



GMNC Monthly Meeting  
February 1, 2021 6:30-8:00 pm  
Online Meeting via zoom

### Meeting Minutes

#### I. Council Members Present

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

#### Council Members Absent

Mirlande Joseph, Assistant Treasurer  
Michel Gray  
Cynthia Brewington  
David Lopes

#### II – Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes subject to corrections by Vickey Siggers
- Seconded by Matthew Skelly
- Approved unanimously

#### III. Committee Reports

1. Public Services – Report from Committee Co-Chair Matthew Skelly – Meeting will be tomorrow night to discuss food service protocols with a representative of ISD.
2. Community Benefits – Report from Co-Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – working on assigning a points system to the benefits package program they've developed with an eye toward EQUITY – meeting will be February 3.
3. Environmental Committee – Report from Committee Chair William King – meeting coming up on February 8 and will address parks.
4. Housing Committee – Report from Committee Co-Chair Joy Gary – Presentations from the Mattapan Station developers, as well as a life skills training presentation on February 25.
5. Zoning Committee – no report this month

II. Presenter: John Barros, City of Boston Chief of Economic Development

- Jumping off of a Black History Month kick off call honoring Mel King
- We're coming out of a pandemic, and the first thing to talk about is that there are over 30 mobile testing sites all over the city. Get tested.
- Most important principal in Economic Development is development without displacement
- Last year over 1,000 affordable units were permitted. It's really important that the units are affordable in perpetuity.
- Many Boston residents have lost their jobs in the last year. It's at 7.6% now across the City, and in Mattapan it's typically twice the City average.
- We're launching an effort to get people back to work. Also working with the tourist industry to try and give them a boost, because many Boston residents work in that industry. A focus of the tourism campaign will be not only the downtown, but the neighborhoods as well. It's not just about the Seaport and Downtown, which is a huge shift.
- The City also partnered with the State to add 130 jobs for people processing insurance claims.
- We're also finding ways to provide capital and technical assistance for people to get their businesses set up with help doing websites, accounting, market studies, etc.
- We just launched something to reimagine Boston's Main Streets, working with over 20 small neighborhood centers in Mattapan.
- The most important thing they're doing is working with neighborhoods with an EQUITY lens. Every City RFP is going to require to have a Diversity & Inclusion plan at all levels, so that it can be a part of the evaluation process for any land disposition by the City. Last year the BPDA flat out denied 3 separate proposals that ignored that question.
- All projects also need to provide a displacement analysis – if the project is going to create displacement, how will it fix that?
- The Office of Economic Development is ready to work with the GMNC and others to make sure that they are designing support (favorable loans for capital and technical assistance) that are built into every RFP that goes out.

Q: Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – is the price of the property going to be addressed in RFPs? Because if the price is too high for any local people to afford it, this isn't really going to help.

A: Going to need to look into this, because it's something that's governed by State law. I'm going to make the commitment right now that we're going to make these parcels as affordable as possible, not only so that people can make more money, but so we can provide the best community benefits package possible.

Q: Cassandra Cato-Louis – we might have good opportunities for people to buy beauty products and Jamaican food, but what about art and the creative economy?

A: Art is super important to the economy. Recently in Nubian Square, four people came up with a plan for a live music jazz restaurant in the Bolin building, and we'd love to support something like that in Mattapan Square. The Walsh administration put in new legislation for liquor licenses.

Q: And what about non-profits?

A: We're set up to help businesses more than non-profits, but if your non-profit is running a social enterprise, then that will count for assistance.

Q: Avaughn Phillip – how has your department been helping the unhoused community during the pandemic?

A: Sheila Dillon's group has provided space for people to quarantine during Covid, including people who've tested positive, people who were waiting for test results, etc. Of the units that were approved last year, 27% were for affordable housing, with a portion of those being approved for homeless people.

Q: Cisco Fernandez – How are you going to continue to serve disadvantaged communities under a new Mayor?

A: Well the new mayor is going to have to decide the new priorities, but regardless we need to do more to help work for disadvantaged communities.

Q: Thelma Burns – Mr. Barros has a lot of great ideas, but how are they being communicated to the neighborhoods in the City?

A: We work really hard to get our message out to everyone.

Q: Alejandro Alphonse – what are the pros and cons of your job?

A: Some of the cons are that it's long work hours, and I wish I had more time to spend with my family. It's also hard when you really want to help someone but you can't. But on the pro side, I get to do things that help my community. My first activity was a neighborhood cleanup I organized at the age of 14, and I've been in public service ever since.

Q: Helen Tonge – you talked about EQUITY in the RFP process; what does really mean the impact to the process is? Once a proposal is deemed to have met the requirements, is there oversight to follow these projects all the way through?

A: We're doing a really good job checking for what the plan is, and maybe even in the first year, second year, we do a good job keeping track through the permitting and construction process, but what about after that? We have now been looking at developers' ability to provide good jobs for people in the community. We also now have a Boston residents job policy, so every job has goals for 51% local, 40% people on color and 30% women on all of the job sites, and we have monitors who report back on whether or not people are meeting their goals.

Q: Imani Walker – did you always want to work in economics, or did you want to do something else first?

A: Well I never thought I was going to work in Government. Growing up in Roxbury I always felt like the government was for other people, and I wanted to be a lawyer to make my dad happy. Now I realize that the government has to be by the people, and we need neighbors like you to get into government, too. I realized that economic development is such an important thing to address inequalities in the world. Growing up poor really taught me how important economic development

Q: Romaine MillsTeque – with all this economic development, how are we providing opportunity for the young people?

A: My role at the Mayor's office is to go to companies that we help and ask for jobs. Because if Boston is going to be booming, we need our young people to understand what those jobs look like. Not just the construction either, but all the way through the process. How do real estate deals work? What are all the pieces and how do you market them? It's also really important to diversify those rooms where the deals are being done. Coming out of high school I went through the in-roads internship program where I learned the unwritten rules about the corporate world – how to dress and how to wear your hair, etc.

Q: Yari, Program Manager at the Mattapan Teen Center – last fall Mayor Walsh opened up a \$2M tourism campaign at the height of the pandemic, when we have a major issue with people experiencing homelessness. Seems wrong.

A: When that campaign was launched, the tourism industry had taken a major hit. About a third of the unemployment claims came from the tourism industry. We had lost \$100M in taxes from hotel receipts alone, which go toward services for people experiencing homelessness, among other things. So that money planned to be spent on the tourism industry is expected to have a really strong return on investment.

Q: With regard to Fatima's question – yes, we say that these programs are going to be affordable, but what does that actually mean? Affordable turns into an umbrella term, but for these housing units, what does that actually mean?

A: All of the those units were affordable at an 80% AMI, which is language we have to use when we're using federal funding. For me, affordability needs to be more local. Because, what's affordable in Wellesley isn't the same thing as what affordable in Mattapan.

Q: Cassandra Cato-Louis – what are the limits of the Main Streets program in Mattapan? How is it equitable to include some businesses instead of others?

A: Maybe we need to redraw the lines, and we need your help figuring that out. But every business in Boston can get assistance from the City regardless of where they are.

Q: Nikkia Jean-Charles – what's the budgeting looking like? We understand that the police are getting a lot of money, but are there any plans to increase budget for housing?

A: The pandemic has hit the City of Boston really hard, and we're going to need to figure out how to tighten our belt and do better moving forward. As we move into this next budgeting phase, you're going to start seeing the impacts of those changes. We're also going to have our current Mayor in Washington DC hopefully pulling for us. Last year the Mayor trimmed \$12M from the police overtime budget, \$1M which went toward certifying businesses as minority and women owned businesses. We know that people were wanting more money to be taken from the police, but that's a process, and we need to keep working on that.

Q: Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – WGBH reported that less than 2% of City contracts went to minor businesses. How are we going to change that? Many family owned businesses are falling by the wayside.

A: Good intentions are good intentions, but there needs to be accountability. That's why the Mayor opened up an investigation into the City's ability to make race based goals to hold people accountable to. The Disparity Study was just finished and will be released soon, so we will finally have the legal framework to make those goals.

Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – this council will definitely be following up to get answers, because we can't wait another year. We're being asked by our youth community to make safe spaces for them to live in. We look forward to continued engagement to create new standards to meet what our values are.

## VI – Wrap Up Announcements

- Because of the ongoing pandemic, the GMNC election will be held later in the year on Saturday June 5, 2021.
- Roudnie Celestin – it's been a busy day, so I'll paste my updates in the chat. Biggest update today is the Mayor signed the police reform bill today.
- Cassandra Cato-Louis is working on a project to hear from elders over 70 and how they're dealing with the isolation related to the pandemic.
- Nikkia Jean-Charles – we're seeing people use the fridge really well. A lot of people are using it daily, and even when we get big donations they're gone in an hour. Please donate food or donate to the venmo or cashapp. The most cost effective stuff is milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, noodles. Just buy more of the stuff you'd get, because that's what people want. 1290 Blue Hill Avenue at Café Juice Up.