PBNA General Meeting

Oct 12, 2011

South End Library 6:30pm

PBNA Finance

Treasurer Charlie Zarkadas could not attend tonight’s meeting but submitted The October 2011 financial report available at this [link](http://pilotblock.org/pbnaeventandhistory.html). PBNA has $1434.68 on hand, of which $529 is dedicated to alley maintenance, leaving $905 for general use.

655 Tremont Zoning Change

The Pilot Block Zoning Committee (Charlie Zarkadas, Mary Carroll) held an initial meeting on October 3, 2011 with Clayton Turnbull, the owner of a proposed Dunkin Donuts Café.

Mary presented the process that Pilot Block Association follows with regards to requests for zoning variances, along with as notes from their October 3rd meeting with Mr Turnbull. Mr. Turnbull has thus far not presented anything in writing.

Both process and meetings notes are in this memo: [Link to Zoning Committee memo](http://www.pilotblock.org/PBNA%20Minutes/DunkinPBNAOct12MeetingReview.pdf).

PBNA President David Mooney requested input for issues for the zoning committee to bring to Mr. Turnbull during any follow-up meeting. Following are highlights from the discussion:

* Residents of 655 said they will oppose the proposal for reasons including; rodents, quality of living, trash, concentration of restaurants already on the block, noise (including existing trash pickup from Tremont 647), property value, odor of coffee permeating the nearby units, loitering,
* One resident who spoke has requested crime stats from D4, but initial anecdotes are that DD results in numerous police calls compared to other breakfast/coffee spots.
* A resident stated that the PBNA board is ineffective. He continued that the longer the zoning process goes on, the harder it is to defeat. He has seen the Zoning board hold a vote before considering written input they had just been handed. Discussion followed that the PBNA is **only one avenue** available to residents to express their opinions. You can also contact your elected officials, write letters, make phone calls, etc.
* Several residents asked why it was necessary to conduct a meeting with the developer at all. It was pointed out that an informed decision based on a general meeting with the developer was more effective. This received general agreement.
* It was pointed out that the Zoning meeting, if held, it will be to grant or not grant a zoning variance, not to rule on the actual business moving in. However, the appeals process granting the variance is based on the specific plans of the developer.
* Technical issue was raised regarding if the existing vent is suitable, or if venting thru the building will cause harm to building/tenants.
* Board members noted that PBNA is only one avenue via which they can object; residents can also contact their City Councilors, Mayor, and the Press. *(see below for city council names)*
* (During the later session with Boston Police D4) A neighbor asked if other DD’s result in a lot of Police calls. CPT Ivens said that anecdotally, he does not know of recurring problems at other Dunkin Donuts. Sgt Provenzano noted that in his experience some DD’s have historically had a lot of problems, while others have not. It appears to relate to the ownership and how the facility is run.
* (During the later session with Boston Police D4) A neighbor asked Tabitha Bennett (South End Coordinator from Mayor Menino’s Office) for ISD violations. Tabitha referred to the Mayor’s Food Court website ([link](http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/health/mfc/court.asp))
* A letter of opposition was submitted from Patrick Plunkett who abuts the property but could not attend this meeting.

Preliminary Vote

* Based upon a suggestion from an attendee, a hand vote (straw poll) was taken to determine if residents are currently “opposed” or “for” approving a zoning variance based on the information presented to date. The vast majority, if not 100%, of those present voted “against” a zoning change. There were no hands raised to vote “for”.

Next Steps

* We will encourage the develop to present plans to a special meeting as soon as possible.
* PBNA Zoning Committee will report back to developer that a straw vote was against a zoning change, along with the issues that were raised thus far.
* If and when a Zoning hearing, is called PBNA will convene a special meeting for residents to hear the proposal, raise questions, and take a formal vote to support or not support any requested zoning variance.
* PBNA will draft a formal letter to elected officials outlining initial opposition to a zoning change as indicated by the attendees at this meeting.
* It was recommended that each concerned resident contact the Mayor and their City Councilors. (See contact info below)
* Please copy (cc) copies of letters sent to city officials to [info@pilotblock.org](mailto:info@pilotblock.org).

City Official Contact Information

* See [CityofBoston.gov](http://www.cityofboston.gov) for phone numbers and more information
  + Mayor Meninio: [mayor@cityofboston.gov](mailto:mayor@cityofboston.gov)
  + District 2 Bill Linehan: [Bill.Linehan@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Bill.Linehan@cityofboston.gov)
  + District 2 Candidate Suzanne Lee: [info@suzanneleeboston.com](mailto:info@suzanneleeboston.com)
  + At Large: Felix Arroyo: [Felix.Arroyo@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Felix.Arroyo@cityofboston.gov)
  + At Large: Ayanna Pressley: [Ayanna.Pressley@cityofboston.gov](mailto:Ayanna.Pressley@cityofboston.gov)
  + At Large: John Connolly [John.R.Connolly@cityofboston.gov](mailto:John.R.Connolly@cityofboston.gov)

Neighborhood Safety – BPD D4 CPT Ivens and SGT Provenzano

Some highlights from the discussion include:

* CPT Ivens, D4 Commander, noted his background which includes tours in South End, Govt Center, Combat Zone, Bomb Squad during Oklahoma City and September 11th.
* Police know the gang members. Police work with City Intelligence center to share information and stay informed of who is who.
* The Sierra shooting was not random- it was gang related because the victim lived in the Villa Victoria Housing projects.
* Previous undercover police operations have resulted in arrests in this area.
* D4 has added walking beats from noon-4am in this area.
* Pittsburgh Pirate symbol is a gang symbol for Villa Pirates. A neighbor questioned allowing P symbols to remain in the memorial for at least a few days. D4 was involved with negotiating the eventual removal of the memorial.
* A resident from the converted church abutting the barbershop discussed that the barber shop owner allows double parking and customers parking in resident parking. Some neighbors complained that Longwood security is ineffective, although other attendees had differing opinions on this matter.
* Another neighboring resident noted frequent loitering/fights among numerous young men in the area.
* A woman from Villa Victoria spoke; she is a councilor and raised a daughter in the Villa. She spoke passionately about her fears and hopes living in the area. She noted that both Longwoood Security and BPD Community Service Officers work hard to maintain security. She recommended that instead of looking away, look people in the eye and say hello to the young men you see on the street. She also said she insists on staying in the area and will not just leave.
* Edlyn Thompson-Mettle spoke from the Youth Exploration and Leadership Program at IBA Community Services. She works with the kids in this area. She noted we can’t live in fear. They are structuring programs to address the kids at risk, including working with D4. She said that her organization is working with D4 to ensure the kids know they are the key resource.

Edlyn Thompson-Mettle

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* A few residents expressed praise for some of the officers who have been patrolling on foot/bike.
* Crime/Neighborhood Watch is run by Carolyn MacNeil . We will try to get her to speak at an upcoming PBNA meeting.

What to do:

* Call 911 if you see suspicious activity. Be prepared to provide details. E.g., instead of reporting “kids on the doorsteps”, add detail such as “kids on the doorsteps showing gang insignia in the area of a recent shooting”. Be prepared that 911 operators will ask numerous questions to get the entire story.
* It is important that we call 911 to build statistics and show patterns.
* Please put your house number on the back of your building near the alley so that responding officers can quickly find the right location in an emergency.
  + **FREE OFFER**: PBNA has limited quantities of self-stick house numbers available. Email [info@pilotblock.org](mailto:info@pilotblock.org) (include your house number) to see if numbers are available and arrange to receive them.
  + Numbers (if available) will be provided at no charge, however donations are welcome!
  + You may also purchase numbers at any hardware store or online
  + It’s an inexpensive way to reduce risk!
* Carry a whistle and if you hear a whistle, come out into the street to support your neighbors. Also very inexpensive.
* See [BPDnews.com](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\Administrator\Local%20Settings\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.IE5\5U18ROOJ\BPDnews.com) and these [tips from a prior PBNA meeting](http://pilotblock.org/pbnaeventandhistory.html) (June 2011 Flyer) for more information.

PBNA Elections

* PBNA needs Street Ambassadors to assist with outreach and feedback for the neighborhood.
* Street Ambassador description:

Street Ambassadors can be residents, merchants, professionals or property owners within their area.  They shall serve a two-year term and may not succeed themselves more than one time in the same office.  The principle duties of PBNA Street Ambassadors shall include:  (1) representing the interests of their constituents to the PBNA Board; (2) tracking the arrival of new residents in the neighborhood and providing them with information about trash, dog waste, street sweeping and other issues important to the well being of the neighborhood and those that live here; and, (3) participating in Board meetings to provide such information deemed important to the well being of the neighborhood and their constituents.  Street Ambassadors are also encouraged to alert the Board about other issues and/or duties that will enhance their role and/or the community.

* We are seeking a nominating committee to nominate street ambassadors as well as President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary.
* The plan is to have the Nominating Committee report back at the next general meeting (tentatively Feb 8 2012), prior to elections (tentatively May 9th, 2012).

Upcoming Holiday Activities

Wreaths:

* Wreaths beautify our neighborhood and are a fund-raiser for the PBNA. Please consider purchasing a wreath, and adding a donation at the same time!
* We need space to assemble wreaths. Ideas included Concord Church although we were also offered the garage at the Alley T (193 W. Brookline St) on Sat Dec 3rd

Halloween:

* This neighborhood gets literally hundreds of kids trick-or-treating at Halloween. Check out [pictures](http://pilotblockassoc.tripod.com/pbna_halloween_2008/index.album/first-place-5-columbus-sq?i=2) from the Halloween 2008 and [2010](http://pilotblockassoc.tripod.com/pbna_halloween_2010/).
* We will have prizes for best decorations, including one for kids
* Seriously- see the pictures from ’08!
* Plan to decorate and plan to hand out candy from your stoop on October 31st.
* We need judges for the [decorating contest.](http://pilotblockassoc.tripod.com/pbna_halloween_2010/index.album/139_wnewton?i=31)  Please contact [info@pilotblock.org](mailto:info@pilotblock.org) for more information or to volunteer. (It’s an easy and fun job!)
* Watch your email and bulliten boards for more information.

Key Upcoming Dates

* TBD: PBNA meeting regarding any proposed zoning changes for 655 Tremont St
* Oct 31: Halloween
* TBD: Wreath orders due. Watch for emails and/or flyers
* Dec 3: Wreath assembly. Volunteers required!
* Feb 8, 2012 (Tentative date) Next General Meeting
* May 9, 2012 (Tentative date) General Meeting & Elections

Administrative Information:

Meeting Attendance: The Oct 12th meeting had approximately 47 Attendees.

How did you hear about this meeting: (Approximate count)

Email: 21

Neighbor: 9

Posters: 1

Bulletin Boards/Boxes: 1

Mailing List: Please help us ensure your neighbors are on the mailing list. Have them send their name, email, and address to [info@pilotblock.org](mailto:info@pilotblock.org).

Twitter: For fast-breaking information, follow us @pilotblock.

A history of past meetings, along with other information about the PBNA is available at http://pilotblock.org/events.html

Submitted: Scott Mabel,

PBNA Secretary