



GMNC Monthly Meeting  
April 5, 2021 6:30-8:00 pm  
Online Meeting via zoom

### Meeting Minutes

#### I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair  
Janae Tooley, Vice Chair  
Matthew Skelly, Secretary  
June Joseph  
Joy Gary  
Nikkia Jean-Charles  
David Lopes  
Lenore Perreira  
David Halbert

#### Council Members Absent

Mirlande Joseph, Assistant Treasurer  
Michel Gray  
Cynthia Brewington  
Nichelle Nicole Purvis-Donnell  
William King  
Vickey Siggers, Treasurer

#### II. Presenters: At-Large City Councilors Michelle Wu (MW), Annissa Essaibi-George (AEG), Michael Flaherty (MF), Julia Mejia (JM), District 5 City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo (RA)

- MF – Longest serving City Council (CC) member, and last year saw some of the most public participation in the budget, and there are a number of misconceptions about what the CC can and can't do. Looking forward to participating in the process again.
- JM – This is the people's budget and last year we learned a lot about how the decisions were being made without us. We're trying to do better at getting more people into the process of making the decisions. We passed a rule allowing at home kitchens to help with the economic impact. Working on making infographics to communicate the budget to the better.
- AEG – Clarifying that the CC doesn't yet have the Mayor's budget. Figuring out how to handle the Federal stimulus money will be really important. Need to use some to support mental health services.
- RA – there are really 3 budgets: Education, Capital, Operational. The operational budget is kind of the day-to-day budget, and it can be the trickiest ones. For a district councilor, the Capital budget is important because you need to fight for projects in your neighborhood, but the Operational budget is where you see a lot of the inequity in the City's systems. During the pandemic, RA's office received a ton of calls from people just looking for food. It's really helpful to get feedback on what's important so that we can advocate on that. Eventually all we get to do is vote yes or no on the three budgets the Mayor presents to the CC.

- MW – CC will get the budget no later than the second Wednesday in April, and must vote by the second Wednesday in June. They will generally vote to ask for revisions, and then do a final vote right before the end of June. It's not a great process, because most of what passes is what's in the original budget, so as Councilor Mejia says, it would be really great to get people involved earlier. There are key components of the development process that factor into the budget, too. Boston might get an extra \$570M of Federal money.
- JM – We learned a lot during Covid about what it takes to keep small businesses afloat.

Q: Nikkia Jean-Charles – BPD's budget is way higher than basically any of department. Would you support reallocating any of that money to other programs?

A: AEG – We're always looking for savings, and we're seeing overages in the BPD overtime budget this year. MF - We need to fund the baseline of the public safety program. We're seeing a lot of issues with overtime, and lost hours on injury time. RA – It's a question about what you see as public safety. What's actually helpful to lower crime? Police show up after the crime's already been committed. Are we trying to fund the police as we always have? Or doing things a little differently than we always have. JM – If we're really serious about reducing violence, we need to allocate money to the solutions that help reduce violence. MW – With BPD, 90% of the budget goes to salaries. So we're talking about who's responsible for what, we want a different type of 911 system that will push other services before police potentially. Need to focus on ROI.

Q: David Lopes – Why can't our City government get to the point where we have a functional vocational high school? Madison Park is consistently rated among the lowest vocational schools in the state. Our kids need a proper vocational high school.

A: AEG – We have done a few good things at Madison, but there's so much more than needs to happen. We've increased enrollment, which helps. We're hoping to keep that school open 16 hours a day. MF – the curriculum needs to be tied to the labor demands. We need to be training our kids for the jobs that are booming in the Seaport. JM – The political will needs to match what we hear in these spaces. We need to dedicate more resources. The buck stops here. MW – We can't pretend like if we talk a little more or tweak a little here and there that things will change at Madison. We can't treat it like the rest of the schools. There needs to be separate management of Madison. AEG – It's important that it stays part of the City school systems, and it should be a school where students from other communities are paying us to go there. RA – this has been an issue for a long time, and we really should have a gem there.

*(Councilor Wu has left at this point to attend another meeting)*

Q: Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – there's a lot of money coming from the Federal Government – could part of it go as seed money to directly fund Madison Park?

A: AEG – the Culinary Arts program is nationally recognized and the Painters Union is in there all the time. The federal money could help, but there's a lot of great stuff going on.

Q: Robert Jenkins – I'm a Madison alum, and I'm the president of the Madison alumni association. There's some good things going on there!

Q: Juwan Skeens – Can we ask you guys to secure funding for a life skills training and wellness center? Can we get additional funding for the Norfolk Street Bridge and the non-ADA compliant stairs?

A: AEG – I'm happy to commit to working on those things with you. Please contact me offline to work on this. RA – Same answer. MF – Same answer. JM – Same answer.

Q: Lokita J - I request your commitment to securing significant funding toward the purchase (if applicable) preservation and conservation of green spaces in our Environmental Justice areas. One such space is Crane Ledge in Hyde Park, near Roslindale and Mattapan?

A: MF – The Community Preservation funds might be really helpful for that. RA – This is a yes – in my time there's already been four of these requests and this was one of them. We need partnerships with the folks selling the land as well as the folks buying it. JM – same answer.

Q: Joshua Ricketts Johnson – The new Mayor Janey is promoting a more inclusive Boston. What are you all doing about that? A lot of the sidewalks really need to be fixed. Also transit in Mattapan is really difficult. How will this make Boston more inclusive?

A: AEG – Mayor Walsh tried to work on this, but we need to do it at a faster pace. MF – no neighborhood should be taken for granted, and the CPA helps with that. We don't have a tree pruning division, so good luck trying to get your trees pruned. We need to fix that. JM – what's happening here right now is about inclusivity. We're working on building wealth in our communities, and getting everyone a seat at the table for these decisions. RA – We're working on making the community more accessible. There's currently a 16 year long wait list on some of the repairs required in the City.

### III. Committee Reports

1. Public Services – Report from Committee Co-Chair Matthew Skelly – Meeting tomorrow night we will be to discuss Blue Bikes and other items.
2. Community Benefits Committee – Report from Committee Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – Councilor Arroyo will be attending this month.
3. Environmental Committee – Report from Council Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – Good continued progress, meeting coming up this month.
4. Zoning Committee – Report from Council Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – there's a lot of development review coming up at this month's meeting.
5. Housing Committee - Report from Joy Gary – next meeting is on the Article 80 process.

### IV – Wrap Up Announcements

- Vivien Morris – Saturday April 17 is the Neponset River Cleanup – the Edgewater Neighborhood Association is organizing a group there. Also working with DND on trying to purchase a parcel in the neighborhood.
- Aisha Miller – the new Mattapan Liaison will be Donte Peebles.
- Juwan Skeens – thanks to everybody for supporting ROC