



GMNC Monthly Meeting
July 6, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Online Meeting via zoom

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair
David Halbert
Lenore Perreira
Ruby James Saucer
William King
Mirlande Joseph, Vice Treasurer
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer
June Joseph
Nicole Purvis
Nikkia Jean-Charles
Joy Gary
David Lopes

II. Meeting minutes from June 1, 2020

Motion to approve – Skelly
Seconded – Purvis
Minutes approved unanimously

III. Presenter: Segun Idowu – Black Economic Council of Massachusetts

- Back again presenting for the second time this year.
- BECMA's main activities are:
 - Advocating – Lobbied the city to award more of its contract work to black businesses
 - Convening – Cannabis equity discussion, and opportunity zones
 - Connecting – Mass. Black Expo (on hold this year)
- 1,200 black owned firms in MA, which employ 14,000 people and generate over a billion dollars in revenue
- BECMA conducted a survey on March 9, before the state even shut down, 90% reported that they expected to be financially impacted, 60% said they wouldn't be able to survive a 90 day shut down.
- On the mark virtual conversation with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley to discuss the CARES Act
- Berkshire Bank set aside \$3M for a product to be used specifically by BECMA members, and it can be paired with SBA products. Up to a \$50,000 line of credit.
- For people who couldn't take on more debt, there is also money that's been lined up to

- Protect MA platform launched May 11 to connect businesses with personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Two weeks ago BECMA convened a large group to put together a blueprint for how different sectors of the state should respond to the racial crisis in our country. The goals for the blueprint are for businesses to invest at least 10% of investment in BIPOC businesses, 10% of contracts go to BIPOC businesses, 40% of leadership to be BIPOC, adopt good business standards, and for a \$1 billion Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Fund which will be managed by the people, and used to invest in grassroots organization, cannabis, tech, etc.
- Kinsean Company says we would add \$1-\$1.5 trillion to the economy by eliminating racial inequalities, so racism is literally holding the economy back.
- Between 2009 and 2012, white owned businesses lost millions of jobs, but black owned businesses gained millions of jobs which is largely what saved the economy. Now those businesses are largely the ones that are hurting because of Covid-19.

Q: Can you explain how you came up with the target numbers? Was there a matrix or a model you used to inform the numbers you set?

A: The combined population of black and indigenous people in MA comes out to about 10% so that's how that number was set. The 40% number was set aspirationally, and to start a conversation, but the idea generally is to get more people on those boards. The \$1B number came from conversations with many people,

Q: Is there a strategy for getting the Boston Chamber of Commerce to fully support BECMA?

A: There have been many conversations with the Chamber, as well as the Mass business round table, many other business community groups buying into BECMA's vision.

Q: Is there a way to leverage the CRA (Community Reinvestment Act)?

A: Yes, it can definitely be a portion of the investment. It's important to get investment from all over, though, because the CRA in and of itself isn't enough.

A: Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – the CRA is tricky because it requires banks in certain locations.

Q: When (time) and where (area of Boston) will the fund begin investing? What's the target date?

A: That's a good question, but right now the priority is getting the commitments to funding.

Q: Are we targeting any of the many millionaires and billionaires in Massachusetts?

A: Yes, especially wealthy people of color, not really targeting the individuals, more the businesses that they run.

Q: As we know homeownership plays a vital role in wealth creation and generational wealth. Systematically Black has been intentionally excluded from owning their home for multiply decades. How does your 1 billion factor homeownership into the equation?

A: The \$1B fund is going to be able to provide money for a lot of different things, but home ownership is a critical one.

Q: Regarding the targets and the fund, have you seen something comparable created by other sectors?

A: No, it's basically all new, but the concepts have been around for decades. It's really just a strategy to propel everything forward.

Q: Has BECMA made any suggestions to Mayor Walsh about how land development happens in Boston? We're seeing much of Mattapan and Dorchester being developed in some unfair ways. Chair Ali-Salaam – especially in Mattapan, it's getting to the point where the only green spaces are graveyards. And the businesses in Mattapan Square are mostly owned by people who live elsewhere – how do we drive business development with equity?

A: BECMA believes in following the community input process, and wouldn't just necessarily come in and tell Mayor Walsh what to do. In terms of investing, the Berkshire Bank product for black owned businesses does have its own standards for who they'll loan money to. BECMA has also been raising funds to support micro-businesses that are just starting up and still small. Berkshire Bank also has a "Friends and Family" loan up to about \$20,000 that's specifically for black and brown business owners.

<https://www.berkshirebank.com/About/Community/Friends-Family-Fund>

Q: Mattapan have the highest black home ownership in Boston. How can we get a black own bank in Mattapan that can help home owners with refinance, line of credit, and actually keep the money circulating in the community.

A: Segun will relay the question to the president of BECMA's board, who is the CEO of the largest black owned bank in America.

Q: We're currently going through the process of PLAN Mattapan, is BECMA going to be involved with that?

A: BECMA hasn't officially collaborated with the BPDA on this, but if and when that happens they'll be sure to involve Mattapan residents.

Q: Have you or BECMA met with any of the CDC's in the Greater Mattapan community, who have control over a lot of wealth and give almost no contracts to black owned businesses. Many of them are even owned by people of color, but still go through the large established builders.

A: Senator Wilkinson wrote a whole article about how \$1 billion dollars disappeared through CDC's without going through any black hands. There's a larger conversation that needs to take place around the efficacy of those organizations – not just in Mattapan, but communities of color across the state.

Q: How are you working with youth to help them start their own businesses?

A: Working with high schools to do something more than just an internship with the BECMA member businesses. BECMA businesses are the best at what they do, but it's really important for young people to understand how the businesses work. Trying to develop relationships with groups like BUILD who already do these types of things.

Q: We need to lobby our elected officials to demand more for our communities.

A: We do have a Mattapan Square Main Streets, but the director resigned in April and they have to go through the process of choosing another executive director. As far as a Mattapan CDC, yes, but it needs to go through the community process. In our last City Council election, we had less than 3% of people turn up. It's also really important to make sure everyone gets counted in the census. Community organizations have been preparing for months on the Covid issue, and systemic racism is a really tough problem, but the system needs to be broken and replaced with something better. We're also seeing people being foreclosed on. The average median income in Mattapan has also recently dropped by \$5,000 recently from \$48,000 to \$43,000. People should not be losing their homes. Make sure to check in with your neighbors to make sure they've filled out their census. We also need to campaign for more voting sites closer to where we live.

VI. – Wrap Up Announcements

- GMNC is gearing up to start having meetings again soon to be able to hear from applicants for development.
- Board member William King is getting married this upcoming Saturday, congratulations William!
- Roudnie Celestin from the Office of Neighborhood Services – in terms of the condition of buildings in Mattapan Square, it's really difficult for the Mayor to fix any of that, and they're trying to get in touch with the building owners. There's also funds available for child care, \$3,500 and up, on the Boston.gov website. There's also money available for artists. Boston.gov/driveinmovies for info on the drive ins. Working on the fireworks issues, please keep report them. If you're looking for PPE, email roudnie.celestin@boston.gov
- There's a Youth Walking Challenge for people 25 and under, contact Shavel'le Olivier shavelleolivier@yahoo.com or sign up here: <https://forms.gle/9ZzuOxpx8WQUyzy9>
- Kenya Beaman – PLAN Mattapan is still going strong, reach out to Kenya if you have any input on what you hope the findings of that effort will be.
- The NAACP ACT-SO competition will be taking place later this month, we'll be sending out a link to watch as soon as it's available. It's a great thing for our community to be so well represented there.
- ZBA hearing tomorrow morning about the 52R and 54R River Street properties to render their decision, they need our support.
- Vickey Siggers – the Mattapan Square Farmers Market will be starting this Saturday! 11am – 1pm across the street from Burger King on Fairway Street.
- Saturday August 1 from 10am to 12pm will be the GMNC will be hosting a forum for the candidates running for the 12th Suffolk State Rep seat, please join in!