



BAY VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

Hi Bay Village Neighbors:

We are now deep into the busiest time of the year for our little Association. The Block Party that I reported on in the last newsletter was followed a few weeks later by a spectacular Halloween Party, and then in short order by our Annual Meeting at the Revere last Monday, at which we elected a new slate of leaders for 2023. Still to come are the fall neighborhood cleanup (scheduled for Saturday, November 19th at 8 AM, headquarters at Church and Melrose) and our annual holiday party (Sunday, December 4th at 6:30 PM at MJ O'Connor's, with caroling before that). This is the final newsletter that I will write as part of my Presidency: I look forward to supporting our new President, Trish Gillis, and I hope to contribute some more "Then and Now" sections to future newsletters as Vice President. Note that I ultimately post these newsletters on our website (at bayvillage.net under the "Resources" section) so if you missed one, you can find it there.

It was great to be able to hold our Annual Meeting in person for the first time in several years, and again I would like to thank Mark Fischer and Chloe Achinger for making Liberty Hall available to us and for providing us with complementary snacks in addition to the cash bar. If you have friends or relatives visiting town, keep the Revere in mind, they have been very good neighbors. We were also happy to welcome Councilors Ed Flynn and Ruthzee Louijeune, Vanessa Woo from Ed Flynn's office, and Kim Crucoli from the Mayor's Office.

Special Guest: Joe Cornish – Director of Design Review – Office of Historic Preservation / Bay Village Historic District Commission

Joe Cornish of the Office of Historic Preservation joined us at the Annual Meeting to discuss some proposed changes to the Bay Village Historic District Commission regulations, specifically:

- To extend the Commission's authority to regulate entryway lights
- To clarify the Commission's purview to include all facades, not just building fronts, visible from a public way
- To extend authority over paint colors to include wood and metal surfaces, not just masonry.

John Shope voiced concern that the extension of these regulations might take the Commission's authority too far – in particular, he views the choice of paint color for doors as something "temporary," and worried about adding a bureaucratic hurdle to an owner executing a simple refresh. Conversely, Joe Cornish stressed that the City's goal is to harmonize regulations across the historic districts, so that Bay Village has the same regulations as Back Bay and Beacon Hill, and he noted that the Commission has a reputation for quick responsiveness and reasonableness. We will discuss this proposed change at the next Executive Committee meeting in December.

We also discussed the membership of the Bay Village Historic District Commission. The terms of the current members have expired – they were extended on an emergency basis through the pandemic, but the City is now working to get everything back onto a "normal" calendar. The Bay Village Neighborhood Association has the responsibility to nominate six candidates for three

positions on the Board – **if you are interested in serving, please contact Trish or me immediately, as we will be finalizing our nominations soon.** Please note that members of the BVHDC will be expected to attend all Historic District Commission Meetings (currently held on the second Tuesday of each month at 4 PM by Zoom, but there may also be meetings at City Hall), and BVNA expects our nominees to also be involved in the Neighborhood (that is, while we don't expect every BVHDC member to attend every BVNA Executive Committee meeting, we do expect members to attend several meetings and community events over the course of the year and to be in touch with the pulse of the neighborhood).

Remembering Tom Kauycheck (1941-2022)

Judy Komarow and Anne Kilguss took a few moments at the Annual Meeting to share some of their memories as friends of Tom Kauycheck, who, as we noted in the October newsletter, recently passed away. Steve Dunwell also compiled a little photo montage of Tom, below, which he has also posted in the neighborhood bulletin board at Church and Melrose. The Association has also made a contribution in Tom's memory to the Animal Rescue League.



Tom Kauycheck 1941 - 2022



© Steve Dunwell (3x)



Treasurer's Report (Scott Orzell Continuing in 2023)

Overall, our accounts are in good shape. Disregarding the transfer of mitigation funds earmarked for Parks or other capital improvements, we ran a deficit of approximately \$2 thousand over the course of the past year – attendance at events was strong, but inflation increased costs, especially for food/catering. We will likely need to adjust rates and event pricing a bit in the coming year. Still, we have a bit over \$100 thousand in the main BVNA account, so our cushion is sound, and Scott will be working to increase our interest income a bit in the coming year as rates continue to rise. We have set aside contributions for the Dog Park fence and the Safety Cameras. Scott noted that BVNA

has historically benefitted, and continues to benefit, from significant gifts from a small number of neighborhood residents who choose to remain anonymous – in some recent years, these contributions have collectively matched or exceeded the total revenue we collect from membership fees, which we have strived to keep low. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of these individuals, and also mindful, as stewards of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, that our activities have essentially been subsidized to an extent that we cannot assume as we plan future budgets. Executive Committee members frequently pick up the tab individually for “little things.” Thanks, all!

City Services (Brian Boisvert, Allie Fitzgerald, and Ian Johnson continuing in 2023)

Brian summarized the Sisyphean tasks of the City Services team over the course of the past year as our troika battled to manage trash, rats, the loss of parking spaces to construction projects, loose sidewalk bricks, burned-out gas lamps, missing signs, and a host of other issues. The team is remaining vigilant about parking and will be lobbying to see if we can get BTM teams in to ticket non-residents more regularly. Meeting attendees noted that the verbal warning (“Lights are Flashing!”) on the Arlington Street crosswalk had failed, and this has now been at least partially restored. As Brian noted, some issues that residents have advocated were proven to be non-starters when we have pursued them in the past – the City is reluctant to install speed bumps (a challenge for snowplows) and only sporadically evinces interest in setting up speed traps on Isabella Street.

As noted above and in the last newsletter, Saturday, November 19th is the day of our annual fall clean up. The meeting place, as usual, will be the Bay Village Garden on the corner of Melrose and Church Streets, at 8AM. The 200 Stuart Street Garage attached to the Revere Hotel is again generously offering Bay Village residents free parking that morning from 7 AM until 1 PM, while the streets are being cleaned. Cars left on streets in the interior of Bay Village are subject to ticketing. When leaving the garage, please pull into the left exit lane and show either a BV parking sticker or an ID with a Bay Village Address. If an attendant is not there, there is a phone number on the equipment to alert the attendant on duty. Remember that if you enter prior to 7 AM or remove your vehicle after 1PM, you will not receive free parking and will be charged the regular rates.

Our thanks go out to Kim Crucioli of the Office of Neighborhood Services for helping us make this happen. As a reminder, we hold this event late in the fall because our goal is to remove as many fallen leaves as possible, and clearing the leaves keeps the drains clear as we approach the winter. Even if it’s a chilly morning, we’ll provide coffee and donuts as well as brooms and rakes. It’s a great occasion to meet up with neighbors and help make our streets and green spaces look their best.

Parks – Carol Carlson, Aoife Austin, Marie Nolan continuing in 2023, joined by Rob Stinson; Joe Kuranda stepping down

Marie gave a quick update of the current state of play with the Parks Committee. Lots of effort in the past year has gone into improving the Dog Park – the temporary fence has been made more secure thanks to the hard work of Mark Slater, but we will shortly be installing a new fence made possible by donations from developers David Goldman/New Boston Ventures, Jonathan Lee, and KEMS Corporation/Ed Doherty. Longer-term, major upgrades of Bay Village Park and Bay Village Garden still await assignment of a project manager from the Boston Parks Department. We are also still waiting on quotes for welding repair of the iron gate at the Isabella Street Park.

Safety – Danny Moll and Bethany Patten continuing in 2023, joined by Chris White

The talk of the neighborhood this past week was a brazen afternoon car theft on Winchester Street. Overall, crime in Bay Village remains quite low other than doorstep thefts of packages and planters, but we are reminded of the need to stay in touch with our Police Department contacts. We will hold the next Safety Committee Meeting by Zoom, but we may switch these back to in-person in the future.

In the meantime, Danny Moll reports that the transfer of funds for the Cameras project from the BPDA to the BPD has finally happened, and the Captain is putting pressure on the Telecoms department to get this wrapped up soon. We've been waiting for years, but progress may be close?

Social – Kim Kulasekaran, Jennifer Lashway, Sara Barakat, Sarah Whitman and Paria Froot joining in 2023, Alexandra Neuse continuing, Nan Rubin transitioning to At-Large, Nancy Cahn and Ryan Jones stepping down

Nan Rubin gave a comprehensive update on an extremely successful year for the Social Committee – we raised funds for the Greater Boston Food Bank, we survived an unusually thorny City permitting process, and most of all, we had a lot of fun! New this year, and a roaring success, was the Halloween Party spearheaded by Kim Kulasekaran.



Participants gathering before the parade

Kim and her merry band promised fun for all ages and overdelivered – we had a very strong turnout on a warm Saturday afternoon, including friends from adjacent neighborhoods, some Jacques regulars (thanks for joining us!) and special guests including Brianna Millor from the Mayor’s Office. The variety of costumes was incredible, and the event served as a *de facto* coming out party for new residents of the townhouses on Edgerly Place, who graciously opened their garages to host food and beverage stands and to provide a stage for our guest magician.

Turnout for trick-or-treat two evenings later was the highest I can remember – well over 50 goblins, ghouls, and assorted scary creatures made their way to my door on Melrose Street. Thanks to Rob Lashway for helping to coordinate.

Planning and Licensing – Sarah Herlihy, Ben Beck, Katherine Nelson, and Craig Douglas continuing in 2023

Sarah gave an update on the major projects reviewed by the Planning and Licensing Committee in the past year – including projects outside the boundaries of Bay Village where the City requested we send representatives, such as the redevelopment of the Benjamin Franklin Institute site at Tremont/Berkeley, and the redevelopment of the YWCA at Stuart/Clarendon. With the renovation of Our Lady of Victories on Isabella Street now getting underway, and the addition planned for 95-97 Broadway fully approved, she anticipated that activity in the coming year would be slower, as the real estate market seems to have topped.

Notwithstanding that prediction, shortly after the meeting we received word of a new development proposal, from Rabbi Yosef Zaklos, for an addition at 16 Piedmont. There will be a public process to allow abutters to review and comment on this plan, which will require zoning relief, and it will also be reviewed at the next BVNA Planning and Licensing Committee Meeting. Stay tuned.

Membership – Daniel Krulewitch continuing in 2023

Daniel Krulewitch gave an update– the good news is that despite the pandemic, the Association has grown to approximately 300 members. We are delighted to welcome new residents, please don’t hesitate to reach out to any of us if you have any questions or concerns about neighborhood issues!

ADCO – Nancy Morrisroe continuing in 2023

Nancy gave a brief update for ADCO. Many of the key topics for 2023 remain the same, including vigilance over continued attempts to obtain zoning variances for electronic billboards outside of districts where they are permitted, and the never-ending fight over irresponsible landlords attempting to end-run the regulations on short-term rentals. ADCO will also be pressing the Mayor’s office for more clarity on the future of the BPDA and ensuring downtown neighborhoods have a voice in zoning and development proposals in downtown neighborhoods, despite the lack of downtown representation on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Other Positions – Paul Buta rejoining as CTO/Web Guru; Roque Dion continuing on Community Relations; Nan Rubin joining Jim McCormick, David Wright, Gaye Bok, Judy Komarow, and Steve Nolan as our At-Large Executive Committee Members

We are excited to “officially” have Paul Buta back to help us out with technical issues – although this is partly to give him credit for tasks that he has informally been assisting us with for several years!

Outreach from Mayor Wu's Office

The Mayor's Office is aware of neighborhood frustrations with the transition in City Leadership and a lack of communication and responsiveness in the past year, about which I have kvetched in past newsletters. Brianna Millor, the Mayor's Chief of Community Engagement, reached out to us and spent an hour with Trish and me reviewing hot topics in Bay Village. We had a friendly and lively discussion, which inevitably included an airing of some grievances – we discussed degradation in the City's responsiveness of 311 complaints, frustration with poor communications (as with the gas lamps conversion that we first heard about in the *Boston Sun*), lack of coordination around resident parking spaces being claimed simultaneously by the City, public utilities, and private developers, concern about the makeup of the reformed ZBA, and the sclerotic pace of City departments in executing agreed-upon projects, such as the Safety Cameras and Parks initiatives.

She heard us out, took careful notes, and promised to follow up on all of these issues, and she expressed an interest in meeting larger groups of us both at our social events and in a special session. Stay tuned.

Note to New Residents – Space Savers are NOT permitted in Bay Village!

I'm hopeful that the flakes won't fly for at least several more weeks. However, for those of you who have moved here from places like Southie or Rozzie, where tribal customs are different, or suburban exiles who have read in the *Globe* about the bizarre Boston rituals performed with broken lawn chairs and other household detritus at the first sight of a flurry ... not here! Like the South End, we voted overwhelmingly years ago to ban space savers, and this year, with the assistance of Ms. Millor, we have a commitment that the City will help us enforce the ban and remove any trash left in the street. While space savers have been officially sanctioned by a series of Boston mayors terrified of the potential political repercussions of suggesting that the practices of 1954 might no longer be appropriate, the City does recognize that downtown neighborhoods do not have sufficient resident parking spaces on the sunniest of days, and the consequences of allocating what few spaces we have to garbage cans and ping pong tables invites chaos. Be a good neighbor, shovel out your space, and don't be upset when another neighbor claims it while you are at work.

Then and Now – Fire Stations*

For the first two hundred-plus years of Boston's existence, fire was an ever-present threat to the life and livelihoods of its residents. Given the limitations of the technology of the time, once a blaze started, it was very, very difficult to control – buckets, hand pumps and horse-drawn apparatus were not up to the task of battling huge conflagrations, and the timber-framed buildings of the City's early history burned readily. Fires frequently leveled entire blocks, and sometimes entire neighborhoods. A fire in 1653 destroyed multiple buildings and resulted in the death of three children; a 1676 blaze destroyed about 45 buildings in the North End, and one three years later leveled about 150 buildings near the waterfront. The first "Great Boston Fire" of Boston in 1711 left over a hundred families homeless, and another "Great Boston Fire" in 1760 was even bigger – but whether or not individual events merited the moniker "Great," every two or three years there was a fire big enough to destroy a dozen or more structures, culminating in the two-day November 1872 event that is **now** known as "The Great Boston Fire," an inferno that raged across 65 acres of downtown, burning over 750 buildings and changing the fabric of the City forever.

By the time that Bay Village was being built up from the 1820s to 1840s, there was recognition that houses should be made of masonry in densely-packed urban areas – although as long as windows and floors and roofs were made of wood, blazes still routinely raged through entire blocks. As the City expanded, fire stations were built near every residential neighborhood. The

first station in Bay Village was at 69 Warrenton Street, a house built in 1854, that was the home of Hand Engine 12 and later Hose Company 8. Nothing survives of this structure, or even of this end of Warrenton Street, which until the 1970s dog-legged toward Tremont Street rather than Charles Street South. The building would have been approximately where the South Cove East project adjacent to Lyndeboro Place now stands. In April 1869, Hose Company 8 moved to a newly-built station at 25 Church Street. This Company was reorganized as Chemical 2 in 1874.

The Church Street Fire station, by architects Bryant and Rogers, represented the latest thinking about firehouse construction in the immediate post-Civil War era, and was described as follows in the City's 57th Annual Auditor's report in 1869:

“The first and second stories are arranged as follows: First story, Ward Room, occupying about one-half the area of the story, and measuring 60 feet by 25 feet; and hose carriage room of 34 feet by 20 ½ feet, with stable for two horses in the rear, together with hose tower, water closet, wash room, hay room, and two closets. The first story is 12 feet clear height, and is most amply lighted from an enclosed yard in rear of the building, facing Knox Place, and accessible therefrom for supplies and other needful purposes. The second story is arranged with parlor, kitchen, bedroom and store room (over the Ward Room), and with two bedrooms, bath room, sink room, and staircase, and its hall over the hose house. The second story has a depth of 37 ½ feet only from street front, and the hose tower is continued up (outside this story) to a total height of 44 ½ feet above first story floor level.”

In fact, this building was built in what had been the Knox Street right-of-way, presumably because of the increased awareness of the need for fire facilities in this era and the shortage of suitable city-owned land in the neighborhood. The eastern end of the now-disconnected Knox Street was subsequently renamed Dingley Place. A “Ward Room” such as the one described above was analogous to a Community Center, but the entire building was soon taken over by the Boston Fire Department as its needs increased. Chemical 2 was disbanded in 1920, although the building continued to serve as a fire station for a few more years, housing Rescue 1 and the Hose Wagon of Engine 35 until 1928.

This building still stands, and the “Chemical 2” inscription remains over the left-side windows, once the engine entrance, over a century after that Fire Company ceased to exist.



25 Church Street Today



Chemical 2 Company circa 1900 – from the Boston Fire Historical Society Website

By the 1920s, as the City continued to grow, downtown buildings were built to greater heights, and firefighting apparatus evolved, it was apparent that firehouses of a larger scale were required. In April 1928, a grand new station was opened at 194 Broadway. As we have noted in earlier newsletters, today's tiny Broadway in Bay Village was once a major through-street contiguous with the Broadway that runs the length of South Boston. The section from Charles Street South (then Carver Street) to the Turnpike Extension was completely leveled as part of BRA urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s, and its eclectic mix of smaller-scale 19th and early 20th Century buildings replaced by large, drab, utilitarian structures that consumed entire blocks of the coarsened and simplified street grid. The Beaux Arts fire station at number 194 stood in the approximate vicinity of where the Josiah Quincy Elementary School and the Quincy Tower stand today, between Shawmut Avenue and Washington Street. The fire companies associated with this building (Engine 26, Engine 35, Ladder 17, Rescue 1) had a long and distinguished history fighting notable Boston fires, including the Coconut Grove fire just a few short blocks down Broadway. (They were not, however, the first to respond – an Engine from the South End, responding to a car fire on Stuart Street, was even quicker to the scene – lightning-fast response of fire crews was sadly of little help in that tragedy, which played out in a few short minutes).



Broadway Station shortly after opening in 1928 - from the Boston Fire Historical Society Website



Broadway Station in context- from the Boston Fire Historical Society Website. The station and all of the buildings in the near background were obliterated by urban renewal.



Broadway Fire Station shortly before closing in 1971 - from the Boston Fire Historical Society Website

The impact of urban renewal didn't obviate the need for fire stations, so as part of the plan, a new building was constructed at 200 Columbus Avenue to house the Broadway companies, designed in a functional style consistent with the less-optimistic era in which it was built. The firemen moved during 1971. This station is familiar to all current residents of Bay Village.



Today's Broadway Fire House, 200 Columbus Avenue

And this explains a curiosity that observant Bay Village residents have probably noticed: though our fire station is on Columbus Avenue, the fire trucks themselves continue to proudly bear the designation "Broadway." Plaques at the station recognize Broadway company firefighters who sacrificed their lives protecting the City over its long history.





A similar situation persists with the “Carver Street Substation,” currently under renovation by Eversource between Charles Street South and Warrenton Street. While BRA bulldozers consigned Carver Street to the dustbin of history as part of the same 1970s urban renewal wave that leveled the graceful Broadway fire station, the nomenclature and the memories remain.

Until Next Month (or two),
Tom

*Note that I have shamelessly borrowed the pictures and gleaned the company histories from the Boston Fire Historical Society’s excellent website, bostonfirehistory.org. Those interested in the evolution of fire-fighting in Boston and more detailed stories of firefighters who lost their lives battling blazes will find far more detail there.