposed project is first reviewed by the Inspectional Services Department (ISD). A long form permit is required for anything other than ordinary maintenance.
2. ISD Counter 1 handles the application
3. ISD Counter 2 determines if any additional information will be required
4. Does the project comply with the zoning code? If not, it may require a variance
5. The project may also require design review

6. If the project does not require design review it can go back to ISD, if it goes to BPDA design review, it must go back to the community.
 7. If it does not comply with the zoning code it will get a refusal letter. The project will either be withdrawn or an appeal will be filed with the ZBA.
 8. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold a hearing, an abutters meeting and the applicant will explain to the abutters what's going on.
 9. The Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS) holds the abutters meeting and makes recommendations to the ZBA
 10. BPDA also makes recommendations to the ZBA
- Many opportunities are provided for public input (highlighted in yellow on the visual aide)
 - If a project gets denied the City can be sued to court or the proposal can be amended.
 - The whole process can apply to big developments or small
 - Emphasis is put on the ability to provide public input

Mattapan Zoning Code (Article 60)

- Cannabis establishments – when the Commonwealth legalized rec cannabis, the City developed new codes.
- Commercial districts make cannabis establishments a conditional use. They get the refusal letter, go to the ZBA for a hearing.
- Proposed locations also require a host community agreement with the City of Boston. They must work with elected officials.
- Anywhere else in the City, cannabis uses are forbidden.
- Use the website Boston.gov and search for cannabis to go through the step by step process

Additional Dwelling Units

- You can take a big house and divide it up internally to develop a separate residence.
- People can avoid ZBA using this new process.
- This would help with illegal units, finished basements e.g. that were never technically permitted.
- Running the last 18 months and expiring in May.
- City is trying to extend it to all of the neighborhoods and make it permanent.
- Mattapan didn't get as much attention – people didn't apply as often. BPDA is here to promote the program, help cover some costs, and walk people through the program if they need help.
- Boomerang kids, Seniors who wish to age in place

Q: I'm concerned about a house I bought 3 years ago. It has an attic which seems like it was an addition. Am I grandfathered? Am I going to have to put in fire, alarms etc.? Will I be penalized by the City?

A: If we make it too hard to do this people won't actually pull the permits. Illegal basement apartment in Quincy caught fire and killed people because of bad wiring. This program is trying to avoid that. People won't be penalized, but it does need to be brought up to basic code. If it's old enough it may be grandfathered. Can't speak for ISD.

Q2: If I go through the process and ISD tells me I can't have people up there?

A2: GMNC will help applicants work through the City process.

Q: Susan Lombardi Verticelli 11 year Mattapan resident – 12 direct abutters 4 story, 7 unit structure. It will not fit in with the neighborhood. Using an egress illegally. City has ignored us because of the as-of-right

permit. Looking for community engagement. Looking for traffic, shadow, normal studies and community engagement. Address 54R River Street

A: It's an allowed use, so the process doesn't necessarily include public engagements. Can go to the ZBA to appeal, or the board of final arbiter.

Q: Robert James 50 year resident of Mattapan: Problems with transparency about the City. Glad that BPDA is willing to say they're involved in the process. Many cases where the abutters were never informed. There needs to be more communication from the City. We don't hear about it when we're not abutters and we should. We've got to be notified. Glad the GMNC is in effect.

b) Ronel Remy, City Life

Ronel is originally from Haiti. Organizer for City life – came into the program when he was losing his home and he eventually bought it back.

- They've seen this happening in other neighborhoods and Mattapan is next
- Someone bought a property for \$65M and immediately started calling it SOMA at the T
- People spending money and wanting to see a return.
- The problem is that people were never informed and didn't have a chance to talk about it.
- He loves Mattapan, works here and wants the best for it. People pay so much money and don't get much for it.
- They use a system called the sword the shield and the offer
- A lot of people try to go into the system and face a judge without a lawyer when the landlord might have three lawyers. Sometimes tenants get unqualified lawyers.
- The sword is
- The shield is lawyers who work with people from Harvard, Northeastern, etc. Maybe is people cannot pay then they shouldn't live there. When the investors come they have more money than God and they want to buy your neighborhood. All of a sudden people are getting evicted without any time to figure out what's going on. In our community you sometimes see lots of fast food restaurants and liquor stores. The council will help ask the question "What's in it for Mattapan?"
- New train station is very nice but it can cause displacement.
- Housing is a human right. We teach folks what to do and what not to do. We don't need another dunkin donuts, we don't need another ATM.
- Displacement is real, and the way City life fights displacement is one household at a time.
- The tenants should be able to make decisions about what impacts the community.
- The City basically always agree with developers.
- We're not saying we don't want development, but we want responsible development.

Q: When you're talking about landlords, do you mean me, someone who just has one tenant, or like a big corporate landlord?

A: The problem is with big corporate landlords. APM doesn't actually own the properties. They sold all the properties to John McGrath, and then back to APM. Lots of people in the neighborhood have faced evictions.

Q: Whats the story with Ugly Houses?

A: They prey on people who can't pay their bills. They buy it for very cheap and then flip it to somebody else and then it becomes the communities problem. All of a sudden you go back to the place where you grew up and it's totally different.

Q: Reverse mortgage?

A: Not a big issue yet, but it will be.

Q: Ugly houses – big issues on Itasca Street. They don't have building permits. Do they need one?

A: Aisha Johnson from ISD – you can't demolish without a permit.

Q: Called inspectional services and no one came out. Digging going on without digsafes. Now they've put up fencing. #38 Itasca St.

A: I'll give you

Q: Roudnie says call 311 and tell them you want to talk to your liaison.

Chair: If you do call 311, please also copy GMNC and we will help provide follow through.

Meetings every Tuesday, 284 Anne Marie St.

III. Working Committees

a) Outreach Committee

Janae – You can expect us to review the efforts we've already implemented for outreach and tweak it to make it more effective. Especially in places who don't necessarily count themselves as Mattapan but they are. Making sure that we're reaching as many people as possible. Helps all the other committees.

b) Zoning Committee

Mr. Lopes – We want to educate ourselves on all the zoning regs and bylaws because the process doesn't work for us unless we're educated and involved. Even though there's a process to notify the abutters, say, without us coming together as a community and providing a vehicle for that notification, unscrupulous developers might do the wrong things. GMNC brings all the neighborhood associations together and makes it much harder for bad intentions to prevail.

We must be diligent about making sure the right permits are pulled. The zoning committee will meet at least once a month, encouraging Mattapan residents to sign up and join. Use the sign up sheets. Going to be very active, and make GMNC powerful.

c) Housing and Development

June – Delighted to see such a large crowd. Lived in Mattapan for 38 years, raised her children in the house she lives in and wants to stay there. She and Vickey want to invite people to sign up to join the committee, meeting is April 28 at the library. Providing a forum to discuss issues around housing and development. From Franklin Park to River Street.

Discussing planning and conceptual phases when projects come to the Committee. Creating a database of available parcels and vacant buildings in the area. We'll be practically creating solutions and need the communities input.

Vickey – Working with the City to provide a forum for community input for public land around the neighborhood. Affordable housing solutions for renters and homeowners based on the current demographics of our area. City life and friends helped Vickey save her home.

d) Public Service Committee

Cynthia – Assigned to Area B3 for 23 years and now is in community service. Judiciary community relations public works, transportation, and crime. Review reqs for food service, alcohol entertainment, public service issues. Traffic and parking, access to public transportation. BOS 311 should be on your smartphone. It helps the police know what's going on in the City. Potholes, out traffic lights, TVs left of the side of the road, anything you see that's a concern, you will get a response. We're partnering with the BPD to promote safety. Everybody needs to sign up!

e) Community Benefits

Chair – Provide guidance to make sure projects give back to the community. Looking at actual data from the City – analyze Boston. The jobs report collects all the data from different jobs public and private, data for last year – if you look at that data pipe fitters, asphalt – no adult minorities working on projects in Mattapan. Total number of jobs in 2018 was a little over 7000. All of the minors in Mattapan were people of color. N full time jobs, no benefits. We'll keep a register of people who work in the trades, so when a contractor comes to town we'll be able to give them a list of all the people who are available to work. Adults to be paid full regular wages. Create a template of a set of standards for our neighborhood. We want to make One Boston a real thing. Holding ourselves accountable, the rest of the City, and private entities.

f) Environmental and Parks Committee

Chair – We have a number of local groups who care about these things – near the River, near Franklin Park, we have the largest amount of open space in all of the neighborhoods in Boston. We need to think about pollution and everything else. No day and time yet.

IV – Wrap Up

Signup sheets with dates for the committees. All the meetings will be at the Mattapan public library. Read all the dates. Meetings are all at the BPL.

Tomorrow there's a meeting in Milton for the high speed Trolley. One on April 4th at the Lower Mills BPL. ADU in Hyde Park

Mattapan Walks Spring, summer, fall. Social media group.

April 11 – Cummins Highway community meeting at the Mattahunt – meeting is listed on website.

Q: Where can we find updates on the Cody Ford? Lots of graffiti, trash, that was cleaned up for the grand opening but it's coming back.

Chair: Come to the housing committee!

Acknowledgements:

Russell Holmes

Walter Applewhite

CJ

Monica