

## **Union Square Neighborhood Council Meeting**

**May 12, 2020**

**6 pm – 8 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

### **Attendees:**

#### **Board Members:**

Miichèle Hansen

Ann Camara

Bill Cavellini

Andy Greenspon

Danyal Najmi

Isabella Drago

Phil Privitera

Gary Trujillo

Tori Antonino

David Scott

Pennie Taylor

#### **Community Members:**

Jessica Eshleman

Laurie Goldman

Frank Kautz

Cosmo DiSchino

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

### **2. Public Comment**

### **3. Approval of minutes from April 28 meeting**

*Item skipped, done later in the meeting.*

### **4. Report back on progress of release of CBA monies for First Source and Union Square Main Streets**

**Ann:** The City requested a letter from Greg K of US2 that he supports the money US2 already gave to the City to be disbursed to Union Square Main Streets (USMS) and Somerville First Source Jobs Program for a staff member for each of these groups. The Request for Proposal (RFP) has been done. We are on the agenda Thursday with the City Council and on May 18 with Legislative Matters, whether this is necessary or not. If anyone wants to speak at the City Council meeting Thursday, we can see if it will be allowed.

**Bill Cav:** Before the request from Greg K to submit the letter, there was a unanimous vote from the City Council Finance Committee as a Committee of the Whole to request to fund these two positions.

**Jessica:** I talked to Tom Galligani this afternoon and he shared that his team is working on developing a procurement process, which may take a couple of weeks, after which, USMS will need to apply.

**Miichèle:** City Councillor JT Scott at the Finance Committee was very direct with Tom Galligani that the City needs to move this forward quickly. City Councillor Ben Ewen-Campen has been very vigilant in getting this done.

### **5. Report back from Ann and Michèle on meeting with DLJ**

**Ann: Miichèle** and I had a 45-60 minute meeting with John Feynton of DLJ. He showed slides of what will be built, what green space, what will be on the plaza. In the winter, outdoor ice skating. Generally lots of social activities, concerts, etc. Would restaurants and businesses from Union Square USMS be able to be involved with those things, John said yes.

Next step - Feynton has a meeting with all of us before having a meeting in the Public Safety Building with the broader neighborhood. Looking into somervision. **Ann** says look at CBA with US2 and our CBA summit for other important issues to address., both DLJ and Macone try to impress with the streets they are building and the social things planned, but there may be other things to help the community to check off.

DLJs first phase project at 101 South Street: <https://www.lmp.com/101-south-street-at-boynton-yards/>

**Miichèle:** He showed a draft of plan for buildings, smaller project then, surrounded by some Somerville owned land and Nissenbaum land. There will be some infrastructure work, straightening out roads, etc. Three lab buildings, and a fourth building that will be housing. He wants to talk to us as a group before he goes to the broader public. DLJ gave money to COVID fund through CAAS. He also suggested that he is doing some work underwriting the Farmers Market.

**Jessica:** Yes, DLJ will be helping support the farmers market this season.

**Miichèle:** He said 3000-4000 jobs in the buildings, but did not respond when Ann asked about jobs for Somerville residents in particular.

**Tori:** We don't have a plan yet for Boynton Yards, so I want to ask Planning how they can move ahead with this project without such a plan.

Before any more development was to happen in Boynton Yards, the City started a plan in December beyond what was in the Union Square Neighborhood plan. I want to find out from Planning what is going on with that expanded plan. I thought there was supposed to be this plan first before building out the area.

**Miichèle:** DLJ wants to build it out at a pretty brisk pace, as they have acquired the land.

**Bill Cav:** Completion on current 1st phase buildings won't be until next June. That doesn't mean they won't be getting approvals for the 2nd phase as 1st phase is being constructed.

**David:** Has there been any talk about JamSpot or other arts/entertainment space that is there and is being taken over?

**Miichèle:** DLJ did not mention it, but we can bring it up at a future meeting.

## **6. Report back on development of guidelines for meetings with developers**

*Pennie shows document for Guidelines for Meeting with Real Estate Developers. Bill Cav primarily worked on this.*

**David:** What about a "quiz" to check that developers have read our Bylaws or other documents we have before they meet with us?

**Tori:** More focus on quiz on CBA?

**David:** Sure. I could make a webform for them to answer. And if they give the wrong answer, it can say it was wrong and then tell them the right answer.

**Pennie:** Our goal is to educate them so that we can talk about the nitty-gritty with them.

**Bill Cav:** I don't necessarily care if they've read out bylaws. I care if they've read our mission statement. I would prefer a quiz focused on that subject and on what's in the CBA. We want to know that they've looked at these documents and paid attention, not that they've memorized everything.

At the previous meeting with John Fenton, he said he had looked at our website, though there was nothing in our meeting that proved to me that he really looked closely at our website.

**David** will make quiz - email him to suggest things important to be in it. [thornewood@gmail.com](mailto:thornewood@gmail.com) What do you want on the quiz? Send it to me.

*Parameters:*

*Discussion of amount of time to give the developers to talk.*

*15 min max to presentation by developer before questions and comments.*

*USNC will facilitate the meeting. Ensure developers answer questions or come back within 2 weeks time to answer questions for which they have no satisfactory answers at the time of the .*

*For transparency, state that our meeting is a public meeting, in which anyone can join, but not a "public meeting" as defined by the Planning Board process.*

*We will send developers this framework ahead of time.*

*Developer sends any relevant documents, presentation info a week ahead of the meeting.*

### **3. Approval of minutes from April 28 meeting**

*Agenda item taken out of order*

*Unanimous approval.*

### **7. Outreach and Communications**

*Gary presents the Outreach Committee section of the webpage via shared screen.*

**Gary:** This page also includes some quoted language from the Bylaws, in particular the values listed in section 2. We have a couple of "action items to consider: (1) **Bill S** suggested at our previous meeting getting in contact with the "mayors of the block" across Union Square and finding out from them both what they would like to see us accomplish and who they would suggest we speak with to go even further in assessing neighborhood needs and doing what is possible to encourage public involvement in carrying out shared purposes, which can be enlarged via this method. I would like to see us put plans in place to determine who these "mayors of the block" are, so members of the committee can carry out the first step of Bill's suggestion. . (2) **Pennie** suggested at that same meeting that we prepare a survey to go out to the community, which would be aimed at getting a better understanding of these "neighborhood needs." Devising this survey is best done by means of a collaborative effort; anyone interested in being part of this effort is welcome to assist.

**Pennie:** I think we could have our important documents more easily accessible on the web site. Should I email suggestions to you, Gary?

**Gary:** Management of the web site is a responsibility of the Outreach and Communications committee (of which Pennie is a member), so this is a topic we should talk about in that committee. I want to invite anyone to make suggestions for improvements to the web site to that committee (which I hope will soon be back in operation -- meanwhile, I would be happy to receive any such suggestions). [*Ex post facto* comment: We will likely want to form a web design and management subcommittee of the O & C committee.]

**Miichèle:** Everyone please read through the text on the Outreach and Communications Committee page of the website so we can approve that language following a discussion of any required amendments at our next meeting.

### **8. Any business previously not foreseen by the Board**

#### **9. Public Comment**

*Taken together as one item.*

**Pennie** (from earlier in the meeting):

*In the meantime, please share city survey with artists you know here!*

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRj7CNR-bqGGk7CUVAQdtS6ECB4pYL0s4iHlIzKfP7bLaynw/viewform>

**Tori:** Update on Planning Board meeting - Assembly's Edge - between Public Storage Building and 99 Restaurant near ASsembly Row. Was going to be a hotel and small open space between two residences. It's right next to the highway, and has lots of pollution. The project has evolved into an 18 story office R&D building with some retail. So it's closer to the project we wish we had originally. New Planning Board Members: Rob Buchanan, Jahan Habib, Dinning. They are very on board with Community Benefits, Sustainability, etc. Dinning is very focused on help for underserved populations.

Other current members from before: Mike Capuano, Amelia Aboff

Dorothy Kelly Gay, Gerard Amaral, Joseph Favaloro are no longer on the Board.

No Planning Board meeting with Public Hearing scheduled about SomerVision 2040 yet.

**Miichèle:** DLJ wanted to present to us on May 22 – that presentation clearly won't happen. What about May 26?

*Discussion on timelines.*

*Send language for developers out to the Board for approval, then send it to DLJ and ask them to send documents a week ahead (May 19).*

**Bill Cav:** I would not send them the guidelines as written - I would send them just what they are required to do and how we would run the meeting.

**Pennie** can distill those pieces and circulate them to the Board too.

**Jessica:** The Union Square Farmers Market begins Saturday May 23. We got grant funding to support a SNAP Outreach Coordinator from the Job's Trust and to increase the SNAP match through June from \$10 per market up to \$50 per market. Hopefully into next fiscal year (July onward) there will be similar funding. Have to apply separately for that if/when applications are released.

There will be a mix of pre-order and live shopping to access the 25 vendors (instead of normal 50, for social distancing). Links available soon on USMS web site. Asking customers to expedite their shopping, and limit customers to one per household to allow more people to be able to participate in the Farmers Market.