



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

Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Mirlande Joseph, Asst Treasurer
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
Lenore Pereira
David Lopes
Ruby James Saucer
Cynthia Beckford-Brewington
June Joseph (not introduced)
Nichelle Nicole Purvis- Donnell (not introduced)

II. Vote to approve April 1 meeting minutes:

Motion: CBB
Second: Lopes
Vote: Unanimous

II. Presenters

a) Alissa Zimmer – PILOT Action Group, (pilotaction.weebly.com) active since 2017

Coalition of all groups of people who care about the wealthy big institutions in Boston giving back to the community and the people who live here.

PILOT – Payment in Lieu of Taxes - it's very complicated and very important for us to understand.

- Boston relies on property taxes unlike NYC who can collect City income tax
- Only 51% of Boston land is taxable
- State aid is going down every year, so the City is more and more reliant on people paying their taxes
- Mayor Menino started the PILOT program in 2012 for 49 very large corporations
- PILOT fees have not gone up since 2012, while property taxes go up every year
- Uncollected PILOT funds now total over \$80 million, only 25% of the entities who are supposed to pay are actually paying
- Large colleges pay lots of money to hedge funds, but claim that they can't afford the payments to the City
- Big four (BC, BU, NU, Harvard) combined owe nearly \$40 million
- They assign a value to their community benefits, but nobody audits the value of their contributions

- No transparency in the reporting of their community benefits, no community outreach on the types of benefits being provided.
- Impacts of tax-free status is felt all over the City.
- The group goes to City council meetings and has published a big report, and developed a list of recommendations
 - Must pay the PILOT payments as requested
 - Adopt a common framework for the community benefits process
 - Needs to be a new PILOT Commission
 - Transparency in reporting
 - Reevaluation of property taxes - their property values have gone up significantly but their payments are not going up.
- The money could go a long way for the City – schools, infrastructure, etc.
- They've hosted a lot of creative events to highlight the problems
- No events planned until the fall, but everyone should be going on to the PILOT group Facebook page

Q: What's the difference between the Community Preservation Act and the Community Benefits from the PILOT program?

A: The Community Benefits from the PILOT program refer to a monetary measurement of the benefits provided from the large non-profits to the community. Community Preservation Act helps communities preserve open space and historic sites.

Q: What is the status of their recommendations? Do they go to the City/Governor? Next steps?

A: The State's not really involved, but they work closely with the Mayor and he's not been super supportive. The group has a lot of work to do to try and put pressure on the Universities to pay the PILOT payments.

Q: Of the 25% is there a mandatory cash payment?

A: Yes, 12.5% must be paid in cash.

Q: How can community members help?

A: Help campaign and like the Facebook page to make sure you're looped in on their actions

Q/Comment: We have a City Council election coming up and we should be putting pressure on those people to make sure they're standing up for that. The Mayor can make it happen but he isn't. City gets 3% from the marijuana industry and they need to also get these PILOT payments.

A/Response: GMNC can make a big difference helping out

Q: How come Mayor Menino could make them pay, but now we can't? Whose responsibility is it to collect the payments and why aren't they doing it?

A: Initial PILOT Commission went away and now nobody's really overseeing it. There's also a fear of stepping on the University's toes, but the Mayor could be a lot tougher on the Universities.

III. Working Committees

a) Community Benefits

The CBC has created a Community Benefits Standard Template. Half of the residents in Boston make less than \$50,000 per year, but average rent for a one bedroom is more than \$2,000. Developers should be able to earn a profit, but not fleece the community. CBC will develop a database of skilled tradespeople who are local to the community who can work on projects. The people who live here aren't getting jobs on the projects here, while people from New Hampshire might be.

CBC wants to help make sure that people who have been incarcerated or in other programs are able to get work. Want to recruit a variety of different businesses, and sustainable design using renewable resources.

Create a fund that the residents of the community get to decide where the money goes based on a community process. Those are some of the recommendations.

b) Environment Parks & Energy

Met with the Allandale Group to discuss the endorsement of a new ordinance which would require developers to stay further back from wetlands. Some developers see these wetlands as prime targets to become waterfront property.

Moved to endorse the letter by MWS

Seconded by CBB

Unanimously approved

c) Housing and Development

Development projects table: With the exception of 'Wellington @ 1301', all of these projects were BPDA Board approved. The projects are either under review again because they had not had completed some part of the community outreach process, requested design changes or awaiting financing;

- 1199-1203 Blue Hill Avenue – Developer wants to change the project specifications
- 775 Morton Street – Had to have another community meeting for the abutters, going back to ZBA in May
- Cote Village (30-32 Regis Road) – Approved in 2016 but construction has not begun – new counsel is on board, but they need to go back to BPDA because they were originally going to bring in the Boys and Girls Club but now they're not going to. Rep Cullinane is also frustrated with this process, it's unacceptable that they haven't begun construction yet. Mr. Lopes suggesting that GMNC should invite that development to present in front of this body with the entire community present to ask questions and what are their proposed community benefits. We have the ability to get some change made while they're requesting a variance. We need to get the developers with the best plan, not necessarily the developer with the most money. We will review who should come present at our next meeting.
- Mattapan Station Development – ribbon cutting last month, no date set to begin construction
- Morton Station Development – Still not fully funded
- Wellington at 1301 – Public meeting on May 15 at Mattapan BPL 6pm-7pm

Question: Is there a place where we will keep the status online on all of these projects? There's a lot of frustration about these developments.

Answer: BPDA Website

Comment: People aren't being notified well enough about new projects e.g. project on Tennis Road.

Response: The as-of-right development

Kenya Beamon from the BRA – when she knows about a community meeting coming up she posts on social media, sends emails to people

d) Outreach Committee

Janae – next Outreach Committee meeting is June 6, working on t-shirt design and teaming with Mattapan Boys and Girls. Outreach Committee is offering a \$50 gift card to Target to whoever brings the most people to the meeting

e) Public Service Committee

Meeting Tuesday May 7 at Ideal Mixer, lots of ongoing projects

b) Zoning Committee

Meeting Tuesday May 7 at Ideal Mixer

IV – Wrap Up

Representative Dan Cullinane – Morton at Gallivan, state funded project to fix one of our most dangerous intersections.

Introduction to Cynthia Lewis, new Mattapan community representative.

Jessie – invitation to come to the spring walking challenge at May 18 at 10am at Almont Park. Announcing the winning team and promoting the summer challenge.

Brianna from Michelle Wu's office – thanking the council for supporting the environmental ordinance, holding a meeting on May 20th for the proposed work week.

Alkia Powell – City Council representative for District 5 collecting signatures

Ronice Kimbrell from the Boston Tax Coalition. They'll be holding a free tax seminar by appointment only.

Roudnie Celestin – City tries their best to make the notifications to the abutters.

Big meeting coming up coffee hour at Walker Playground. All of the department heads will be there at May 20th at 9am.

Ronald Claude from Ayanna Pressley's office – he will be the Mattapan liaison for the Congresswoman

Paula Campbell – we need to come together as a community to address the recent violence at the City. Come to the meeting to discuss our safety. There's also a peace walk next Sunday May 12.