

**PMAC Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2020**

Below is the list of attendees and notes from the August 4, 2020.
The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Attendees:

1. Jennifer Leonard – Co Chair PMAC
2. Tracy O'Brien – Co Chair PMAC
3. Bob Barney – SWCPC/PMAC
4. Scott Romney – Carleton Court Dog Park & SWCPC/PMAC
5. Carla-Lisa Caliga – JP Resident / PMAC
6. David Wean – PMAC
7. Captain Greland, BPD E-13
8. William Jones, BPD E-13
9. Patty DeRosa, BPD E-13
10. Clare Duffy – BPD Homeless Office Liaison
11. Sgt. John Farrell – Northeastern University Police
12. Lt. Jay Farley – MA State Police jay.farley@
13. Natalie Kaufman – State Rep Liz Malia's Office
14. Cory Azmon – State Rep Jon Santiago's Office
15. Carla Coch – SWCPC SE
16. Jennifer Jones – PMAC SWCPC JP
17. Jenny Norwood – DCR External Affairs
18. Carol Blair – Chester Square Neighbors
19. Joe Wong – Chinatown Main Streets
20. Andrew Maydoney – Associate Director of Main Streets
21. Frederic Vetterlein – PMAC JP
22. Matilda Drayton - Tenants Council / Alice Taylor Apts.
23. Althea Wagman-Bolster – Volunteer Coordinator for SWCPC, Section 1

PMAC Co-Chair Jennifer Leonard opened the meeting by inviting all participants to introduce themselves and then introduced the guest speaker. Jennifer noted that this meeting would be dedicated to this one topic, and that PMAC would follow up on other ongoing projects at subsequent meetings and via email. Jennifer briefly noted that following an incident in the park involving a volunteer, and in the midst of the pandemic and on-going substance abuse challenges, our focus on volunteer safety is more important than ever.

For reference: <http://swcpc.org/publicsafety.asp>

Guest Presenter: BPD – Officer Claire Duffy from BPD's Street Outreach Unit

Contact Information :

- streetoutreach@pd.boston.gov
- claire.duffy@pd.boston.gov
- Phone : 857-352-2230

- **Overall Goal:** Claire Duffy was invited to present to PMAC to discuss BPD's Street Outreach group, how they are organized, how they work with the community and provide tips and suggestions about volunteer safety and reporting.
- **Background and focus of group:**
 - This city-wide Boston Police unit is made up of 7 people and includes recovery coaches and 4 clinicians that work with people in need.
 - They deal with homelessness, debris left behind by homelessness, mental health issues, encampments, needles, etc.
 - You will find this unit where the needs are, Greenway, Beacon Hill, Mass/Cass etc. They have been called to many neighborhoods throughout the city.
 - They are prevention focused and do not take 911 calls. Many of the things they deal with come from 311 complaints and non-violent crimes, nuisances, etc.
 - They have connections to state, city, and nonprofit agencies to get the population to the appropriate services they need for help and support.
 - They provide guidance and help on how to handle things for residents, businesses, and neighborhoods.
- **Concerns raised by meeting members:**
 - **South End and Back Bay** residents have seen issues with homelessness, needles, encampments, active drug use, human waste, verbal abuse on the park. A few residents and garden stewards provided updates about the issues they see with respect to substance abuse and homelessness, including active drug use, people sleeping in the park, physical damage to gardens, debris that includes needles, pill bottles, clothes, suitcases, toiletries and other personal items, human waste in gardens and on sidewalks; debris of blankets, cardboard, mattresses and other sleeping materials.
 - **It was noted that these issues are not new this year, and while some issues seem worse this year others seem less so this year. These issues have been a major concern over the past several years.**
 - It was noted that the South End is in a densely populated area, and the Southwest Corridor Park is intensely used, with many people using the park for gardening, walking, dog-walking, playgrounds and other activity throughout the day.
 - The park is in close proximity to the Mass/Cass area which is a focus of the city's opioid issues.
 - There was praise for the Sharps Unit that picks up needles.
 - Several volunteers noted that they are spending several hours per day in the park each day. [Side note: in the invitation to the meeting, we noted that so far this year, volunteers have dedicated more than 1300 hours to hands-on volunteer work in the park.]
 - **JP** residents see people drinking and encamping near Forest Hills. They are mostly located near the pines on the Washington Street side. Also near Burnett Street. Egleston Square neighbors are experiencing similar issues.
 - Two representatives from Washington St./Main Streets attended to learn more about the topic.
- **Advice Provided by Officer Claire Duffy:**
 - **Acknowledging the concerns of residents and volunteers.**
 - *She acknowledged that residents and volunteers can be simultaneously concerned about the impact on public health and safety, the safety and well-being of the individuals using drugs or sleeping in the park, and the damages done to park gardens and landscaping, acknowledging that damages to gardens and plants may set back the hard work of staff and volunteers.*

- She noted that her unit works with residents and volunteers in many neighborhoods and parks groups, including state parks within Boston.
- **Active Shooting-up**
 - Call 911 when you see someone shooting up.
 - This helps the police and services because it reinforces where and when this is happening to trigger trending for the police.
- **Human Waste**
 - Claire’s unit is actively advocating for city response to this problem, and assured the group that the concerns about human waste, a serious problem, are being heard. This has been a frustrating issue in many sections of the city.
 - Claire is working with city service providers to get movable shower and toilets that will move to different sections of the city that needs the most effort. This is city-wide issue because of the closure of comfort stations due to COVID.
 - Report these to 311 and to the mass.parks email address, document it, stay away from it, being aware of the serious risk of infection, and shovel dirt on it if possible and appropriate. (There was discussion about the best approach to reporting it, covering it up with dirt, or other options, and it remains a problem without a clear answer.)
- **Homelessness, Encampment, & Debris**
 - Call 911 if someone is sleeping within an encampment. Do not try to move them on your own.
 - Police will talk to people and general escort people from the area once they arrive.
 - Question: can volunteers drag off debris with proper gloves and tools? There was some discussion about this question, and Claire said volunteers should be able to remove debris if they are comfortable doing so. Jennifer L. noted that under DCR policy and our volunteer guidelines, volunteers should not take on any hazardous tasks. [Note after the meeting: perhaps “if you are comfortable doing so” could be re-phrased as a minimum standard of “do not take on tasks that you are not comfortable with.” Volunteers are asked to review the volunteer safety guidelines in the park stewardship guide, found on the swcpc.org website.]
 - Contact 311 and or DCR to ask for hazardous debris to be removed. (Note: DCR is currently providing daily ‘sweeps’ each morning to check for debris left behind.)
- **Habitual Homelessness**
 - Reach out to Clare to start the process of reporting and recording of the homeless person. The more information we can provide on an individual it makes them eligible faster for transitional or permanent housing,
- **State Police – Lt. Jay Farley, Boston Barracks**
 - Lieutenant Jay Farley will now be our MA State Police contact.
 - There are now extra patrols on SWC in both cars and motorcycles.
 - Lt. said he can request bike patrols as well which the group thought was a good idea.
 - Matilda asked that MA Police also patrol near the “Mission Deck” because of concerns about groups of young adults meeting there, which has had an increase during the summer months.
 - Please email or call with any issues on the corridor. Contact data is:
 - jay.farley@state.ma.us
 - Officer’s Farley cell is 617 799 6931
 - MA Barracks 617-727-6780

- **Northeastern University Police – Sgt. John Farrell**
 - Sgt. John Farrell from Northeastern University Police's Community Engagement Unit joined out meeting.
 - Northeastern's police patrol portion of the SWCP is essentially between BPD HQs and Mass Ave.
 - There is a focus and a directed patrol near (referred to as Columbus South) the Carter School and Northampton Green.
 - NU will continue to monitor this area and support the community. Contact data for Northeastern University Police Community Engagement Unit:
 - j.farrell@northeastern.edu
 - 617 594-8591
 - After the meeting Office John sent a communication and reminder that Northeastern had begun construction of a new research center near Ruggles at the intersection of Columbus Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Meeting adjourned at approximately at 8:30 pm.