



GMNC Monthly Meeting
March 2, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Mildred Community Center

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Mirlande Joseph, Vice Treasurer
June Joseph
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
David Lopes
Nicole Purvis

New Council Members

Joy Gary
William King
Nikkia Jean-Charles
Machel Gray
David Halbert

II. Meeting minutes from February 3, 2020

Motion to approve – Skelly
Seconded – June Joseph
Minutes approved 6-0

III. Working Committees

Public Services Committee - Report from Matthew Skelly – Working on an emergency preparedness event coming up soon. In the future we look forward to hearing issues around liquor licenses, and findings from the Blue Hill Avenue BTM, PLAN Mattapan BPDA, and Cummins Highway PWD studies. Meeting is tomorrow night, March 3 – first Tuesday of each month.

Outreach Committee – no report this month – Committee Chair Janae Tooley is out sick.

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 – looking into adopting the LEED Neighborhood Design (ND) standards.

Zoning Committee – Report from David Lopes. Zoning Committee meets the third Thursday each month. Met with one potential developer last month, which did not have all of their paperwork together, and they will be back on March 19th. The Committee will review projects from a zoning perspective and then make recommendations to the Board. We have a new checklist that the Zoning Committee will be

Housing and Development - June Joseph and Vicky Siggers – No report this month, as there was no meeting last month. Meetings are on the fourth Thursday at Ideal Mixer.

IV: Presenter: Dr. Brenda Cassellius, BPS Superintendent

- Appointed Superintendent on May 8, visited all 135 school buildings to get a sense of the opportunities, partnerships, and got a sense of the work needed ahead.
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- Restarted the build BPS programs, working on building new K-6 East Boston facility.
- Focused on the K-6 first, then the 7-8 facilities, then the 9-12
- Trying to have 10 really good high schools that everyone has faith in instead of only 3
- Working on the final, final revisions to the BPS strategic plan, while coordinating with the Mayor and the City Council
- The Mayor's committed to funding \$200 million over the next three years in additional funding above and beyond and maintenance, or inflationary costs, or any other increases. It's real money going directly into the classrooms.
- At the same time the Mayor is also providing \$500 million in funding, which will help shore up housing especially for children.
- Strategic plan has 6 major commitments
 - Close achievement gaps – whether it's technical/vocational or anything else
 - Expanding opportunities, creating partnerships across schools, ensure there's equity across the schools with fund raising
 - Accelerating learning – advanced placement programs all around
 - Amplifying voice – community members need to feel valued, heard, and authentically engaged in decision making
 - Cultivating trust – need to have staff at the central office who respect the members of the community, having buses that run on time and food services that work, hot good food, most importantly it's all about making sure
 - Activating partnerships – community partners needed this elevated up to a primary goal. Serving the students who look like them, understanding their language and understand their cultural heritage.
- Focused on improving the worst performing schools first, including several in Mattapan, hoping for turnarounds like Mattahunt
- Working on developing a standard of education to make sure the curriculum is aligned to the assessments.
- When you do work with children, you also need to do work with the family, so it's a whole family approach to supporting children in school
- Doing a lot of work to support students who are ESL, or who are new to the country. Developing more dual language programs, programs for ethnic studies.
- Working on a lot more on Hub Schools, particularly under the partnerships goal. Developing asset maps to better understand what access each community has to resources in their neighborhoods. Need to make sure that schools have opportunities for fund raising.
- Brought in a guru on bus service, looking to present those findings to the school committee later this month.
- Next year there will be a lot of improvements on those levels.

Q: Vocational high schools – Boston has had a really rough history with providing good vocational education. What's your plan for Madison Park?

A: Madison Park is at the top of the list for school turnarounds. They're 350 students higher in number than last year, and in the future there will be a lot of certification programs there.

Q: Do you provide any incentives for teachers to teach in their own community?

A: Well if you teach in the community you work in, then you don't have to drive so far! Also looking to improve teacher diversity via incentives. Also looking to match languages – no incentive programs yet, but we're looking at it.

Q: How do we improve the number of male teachers of color?

A: New HBCU recruitment program, but it's really difficult with the cost of living and housing in Boston. Still working on developing programs for that.

Q: Can you expand on the incentives around housing? Workforce housing is a big issue, what support would teachers have?

A: For students and families there will be vouchers and lots of other help for BPS families. Opportunity to think about programs for mortgage assistance – all just ideas to look at at this point.

Q: Are you looking to switch the way schools are funded in accordance with the BEJA (Boston Educational Justice Alliance) program?

A: BPS has looked at the BEJA pledge and the student funding formulas. In Boston we have schools that have 137 kids in them. When you do something like that you wind up sending too much money to the smallest schools. They've done an equity analysis to make sure that money is going where it should. Every school needs a nurse, for example, but some schools need much more help than others. But with only \$100 million to work with you can't do everything.

Q: Parent of a 16 year old: in working with PLAN Mattapan, we don't see a deliberate planning/zoning process around schools. How should they be funded and integrated deeply into a plan? You would think the funding needs to be completely rethought – not only in taxes but also with incentive. How do we partner with businesses in the community?

A: Worked in Minnesota for 8 years with almost the sole purpose being to try and find revenue, so there are a lot of ideas out there. PILOT program could help, but it's also about finding corporate partners who are willing to raise their hand and sign up.

Q: What about the actual physical buildings for the facilities? We have dire need to improve school buildings. Where can we envision a new high school on Blue Hill Avenue?

A: BPS would love to work with Mattapan residents to develop a fine arts high school in Mattapan – need to identify some property. BPS just acquired property at St. Angela's for K-6 students.

Q: BPS is focused on too many things that students aren't getting what they actually need. Compared to a student who goes to Wellesley, we're lacking so much funding and services.

A: BPS facilities do need a lot of work, anything from bathrooms, to paint, to lighting, auditoriums, cafeterias, anything. The historic nature of these buildings means they don't always have all the amenities. It would cost billions of dollars to try and rebuild everything. But underperformance in education will be changing now. There will be a new K-8 literacy launch, then high school will be next. Science labs and classrooms will be starting up next year. That curricular work is happening right now.

Q: If BPS comes under receivership, what does that mean? All the way across the spectrum of different types of schools, and also for the funding promised? How do you stop the school to prison pipeline? What about kids who don't get it immediately, how do you stick with them?

A: Attitude reflects leadership – Dr. Casselius will be setting a very high bar for herself and her team and the rest of the performance will follow. Schools can have creative autonomy, but teachers still need to teach toward the tests. We need to make sure that a career in technical resources is just as rigorous as what students will find in college. Regarding receivership, the expectation is that the commissioner should let the Superintendent do her job!

Q: What are your future thoughts about BPD officers that are showing up at schools and deporting students?

A: Working with BPD and training them on what information can be shared between the resources officers and the police department. Info must be shared when there's an immediate safety need, but there needs to be a balance and not oversharing. Important to make sure the principals are in charge of discipline, not the police department.

Q: What are the schools plans for Coronavirus?

A: Cancelling school trips to effected locations, there's been a single point of leadership for the response established. There was a deep clean of all the buildings over winter break, and more janitorial staff will be added next year. Closely monitoring all flu like systems. Instructing that everyone should be washing their hands all the time and practicing good hygiene and sanitization.

Q: Parent of a K1 student – when we were looking at potential schools we tried to figure out the numbers of students who were placing into exam schools from each school but that data was not available. Can you make that available a) because it's a good data point to know when trying to place your own child, and b) because it will inform the conversation the public should be having around these schools.

A: Absolutely – the school quality framework group meets tomorrow and that's great data for them to look at. A lot of other similar information can be provided as well.

Q: How are you connecting with local colleges? And for students who aren't going to college, what are we doing to prepare those students as well?

A: Working on the pathways program, which will help students get college credits for robotics or other similar programs. Haven't done a ton of engagement with the universities yet, but plan to this summer at stakeholder meetings.

NOTE: GMNC will be starting up an ad hoc education committee to work with BPS. GMNC is very solutions based and action oriented, and we want to help. We're also in discussions with Bank of America, and we're working on getting them to integrate financial literacy into the BPS schools.

V – Wrap Up Announcements

- TOMORROW March 3! Presidential primaries as well as the Ward committee elections.
- March 4 at Mildred is the Olmstead Green public meeting. BPDA holding the meeting on Wednesday night.
- March 5 is the Blue Hill Avenue BTB project meeting.
- March 7 is the Ward 18 election
- March 14 at Mattapan BPL is the community electrical box design meeting
- March 18 is the Women Owned Small Businesses event in JP
- March 19 is the CAC meeting about the State Hospital Site
- Later this month GMNC will be holding a Census awareness weekend meeting to try and get the word out. The cards go out on April 1.
- Friday April 3 is a city wide needle exchange
- Rep Cullinane aide Cynthia Lewis reporting on the aging with grace program, as well as other legislative successes.
- Councilor Ricardo Arroyo has business cards now!