

## WVNA Quarterly Meeting

March 28, 2024

7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Zoom

### **Attendance:**

In addition to neighborhood residents, the following officials were present at this meeting.

- WVNA Board President France Donovan
- WVNA Board Members Alan Wright, Nia Lewis

### **Representatives from other organizations:**

- Nathaniel Fink, Boston Transportation Department
- Frances Oliveira, Boston Transportation Department
- Eileen Michaud, Squares and Streets Project Manager, BPDA
- Kenya Beaman, Community Engagement Manager, BPDA
- Caitlin Coppinger, Deputy Director, Comprehensive Planning, BPDA
- Dianna Bronchuk Chief of Staff, Councilor Enrique Pepén's office
- Edosa Osemwegie, Administrator, Councilor Henry Santana's office
- Emily Carrera, Legislative Aide, Representative Rob Consalvo's office
- Dennis Kirkpatrick, Roslindale Community Center, Roslindale Business and Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association
- Laurie Radwin, Roslindale Coalition
- Cris Bratsis, St. Nectarios Church Board

### **New Board Member Welcome:**

Frances Donovan welcomes new board member Nia Lewis who will also serve as a community liaison to the BPDA Squares and Street project and provide updates to the WVNA.

### **Phase 2 of Poplar St Traffic Calming Project and Poplar Street Safety Issues:**

Nathaniel Fink provided an update on phase 2 of the Poplar Street project. Phase 2 will require civil engineering work and is expected to start in Spring of 2025. Phase 2 will include raised crosswalks, curb extensions and will require clear corners which will impact the existence of 2-4 parking spaces for clear visibility. The BTM team is looking at potential interim options for traffic calming while we wait for phase 2 to start.

In February the WVNA sent a letter to the BTM addressing Poplar St safety and traffic enforcement issues particularly between Washington St and Florence St. The BTM did send a response and has added some requested signage as well three fifteen minute parking spaces. The WVNA letter and the BTM response will be posted on the WVNA website. Questions sent in by WVNA neighbors prior to the meeting were addressed in the BTM's response letter.

### **Squares and Streets (S&S) Presentation and Discussion:**

Eileen Michaud, BPDA Project Manager for the S&S Roslindale Small Area Planning presented on S&S and the timeline for Roslindale ( please check BPDA site for more details: <https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>).

- Resident Cassie White thanked Eileen for the helpful presentation and expressed concern about concrete housing affordability issues and will follow up during office hours.
- Eileen mentioned the plan includes “inclusionary zoning which required new privately developed buildings with 7 or more units to contribute to lower income housing. She also mentioned the possibility of the disposition of publically owned land or land that the city could buy to created income restricted/mixed income housing. The city has existing resources to help with housing stability for current residents.
- Resident David Churella had a question but for the sake of time said he would reach out to Eileen directly.
- Resident Laurie Radwin said that the results of the surveys should be stratified by demographics. Parking would have come up as an issue/concern for business owners. It is surprising that parking did not come up as one of the main S&S community themes.

### **New Development: 55-57 Belgrade Ave building next to St Nectarios Church:**

St. Nectarios Board member Cris Batsis gave a brief update on the project:

- Proposed 15 condo units with 11 parking spaces
- There was a BPDA public hearing earlier this week.
- The church has been in conversations with the developer
- Concerns about
  - Safety of congregants, children and pedestrians as the street becomes busier
  - Handicap left is of great concern
  - Shared driveway is too close to the church, has steep incline and construction is likely to cause more water management issues.
  - Shadow issues and less light allowed into the sacred spaces
- The church is not arguing the need for a building or more housing.
- Have spoke to elected officials and will continue conversation with both the city and developer about what can be done to address the concerns.
- Please view BPDA project page for more information:  
<https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/55-57-belgrade-avenue>

One particular meeting attendee/WVNA board member had a series of “heated” questions for Cris and the discussion was abruptly ended at the recommendation of the WVNA board president.

### **Poplar Street Park :**

- Frances Donovan asked if anyone was interested in supporting efforts around Poplar Street Park. She pointed out it was an opportunity to revitalize existing green space in our catchment area. She asked that interested people reach out to her via email.

**Fornax Parklet:**

- Alan Wright explained that Oscar Bonilla the new owner of Fornax is interested in setting up the full parklet. Alan notified neighbors and not all neighbors are in favor of the parklet being installed. In the past there have been issues with loitering/ public drinking/drug use/fights and harassment of passersby.
- Laurie Radwin had a question and would defer to the elected who were present. If the parklet is to be on public property isn't a public hearing required?
- Dianna Bronchuk said she would look into whether this falls under outdoor dining. Alan said the parklet preceded outdoor dining. It was a pilot and RVMS suggested the location. Dianna will follow up offline.

**Rozzie Bikes:**

- Alan Wright shared updates: (check Rozzie Bikes website for more details)
  - Annual meeting is on Tuesday April 9, 6:15pm at the Roslindale Community Center.
  - Smart Cycling class starts on Wednesday April 10, 7p.

**Other community announcements:**

- Resident Lauren Peter spoke about the renovation of the Irving School on Cummins Highway:
  - The Sumner and Philbrick schools are merging and will be located in the Irving School building
  - Renovations are in the early stages.
  - Traffic patterns will change ( there will be 700 students)
  - Parents are working with BPS/Planning Facilities on street/traffic safety issues
  - School will have new name to be determined by school community
- Alan Wright thanked her for update and expressed safety concern for children crossing Cummins Highway.
- Dennis Krikpatrick mentioned the crossing guard open positions and encouraged people to share out the opportunity.
- Dianna Bronchuk mentioned that Councilor Pepén's "maiden speech" was on improving Boston's safe school zones. There will be a city council working session on docket #0477 to explore the creation of Safe School Zones to improve pedestrian safety around all schools in the City of Boston on April 11 at 10am. Check Boston.gov for more details.

**Closing: Frances Donovan thanks everyone for attending.**

**Upcoming zoom meetings for 2024:**

- Thursday, June 6th, 7pm.
- Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm
- Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

Submitted by Nia Lewis