

**PMAC Meeting
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2020**

Below is the list of attendees and notes from the May 5, 2020. The meeting was held virtually due to the COVID 19 crisis in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Attendees:

1. Jennifer Leonard – Co Chair PMAC
2. Tracy O’Brien – Co Chair PMAC
3. Bob Barney – SWCPC/PMAC
4. Jenny Jones – SWCPC
5. Scott Romney – Carleton Court Dog Park & SWCPC
6. Boston PO William Jones, E-13
7. Fredrick Vetterlein – PMAC
8. Franco Campanella – SWCPC
9. Natalie Kaufman - Liz Malia’s Office

Public Safety Updates:

- **D- 4 – BPD**
 - No one was present at the meeting.

- **E13 – BPD P.O., William Jones**
 - 15 to 20 officers tested positive for COVID 19 at E13. Unfortunately, one officer lost his life to Covid. Our thoughts are with E13, including Captain Greland, who were impacted so significantly. PMAC appreciates their continued park support during this difficult time.
 - Overall, part 1 crimes are down by 1% year over year.
 - No specific crimes were on the SWCP.
 - 14 less incidents across the area.
 - Shootings are up in the Bromely Heath area.

- **MBTA Transit Police**
 - No one was present at the meeting.

- **B2 – BPD**
 - No one was present at the meeting.

- **State Police**
 - No one was present at the meeting.

- **Northeastern University - Staff Sgt. John J. Farrell**
 - No one was present at the meeting, but the following notes were sent to Jennifer Leonard prior to the meeting:
 - NUPD has not altered its person power numbers at all with regard to on-duty personnel on all three shifts.
 - There remains at least one uniformed officer assigned, 24/7, on patrol in our Columbus South Sector (where SW Corridor is located).
 - We are seeing some continued issues with homeless loitering in and around our Columbus South Sector (where SW Corridor is located).
 - We are occasionally finding needles discarded on, around, and along the Corridor area (no more than in years passed however).
 - The drastically reduced pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic along Columbus Avenue has made the area quite quiet of late.

- Northeastern & NUPD are awaiting the week of 18th May, after the stay-in-place extension has expired, to determine if there will be any changes in patrolling strategy.

Community Updates

• DCR Communication Discussion

- DCR staff members are challenged by COVID 19 and requests from SWCP. Pat and Ben are alternating weeks of onsite work but continue to get requests for work from various sources which adds to their work level as they try to prioritize work.
- **Alignment**
 - To assist with Pat and Ben, we agreed that all SWCP should be channeled to Jenifer and Tracy to streamline communication to DCR for needs and support. Please continue to do this from this point forward.

• West Newton Landscaping Proposal

- PMAC reviewed the request for landscape changes put forward by Carla Coch for West Newton section of the park. We are always pleased with Garden Stewards put forth requests like this to PMAC. See a brief description of the change below:
 - “A gnarly juniper including the roots from the overgrown corner at the SE side of West Newton was removed. For the next phase, we propose to remove the old juniper: 1) because it isn’t particularly healthy and 2) it obscures sight lines into the back part of the corner. In addition, we would like to remove some rhododendrons: some are old and suffering from failure to thrive, and some contribute to the problem of affording hiding places for people to use drugs, leave debris, and/or sleep. Then we would spread a load or two of good topsoil mixed with compost and peat moss. Then we would plant differently-colored Japanese maples which would be radiant in the sun that shines nearly all day long. The ground cover at present is ivy and blue vinca in certain places; we would fill in the empty spaces with a variety of low-growing plants such as white vinca, ginger ivy, and variegated-leaf ground covers. In the fall, we wish to plant tulips and daffodils and such to create a gorgeous bed of color in the spring. We will assume the tasks of weeding and watering, etc., and I will personally pay for the trees”
- **Alignment**
 - We appreciate our Garden Steward ideas (keep them coming) and dedication but will put this request **“On Hold”** until our September PMAC for an additional review cycle. Exceptions to the to the request is to allow for pruning and general garden maintenance in the area.

• Representation on Boston Park Advocates – PMAC representative – Jennifer Leonard

- Jennifer will be PMAC’s representative with Boston Park Advocates. This will allow us, through Jennifer, to maintain or develop a relationship with other DCR parks and bring back ideas on how we can continue to advocate for the SWCP.
 - See the link below to sign up to receive these emails and add your name to the growing list of subscribers who support and advocate for Boston parks.
 - <https://mailchi.mp/8aa760512c43/bpamay2020>

• Mildred Hailey Redevelopment Update

- This project is front facing to the SWCP. A recent public meeting was attended by Jenifer Leonard and Jenny Jones. This will have impact on SWCP and needs to be monitored.
- The development includes the demolition of existing Mildred Hailey buildings and replaced with 7 to 8 story buildings. This project will start in 2 to 3 years and will take up to 10 years to complete. The development plans currently move buildings closer to the park. PMAC will remain close to the project to ensure the SWCP is considered in the development plans.
- A link to the project is on the City of Boston’s web site is listed below:

- <https://www.boston.gov/news/center-street-partners-chosen-complete-phase-one-mildred-c-hailey-apartment-redevelopment>

- **Mini Grant Options for Summer 2020**

- Northeastern University currently has a freeze on all grants due to COVID 19. They have indicated that this could change and PMAC will check back in with them late May or June. Last year they sponsored the Mini Grant program with \$2,500.
- SWCPC has agreed to donate \$1,000.
- **Action**
 - Jennifer will reach out to the community members in May to determine how mini grants can be used in our current state of social distancing.
 - Jennifer to check back in with Northeastern on status of funds.

- **Community Gardens Update:**

- Tracy shared the new guidelines that were developed due to COVID 19. These guidelines have been issued to all community gardeners and, by request, shared with other garden organizations. The guidelines are exceptionally well done. Easy to understand and well communicated.
- Community gardens are considered essential and almost all gardens in the area (Trustees, DCR, other) are open.
- Garden coordinators have stressed the importance of wearing masks.
- Water has been turned on for some gardens with the expectation that remaining water will be turned on the week of May 18th or after the governor's re-opening plan begins. No definite timeline for water has been established.

Community Garden Funds

- A discussion was raised regarding using some the Community Garden funds to support supply needs and infrastructure by SWCPC. The Community Garden is currently in the process of how they will use funds to improve the
- Community gardeners contribute \$25.00 per year to use a community plot and then sometimes contribute an extra \$5 to \$10 to support additional needs for each community garden.
- **Alignment**
 - Tracy and Franco will discuss funds uses offline and come back to PMAC with this alignment over the next few months.

DCR Updates on Topics Discussed at Meeting from Jennifer Norwood

- **Budget** – State budget is in a wait-and-see mode. She expects that there will be public-private matching funds again next year (and meanwhile the project Tracy is working on for community gardens could be submitted now for FY20). Natalie had shared with us that the State's budget is grim at this point.
- **Capital Improvement Funds** - DCR has capital improvement funds for this current year, FY20, and they are working to do as many projects this spring as possible. Some projects have last minute scheduling changes, such as if one project can't move forward yet they re-assign those resources to another project on the list. Construction depends on some of the COVID-19 restrictions. In Boston, some work is affected by Boston's construction moratorium, so other work can go forward.
- **Green Street Playground** - The Green St. playground project includes pouring new surface on the basketball court, needs to wait.
- **Communication** - conversation about the flow of communication about upcoming projects, including longer-term strategies to make sure that friends groups (as well as other departments within DCR) are alerted to construction projects that affect the park. We agree that there should be something more systematic, rather than relying on project managers to decide "who needs to be told." A playground upgrade doesn't require

the same public process as a larger project, and in the current situation the playground was closed anyway, since all state park playgrounds are closed. That is an interesting part of a bigger look at building systems within DCR to improve transparency and communication and relationships with friends' groups and other constituencies. I enjoy talking with Jenny about this!

- **Social Distancing & COVID Support** - PMAC can help to share messages about social distancing. PMAC told Jennifer Norwood that we are going to try to channel communication with park staff through Tracy and Jennifer Leonard, with the exception of the day-to-day conversations that Franco and Jenny have about specific projects they are working on. When neighbors have questions and concerns, they can also either channel through us or use the mass.parks@state.ma.us email address (which Jenny N. reads) rather than going directly to park staff.
- **Skateboard Park Moves Forward** - Skateboard park will start soon. Jennifer Norwood wishes we could have a groundbreaking or virtual groundbreaking, but that's not likely.

Meeting adjourned at approximately at 8:30 pm.