

Meeting of Friends of Elliot Norton Park / Friends of Bay Village Parks

Monday, April 28, 2014

7:00 – 8:30pm at 7 Fayette Street

(v3)

Mission: *"To make green spaces in and around Bay Village thriving urban oases for plants and people."*

Attending: Anthony Badaro, Jo Campbell, Steve Campbell, Megan Castro, Leslie Coburn, Eric Cordes, Mary Darmstetter, Barbara Gaffney, David Gural, Kathy Hull, Terrence Janericco, Judy Komarow, Tom Kauchek, Daniel Krulewitch, June McCourt, Kathy McDermott, Nancy Morrisroe, Bill Nigreen, Francine Pilgrim, Mark Slater, Rob Stinson, Barbara Warren, Marcia Wetherbee, Sally Withington

Special thanks to City Officials: Jordan Deasy, Mayor's Office; James Chan, Office of City Councilor Bill Linehan; Henry Cohen, Office of City Councilor Michelle Wu

Topics Discussed:

President Bill Nigreen welcomed everyone and thanked Kathleen McDermott for the **delicious refreshments**, as well as Eric Cordes and David Gural for bringing wine.

Neighborhood Cleanup

- Bay Village street cleaning was postponed due to rain; will be rescheduled. Nonetheless, the village looks great for this time of year!
- Thanks to Mayor Walsh for recent street sweepers!

Treasurer's Report: Daniel Krulewitch

- All spending for the year is at or under allocated Budget
- For spring purchases, please use the Friends' Chargecard or submit receipts for authorized purchases directly to Daniel.
- Think about any initiatives you would like to propose for next year's Budget, which will be discussed and approved at the June Annual meeting.

Elliot Norton Park Renovation: Bill Nigreen provided an update.

- 80% of design is complete: curved paths, contemporary design, sculptural elements in relocated tot playground. Lower fences and reclaimed space on north border.
- A September start is planned
- The Play area used by Little Panda Early Learning and Care is public land, currently used by the daycare center. They want to keep it but Parks Department wants this area returned to public and is negotiating a way to make that happen.
- The group agreed that we should make every effort to be reasonable about their needs while respecting the principle of public use of public space. We will follow the Parks Department's lead.
- Mayor Walsh will be holding a coffee hour in Elliot Norton Park on Tuesday, May 20 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Former Church of All Nations Building: Marsha expressed concern about future development. So far there are no confirmed rumors regarding the disposition of the site, which is currently owned by Feeney Brothers. Jordan Deasy, Neighborhood Coordinator from the Mayor's Office, said she would look into the status of the property and aim to keep us informed.

Friends Annual Meeting: scheduled for June 24, 2014, 7pm at Bay Village Neighborhood Park

- Please consider joining the leadership and running for office
- Celebrate the year's accomplishments
- Annual Budget will be discussed and approved
- Considering a pot luck picnic

VOTES TAKEN:

- As part of EN Park design, there is an opportunity for a "rain garden" along Charles Street to collect rain runoff and recharge aquifer but it requires our commitment to maintain it. It is proposed that FOENP will maintain this area when it is complete, and assign "Park Captain" for this position.
 - Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.
- Bill Nigreen read a letter dated April 11, 2014, that he sent to Parks Commissioner Christopher Cook offering our support for reclaiming public land currently used by the day care center. Request was made for Friends to approve his letter (attached at end).
 - Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.
- Parks Department plans to irrigate the center lawn of EN Park. For an additional \$20K from Friends we can have the outer areas irrigated as well. A motion was made to authorize \$20k for irrigation of the outer areas. Marsha requested a hose connection at corner of Lyndeboro Place and Charles Street South for dog park use. We would pay up to \$2k if the Parks department is able to add it into the plans
 - Motion for both was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

A motion being made, seconded, and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Megan Castro

COPY

To: Christopher Cook, Boston Commissioner of Parks and Recreation
From: Bill Nigreen, President of Friends of Elliot Norton Park
Date: April 11, 2014
Re: Support for Elliot Norton Park Renovation Project

Dear Commissioner Cook,

As you know The Friends of Elliot Norton Park have worked with the Parks Department for several years to develop a first rate renovation of Elliot Norton Park, including many public meetings. You are also aware of the opposition by Little Panda Early Learning and Care to the part of the project that impacts the fenced-in playground adjacent to their facility.

Friends of Elliot Norton Park adopted this urban oasis in 2000 and has cared for it for nearly fifteen years. As President of Friends of Elliot Norton Park and founder of the organization, I would like to submit my initial opinion. After our regularly scheduled meeting on April 28th, I would be glad to back up my opinion with more facts, detailed argument, and an official vote of the membership.

Little Panda entitled their petition, "Preserve Little Panda Early Learning and Care's outdoor space." People may have signed their petition with the misunderstanding that they have some kind of ownership rights to that space.

The space they refer to is public property. They are using this public space as a private playground - locked and completely off limits to the general public. Relocating the fence to the legal border legitimately reclaims space that belongs to the public for public use.

That public parkland may not be encroached upon by private abutters is shared strongly by others in the park's vicinity, including China Altman, 25+ year leader of the Boston Public Garden Rose Brigade, who spoke against private encroachment at the first public meeting for the park renovation at the Wang YMCA.

We could debate one by one the "reasons" mentioned in the petition, regarding safety, sanitation, privacy, business impact, and noise from construction, but the essential fact is that they have no right to exclusively occupy public space. They are being offered a spectacular park for their children to play in right outside their door.

Please let me know how the Friends of Elliot Norton Park can support the City and the Parks Department in your effective stewardship of our public land. As your partners for so many years we deeply appreciate your efforts.

Yours truly,

Bill Nigreen
President, Friends of Elliot Norton Park
7 Fayette Street, Boston
(617) 338-5358