PBNA General Meeting

May 15, 2013

Approximate 40 Attendees - including the PBNA board and guests – attended the PBNA meeting on May 15, 2013, including many new and long-time members. Guests included;

* Hilani Morales, South End Neighborhood liaison of the Mayor’s Office
* City Councilor Bill Linahan’s Office (Chief of Staff)
* City Councilor Ayanna Pressley
* Representative Aaron Michlewitz’s Office
* Ramon Soto, City Council Candidate
* Michelle Wu, City Council Candidate

Meeting Discussion Items:

1. Opening Remarks- Pat Plunkett, PBNA President
	1. Pat noted that 2013 is the 40th anniversary of our 1973 by-laws ([link](http://www.pilotblock.org/images2/pbna%20bylaws%201973.pdf)) and discussed, “what is the PBNA”;
		1. A forum for neighbors’ opinions
		2. Represent the neighborhood to City organizations
		3. Sponsor projects within the neighborhood
		4. Keep members informed about the items mentioned above, to include political activity impacting the PBNA, however the organization should remain non-partisan
	2. Pat discussed activity and challenges in a few areas:
		1. Activity:
		* Dumpsters- in the face of multiple building renovations on W. Brookline St, PBNA officers worked with City officials to reduce the amount of time, and parking spots, dumpsters can occupy the street.
		* Advocated for new trees to be planted. At least 12 have been.
		* Worked with the Rutland Sq Association to adjust the traffic-light cycle at the corner of W. Newton St to increase safety
		* Welcoming several local, small businesses that have recently moved in & opened in the area.
		1. Challenges:
		* Financial resources. We raised around $1k by selling wreaths, but that is our only income source.
		* Conditions of private alleys.
		* Trash & Litter
		* Security and crime
		* Membership and participation
		1. Opportunities:
		* With city elections approaching, how we can engage in dialogue with candidates regarding issues of concern to our residents, and not just hear their stump speeches.
		* We have had several new members join the PBNA recently and become active. We need to develop collaborative strategies that leverage the opportunity and expand the level of resident participation and engagement
2. Treasurer Report- Chip Huhta, PBNA Treasurer (See the full report filed [here](http://pilotblock.org/pbnaeventandhistory.html))

1. Balance: General Fund: $1740
2. Balance: Alley Fund: $202
3. Q4 2012 Wreath Fund-Raiser net income: $941
4. Expenses included refreshments, Alley Supplies & tiller maintenance, website hosting/registration.
5. Alley Updates (Also see <http://pilotblock.org/Alleys.html>)
	1. Pembroke / W. Newton Paving
		1. Bobby Canzano discussed efforts to pave the Pembroke / W. Newton alley.
		2. After dealing for years with puddles, potholes, and mud in the private alley, a group of abutters has begun talking to construction firms, government officials, and neighbors regarding possible designs, fundraising, groundwater concerns, etc.
		3. While PBNA is partnering with this group as appropriate, this effort is being led entirely by the **Pembroke / W Newton Private Alley Association. Please see further information on their** [website](http://www.southendalleyrepair.blogspot.com)**:** [http://www.southendalleyrepair.blogspot.com](http://www.southendalleyrepair.blogspot.com/)
		4. Residents of the W. Brookline / W. Canton alley are beginning initial research for a similar effort in that alley. There is no further information available at this time, but we will share it as it becomes available.
	2. Discussion of Challenges related to Private Alleys in general. Chip Huhta presented findings from his personal research and reflected on a [hearing](http://pilotblock.org/Alleys.html) held by the Boston City Council approximately two years ago.
		1. Some individual building taxes have risen from approx $4k to $23k over the past 20 years.
		2. Given the increase in tax base generated from homes along the South End’s private alleys, Chip proposed that the city should in return make the alleys public, and fund maintenance and repairs. Concerns such as ADA requirements and cost should be balanced against the needs of residents and the corresponding tax base.
		3. In addition to his property tax study, Chip reviewed city financial reports. His findings indicate that the DPW appears to be underfunded, receiving only 4+% of the city's annual budget, and notes that the DPW's actual expenditures have exceeded budget in seven of the last ten years.  Chip also noted questions regarding the city's recent bond issue and its relationship to alley finances.

iv. For more details of his research, contact Chip at chuhta@verizon.net

1. South End Trash Pilot
	1. Pat Plunkett discussed the SE Trash initiatives and a trash pilot program.
	2. Purpose: reduce litter related to trash pick-up days and trash scavengers.
	3. City focus on picking up trash along Tremont St earlier (7-8am) to reduce time it is on these main streets.
	4. Increased inspections and ticketing for improper trash
	5. Trash “Pilot Program” in the Hurley Blocks and Worcester Square is testing reduced hours to put trash out; instead of the current 5pm of the night prior to trash day, the earliest time to put trash out would be moved to 11pm in order to reduce the time trash is out and the potential for litter.
	6. A recent PBNA survey found support for later hours than 5pm, but not as late as midnight. (Note, many medical recommendations include 8 hours sleep, so limiting trash from Midnight-7am would violate that recommendation).
	7. Results from the Hurley/Worcester area pilot are due soon (June 2013). Expect more information at that time.
2. Please Ensure House Numbers are visible on the rear of buildings.
	1. Boston Police have repeatedly asked us to ensure house numbers are on the rear of buildings.
	2. During an *emergency* (reported crime-in-progress, fire, etc) BPD/Fire often sends some units to the front, and some to the back. Officers can find the correct house much faster if numbers are visible.
	3. These requests have recently been reiterated during police response incidents. (i.e., on at least two occasions, police officers were in the alley responding to a reported/possible crime, and expressed frustration to other area neighbors that they could not easily locate the buildings that were the subjects of the alarms).
	4. House numbers should be visible in the area of your rear door/gate, even if your vehicle is parked. Please consider SUVs and place house numbers so they can be seen around parked vehicles.
	5. BPD has also requested that homes on corners include the street name, so that an officer moving from alley-to-alley can more easily track location.
	6. Some members of the PBNA board have discussed launching an initiative to distribute flyers to homes without numbers. If you are willing to help with this project, please contact Peter or Scott at info@pilotblock.org.
3. New Member Welcome: Summer months bring moving trucks. We need your help to make sure your our new neighbors know about the PBNA. To help welcome them, please share one of our emails, or you can give them [this information sheet](http://pilotblock.org/neighboorhood.html).
4. Other Discusion Items:
	1. Judi Wright noted discussions pending regarding a sky-scraper at Copley Place near the Neiman Marcus location. Public Hearings are pending.
	2. Scott noted there has been discussion around the Concord Church development about the number of visitor parking spaces that have been taken by the project. Scott spoke to the developer who said the city had denied a request to move or add new Visitor spots. The developer also had a concern that moving/adding visitor spaces could be perceived as taking resident spots, so it would not result in a net gain. Pat P or the PBNA board to follow up with the Mayor’s Neighborhood liaison.
	3. A neighbor on W. Canton mentioned that the recent death on W. Canton Street appeared to have been accidental and not related to violent crime. This is unofficial.
	4. Summer Pot Luck: There is desire for a social event, but at this time there are no volunteers to organize the event. Please contact info@pilotblock.org if you are interested in helping to organize a pot-luck or another social event. (Note: June pot-lucks have traditionally been held in Hiscock Park on W. Newton)
	5. The SE Garden tour will be centered in our neighborhood on June 15th. It will include Harriet Tubman Park and Carlton Park. <http://www.southendgardentour.org/>