



GMNC Monthly Meeting
September 9 2019 6:30-8:00pm
Mildred Community Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Mirlande Joseph, Asst Treasurer
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
Lenore Pereira
Ruby James Saucer
June Joseph
Cynthia Brewington-Beckford
David Lopes

II. Vote to approve June 3 meeting minutes:

Motion: MWS

Second: Ms. Tooley

Vote to approve: Unanimous

III. Presenters

a) State Representative Dan Cullinane

- New daughter Isabelle 3 months old + son William 2 years old next week
- Shout out to Cynthia Lewis
- Preserving and investing in the Mattapan Trolley line, 5k riders daily. Huge rallying effort to keep the trolley – got \$7.9M in funding, including \$1.1M for a study. \$50M over the next 5 years, \$200M over the next 10 years invested by MBTA
- Leader sponsor to run a pilot for rapid transit Fairmount Line, and to be able to use the Charlie Card for fares.
- The intersection of Gallivan Street and Morton Street has been funded for \$3.25M to reconstruct the intersection, and to extend the project down to West Selden
- City has plans for Cummins Highway, PLAN Mattapan, Mattapan Square, etc – State Representatives and State Senator working together with the City.
- Has worked to connect the missing link of the greenway, also working on getting an improved plan from DCR on the Edgewater walking path. Currently being used as grounds for dumping, needs to be improved.

- Neponset Greenway comfort station (stone building) has incredible potential to be an amenity for the community, got a \$50k item in the budget to try and get that activated.
- \$500,000 for the green space in the median on Blue Hill Avenue, helpful for climate change
- Working on making sure people can get mental health care in the same place they get physical health care
- Helped work to get affordable housing at Mattapan Station and Cote Ford
- Working on community based re-entry for people who used to be incarcerated.

Q: Can we get a copy of the bond bill?

A: Yes, will be provided to the Council – also important to note that the bond bill is more of a long term thing, still requires further approval each year

b) State Representative Russell Holmes

- Born in Mississippi, mom was pregnant when she was 14, raised at first by his grandparents
- Dad came up to go to Tufts and he grew up at 27 Rockdale Street in the summers, went to school during the year mostly in Mississippi. Tested into Boston Latin, but eventually went to Hyde Park High School
- First job was at Brigham's, first girlfriend was Cynthia's sister. Cynthia's family helped out when his dad was struggling with drugs. Got an engineering degree and worked in robotics, then got an MBA and went on to work as a financial planner.
- Housing stability is very important, whether you're renting or hopefully owning.
- Added to paid sick leave and family leave, working on raising the minimum wage, added Uber/Lyft/AirBnB to the community, casinos, cannabis
- School systems are evolving, he's for Charter, Private, Public, Parochial, and METCO. Now Brooke Charter is a level 1 school in the Mattapan basket.
- Transportation changes, \$28M for parks
- Most important vote is coming up on September 24 – local government is much more important than any other form of government.
 - Q: How do we treat diversity like money?
 - A: Black communities should have a very strong voice in the Democratic Party. Black communities vote 95% democrat, but have an undersized voice in the party. Black communities should have a very strong voice. We should be leading because we're the most reliable votes.
 - Q: Sonya came up through BPS and went to an Exam School. Daughter tested into METCO Lexington, but it's too far away. Mildred is a level one school, but it doesn't support 4th grade classwork.
 - A: Brenda Cassellius is an important person to discuss that with, but he's working on educational reform at the State level, trying to handle the low income students.
 - Q: How can the community be involved with the Blue Hill Avenue redesign?
 - A: Need to get as many people involved as possible. Blue Hill Avenue should run like New York City. We need to get the money required for the technology to get all the signals coordinated. Make sure everybody's involved in PLAN Mattapan.
- When Forest Hills was proposed, people thought it was going to be the end of the world, but people need to go through the processes to get more good projects like that. Don't make emotional decisions but stay involved and get good projects

c) Ethel Harris Shepherd from the US Census Bureau

- There's no bigger agency for collecting data than the US Census. Mission is to count everyone once, and only once, and in the rest place.
- The census does not care about citizenship status, just needs to get a count. All information is confidential, and cannot be given to anyone.
- Expecting a count of 330,000,000 people and going to 140,000,000 households.
- The census will have 10 very basic questions. Only trying to count people, nothing else.
- The census is very important because it defines the number of seats in the House of Representatives, funding on infrastructure, government's business decisions, it provides the benchmark for every other survey conducted in the United States.
- The next census isn't for another 10 years, so it's very important to get accurate data.
- Address canvassing is under way right now – people coming to the door to verify the address. They'll be wearing badges and carrying computers.
- For the first time, people are able to respond online! You'll get a postcard in the mail with your personal code and you can go online to answer the questions.
- Available in 12 non-English languages online (including Spanish and Haitian Creole) and another 59 languages available if you call in.
- If you don't respond to it on your own, someone will come to your door to check in on you.
- The last census did not count approximately 50,000 people, so we lost out on \$12M every year.
- Hiring 500,000 people across the nation to conduct the census, with a lot of those being in Massachusetts. Well over 5,000 jobs. \$25/hour, flexible part time so you make your own hours.
- If you go to census.gov/roam you can view the Response Outreach Area Mapper to see the hard to count areas.
- The only way to get our fair share is to participate!
- GMNC applied for \$10,000 in funding to
 - Q: Can we fill out the census information now?
 - A: If you have the code
 - Q: How do we account for someone who's away at college?
 - A: They're counted in only one place, wherever they'll be on April 1
 - Q: Do homeless people count?
 - A: Yes
 - Q: Are you working to make sure college students are counted?
 - A: Yes
 - Q: Can we get stickers like "I Voted"?
 - A: The partners of the census can do that?
 - Q: How can we be assured that the information won't be shared with other governmental agencies?
 - A: The citizenship question is not on the census. The information is secure, and it's against the law for anyone at the census to divulge it. It's a \$250K fine, or 5 years in prison.
 - Even if you don't answer a question in the census, you'll still be counted

Presentation will be posted on the GMNC website.

d) Sarah Gifford from ActiVote

- Created the app in August and got 10 votes across the country that month.
- Everybody running for City Council is in the app
- If you want to answer questions, the app will tell you which candidates agree with you on certain issues
 - Q: Which questions are used to determine which candidates reflect your values?
 - A: There's a new question to answer every day, on all sorts of topics that politicians answer in 17 different categories. Privacy is paramount and the data is never shared.
 - Q: Does the app check if the politician answers one thing and then does something else?
 - A: No, but they're planning to incorporate voting history.
 - Q: Is polling location data on the app?
 - A: Not yet, because they don't really have a way of making sure it's accurate.

c) Jared Johnson, Organizer – All in Energy

- Mass Save is a big energy efficiency program .It's paid for by everyone paying into an energy efficiency charge.
- You access the benefits by signing up for a no cost energy assessment. They'll do a health and safety check, and tell you how much it will cost to get your house efficient.
- They're struggling to get people in low income neighborhoods to participate
- There is money available to help pay for some other those improvements
- All in Energy is a resource to the community – (781) 656-5359 and allinenergy.org
 - Q: If there's a senior in need, how could we connect them with the resources? There are a lot of seniors who don't know what resources are available, and shouldn't trust everyone because they can be a target.
 - A: There are a lot of scammers out there, and All in Energy helps to educate people about the scams. It's a no-cost assessment, and often times all of the upgrades can be paid for as well.
 - Q: Does your agency handle people who are on ABCD and fuel assistance?
 - A: There are rules, but they can help educate on the rules and what they can do.

IV. Working Committees – No updates this month.

IV – Wrap Up Announcements

- CJ from Andrea Campbell's office: Hearings coming up – also the Mattapan Jazz festival Sept 22 at the Foley lawn. Cheryl Harding, the senior advisor, is looking forward to getting connected with more seniors in the area.
- Roudnie Celestine – Sept 25 discussion on the changes coming to Blue Hill Avenue at KIPP Academy. Mayor got a big ruling with AirBnB to require everyone to register postings.
- Malaika from Annisa Esssaibi George's office – happy to help with any BPS related issues
- Mattapan Patriots season started last weekend. Games are on Sunday from 10am to 2pm. Event held at the Venezia restaurant, oldest African American Legion post in the country.