



GMNC Monthly Meeting
January 6, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Mildred Avenue Community Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

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

II. Meeting minutes from December

Motion to approve – Beckford Brewington
Seconded – Tooley
Approved

NOTE – we need to report back to the community of what the Council's done over the previous month (e.g. meeting with BofA, other committee actions, etc)

III. Presenters

a) Lori Nelson, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Boston

- Shout out to Vicky Siggers, longtime friend
- What is resilience? In this case it's all related to race equity, diversity and inclusion
- Office of resilience was established in 2017
- Resilient Boston Strategy was a public document produced with the Rockefeller Foundation, geared toward changing governments around race resiliency
- Lori's been there for 19 months so far, which has been a very difficult job working with 45 different City departments, not all of which want change or are comfortable with these issues
- Work of the office outlined by an executive order from Mayor Walsh, with details on accountability and how to make sure they're accomplishing their goals. It is the rubric for whether progress is being made.
- Shout out to the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), for being such a diverse and forward thinking department
- Boston is the lead City committed to moving the needle forward.

- BPDA is another partner in this effort, and has provided a lot of data specific to Mattapan. It shows we've made some progress, but of course we have much more work to do.
- In 2020 the Office of Resiliency, Race, and Equity is committed primarily to accountability. Determined to hold other departments accountable and also asking to be held accountable by the public.
- This is Version 3.0 – continuing to revamp and improve.
- Focused on trauma, economic development – huge small and local business space needs help, working on certifying small businesses, growth, and also working with ecumenical, faith based groups.

Q: Can you please give more detail about the ecumenical groups?

A: A survey of leaders in faith groups found that they felt they didn't originally have a seat at the table. We've held an initial meeting with Mayor Walsh, and building off that we're looking for recommendations on who to connect with from the faith community.

Q: It's difficult to get your mind around all the information if it's not computerized. The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) does not have any of its services online. How can the Office of Resiliency, Race, and Equity help get this information to be more public? How is ISD being held accountable to the standards you've described?

A: David Ingles was recently hired as the Chief Information Officer from the Washington, D.C. area recently to try to work on this and other similar issues. He's the one in charge of this issues and would be a good resource about it. Commissioner Dion Irish would be a good person to give us information as well.

Q: The residents would love to see a plan on how to modernize ISD. We haven't seen anything like that, we know it will be expensive, but it must be done.

A: Lori's happy to take the responsibility on her part, and those other people she's mentioned are good resources as well. We should also committed to solving this process collectively. She also has convening power, which might also be useful.

Q: Could you better explain what resiliency means with respect to what this department does?

A: The department came out of two things – when the Mayor campaigned in 2013 he was asked by a resident what he's going to do about race matters in the City? He froze on that question because he didn't have any answer. From that day forward he has committed to trying to have a good plan to deal with race matters, particularly with City Hall, and with the Rockefeller Foundation. Most people think of resiliency with respect to climate issues, but Boston has tweaked the idea to hinge on issues of race as well.

Q: If you're looking at partnerships and trying to make things better, who is the City reaching out to on the community side as far as organizations involved with minority folks (especially around construction) – how is the Resiliency Department making concrete changes in the community?

A: Chief Economic Development Officer John Barros helped work out an executive order to help make sure everyone's on an equal playing field, and the organization of a steering committee who will be assigned to monitoring accountability on these issues.

Q: Are all City agencies on the same page about all the projects that are headed for Mattapan? Mr. Barros has gotten a big group together, but how many of those people are residents? We have a lot of stuff going on (planning around arterial roadways, major developments, traffic issues) and we have a hard time finding out about all of those issues.

A: We need to do more work around communication. CIO Ingles is putting in a lot of work to figuring this out on the IT front.

b) Star Laws, Department of Neighborhood Development

- Deep Mattapan connections, grew up here and lives nearby. Her son played basketball at the Mildred all the time.
- Jay Lee and Shani Fletcher are also here today
- Primary goals here are to receive community feedback to help develop an RFP to send out to try and get developers to make something happen on this land a 30-36 Mildred Avenue
- Right now the options are looking like:
 - A) Two 3 unit buildings and 18 community garden plots on one side
 - B) Two 4 unit buildings and 18 community garden plots in the middle of the two buildings
 - C) One 8-9 unit building with 24 community garden plots
 - D) One 8-9 unit building oriented more along the street with 24 community garden plots – could be better for solar
- Any of these options would likely be one third market rate, one third middle income (100% AMI) and one third moderate income (80% AMI).
- Shani Fletcher discussing the Grassroots program
 - Grassroots helps pay for and design community gardens to make sure they're running the right way
 - Any non-profit can apply to run the garden, but Grassroots can only give the funds to a 501c(3) – whichever group winds up running the garden would keep it available to residents of the neighborhood

Q: A survey was conducted along Mildred Ave to ask what the residents want to see on these four parcels and there was a lot of feedback saying that it should be something that ties in with the school. It seems like a community garden would be a great way to make that happen.

A: The RFP can include requirements to make sure the developers work with the school, and that the community garden will only have local ownership.

Q: Will the housing be rental or ownership opportunity?

A: We'd love to hear from the community on that.

Q: If you're a resident, do you get dibs on the RFP? It would be great to give other people who live on the street the best opportunities to bid.

A: With the Yard Sales program, that used to happen, but this is a different situation. When you have land that's developable, the City wants to try and use it to help with the housing crisis. If it's a small lot that you can't really build on, then yes.

Q: Is it possible to have a grading system where if the development team is 51% minority, could you get some extra points, if the contractor is a person of color or from Boston you get extra points. Something like that?

A: There is a system of ranking the potential developers, and they can all be brought in front of the council to present?

Q: Regarding the rental vs. home ownership issue – the only way to build wealth is through ownership, my preference would be home ownership.

A: We're taking notes on these preferences.

Lenore Pereira: We know that we definitely want the community garden because we used to have one on Mildred Avenue, but I'd need to talk to my neighbors.

Q: Are the options presented on the comment form as they are in the materials presented here today? Could the mixed rate

A: They can be presented in any way, but if different affordability rates are desired we can tell them that's what we want.

Q: Would the options as presented tonight be feasible for developers to make money on them?

A: We think these options are probably pretty solid to be attractive to a developer, but we don't really know until we put it out. If we put out the RFP and the community doesn't like the proposals that come back, DND can reissue the RFP.

Q: We appreciate the community involvement this early on in the process. We think people will be living in these units for a long time. These proposals should also address traffic and parking.

A: That's something that we can work with the developers on.

IV. Working Committees – No updates this month.

V – Wrap Up Announcements

- Jesse Dambreville – this Saturday Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition is having the final walking challenge at 500 Walk Hill Street to announce the winners and acknowledge.
- The Public Services Committee has been working with Michelle Wu on a number of items, one of which is MBTA fares. Recently in Lawrence several bus routes were made free and she is working on sending a delegation to go up and ride the free buses.
- On MLK Day the American Legion is having its annual breakfast. More details are on the website. It's the oldest African American American Legion post.
- Lindiwe Rennert from BTM – the Blue Hill Ave study is in the public realm study
- Cynthia Lewis from Dan Cullinane's office – Rep Cullinane has been working hard on getting Charlie Cards to be able to be used on the commuter rail. Rep Cullinane is also working on doing living room conversations if anyone is interested in setting up one of those.
- By the end of this week there will be information up on the website regarding the next election for GMNC Board.