



GMNC Monthly Meeting
February 3, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Mildred Community Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
June Joseph
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Lenore Perreira
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
Ruby James Saucer

Notes from Council Chair Ali-Salaam - over the past year we worked very hard on bringing the community together and learning about zoning, development, community benefits, outreach, and many other topics.

- II. Meeting minutes from January 7, 2020
Motion to approve – Skelly
Seconded – June Joseph
Minutes approved 7-0

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) Segun Idowu, Executive Director, Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA)

- Born in Boston, lived in Dorchester, mom still lives in Mattapan, now he lives in Hyde Park. Worked in City Hall and then for Charles Yancy for a number of years.
- BECMA basically serves as a chamber of commerce for all black owned businesses across the State. Working on research about wealth in communities of color, and how to set up institutions that guard against displacement and other forces aligned against communities of color.
- It's important to grow black businesses in our communities because they help to employ all of us and give us better benefits. There are at least 20,000 black owned businesses in the State, but there are over 800,000 businesses total, so we need to invest more.
- BECMA has three major actions to advance their mission. To Advocate for policies that help grow and sustain the Black economy. To convene solutions, and to collaborate with each other.
- Meeting outcomes are to 1) Understand the Problem such as access to capital, back office support, transportation, rising costs, and access to opportunities.
- Advocacy & Access to opportunities - big partnership with WeWork. Last year they only spent \$50,000 with MBEs - this year they spent over \$1 million. That's their biggest work on the private front. In the public sector, they worked with Congresswoman Pressley and Wu to hold a hearing on contract equity. As a result of the hearing they learned that Boston awarded \$664 million in contracts

in 2015, with less than 1% went to women and minority businesses. BECMA then held the Mass Black Expo to bring awareness to black owned businesses.

- BECMA has made a number of recommendations around goals - recommending minimums of 7, 14, and 20% MBE participation; policy - because these needs to be lasting changes; responsibility - needs to fall on one specific department to connect black businesses to opportunity; resources - must be appropriated for personnel and technical assistance; reporting - already required by law, but isn't being done.
- Recommendations related to access to capital and back office support, like gap funding and technical assistance.
- Recommendations around rising costs include rent subsidy, "Buy your building" program to help create coops.
- External examples of success include the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, which helped develop MGM Springfield as well as the Encore Casino in Everett. Both casinos have exceeded their goals for percentages of MBE spending.
- Another example of external success is the "Massport Model", which was conceived by L. Duane Jackson and Ken Turner, Massport's Director of Inclusion/Compliance. It means that 25% of the grading process for whether or not a bidder will be awarded a project. It's been used in the bidding for the Omni hotel in the Seaport, and will be enforced on two other upcoming projects.
- This type of model, and process, are things that GMNC could help campaign for.

Q: You talk about black owned business and also minority owned business and it's hard to tell what the breakdown on those groups are. It seems like there should be more differentiation on those categories to ensure that everyone's getting what they should.

A: That would be excellent, but right now that's not the way it works. The City doesn't even really ask those questions. BECMA is working on trying to roll out a separate website with that information.

Q: Is it a prerequisite to register with the City to take advantage of these programs?

A: Basically, yes, right now. However, now the City of Boston and the State both recognize each other's programs so you don't need to sign up for both. Also, there's a program called COMMBUYS.com that publishes all the work that comes out in the state. Email info@becma.org for more information. Also, the City is having a procurement fair next Monday to try to help people understand how to do business with the City.

Q: The City released a diversity study over the summer by BBC research - could BECMA do a similar study?

A: Mayor Menino ended previous 'affirmative action' programs because he was worried about getting sued. Other states found these practices to be unconstitutional so he was scared. The City argues that it needs some type of foundational document to help protect against law suits from white business owners who think these programs are unfair. The Mayor did sign an executive order that gives power to Chief Barros's office last year, but it's a really difficult issue.

Q: How can business people find out about these opportunities before they're already over?

A: BECMA is a great place to learn about these things - please sign up! And don't let the registration fee keep you away, BECMA always tries to help where they can.

Q: How can GMNC partner with Mattapan Square property owners to get more businesses that we're excited to get?

A: There's a market aspect to it - the businesses that people want to see are the ones that are most likely going to be able to pay their rent, so that's important. Also, a market study analysis could help more clearly identify what types of businesses and where they should be located. GMNC could hold a lot of sway by joining together to come up with recommendations on what types of businesses we'd like to see.

Q: Milton Baptiste is located at 1601 Blue Hill Ave in Mattapan Square. He represents property owners and would like to hear about what businesses should be in Mattapan Square.

IV. Working Committees

Public Services Committee - Report from Matthew Skelly – Working on a residential parking permit application in the Savannah Ave/Monterey Ave neighborhood, also working on the Slow Streets application for the Colorado Street neighborhood. In the future we look forward to hearing issues around liquor licenses, or any other public service issues.

Outreach Committee - Report from Janae Tooley – Meetings are the first Thursday of every month. Working on Phase 2 of the election process, with flyering and social media for the election on February 29. Quick presentation on Main Streets and why they're important to the community. Also the video of the month, which is building better platforms for our cities.

Community Benefits Committee – Report from Fatima Ali-Salaam - Working on compiling a list of community benefits standards. Looking at the potential for community space, help with child care, help with finding more affordable housing.

Environmental Committee – Report from Fatima Ali-Salaam - Mattapan has a lot more green space than almost any other neighborhood in Boston. The way things are going in Mattapan the only open spaces left in Mattapan are going to be the cemeteries, which is the opposite of what Frederick Law Olmstead would've wanted when he designed the Emerald Necklace. The green space helps keep the community cool! We need to protect it.

Zoning Committee – Report from Fatima Ali-Salaam (for David Lopes) - the zoning committee allows developers to come in and present their plans. This helps people know what's going on before it's too late, and give feedback on projects.

Housing and Development - June Joseph and Vicky Siggers - Vicky joined the committee because she is a renter and she got help from people who kept her from being displaced. All of the struggles she's been through have helped her understand how to be a voice for those people who don't have a voice. Ruby James Saucer has been having similar problems, and worked with the committee to help get a better deal with her landlord. The housing committee is looking for members with skills in transportation, legal, or anyone who's interested.

V – Wrap Up Announcements

- Cafe Juice Up has been an amazing partner to the GMNC over the past year, and has been an exemplary business. GMNC would like to present the owners of the Cafe with Certificates of Appreciation for providing nourishing food and great spirit.
- DCAMM is hosting presenters at Brooke for the State Hospital site.
- February 12 is the deadline to register for the presidential election.
- February 29 is the GMNC election. We are offering electronic ballots this year, check the website for further details on that.
- Visit the BECMA website to learn more about the Black Restaurant Challenge. There's a raffle for people who visit one black owned restaurant each week.
- March 3 is the date of the primary - make sure you get out and vote!
- Cynthia Lewis from Dan Cullinane's office – event coming up February 22 at ABCD Mattapan on aging in a state of grace, learning how to do an estate and lots of other great info. 12pm-4pm.
- Tuesday night there will be a vocalist showcase at Flames.
- Wednesday February 26 - PLAN Mattapan meeting. Save the date!
- Commission on the PILOT program in the City should have its first hearing. It's important to hear from Mattapan!