

Gilman Square Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: February 24, 2022

Time: The meeting convened at 5:30 pm

ATTENDANCE:

CAC Members Present: Diana Marsh, Melinda Coneys, Ram Kelath, Casey Babbitt, James Nicoloro, Jamie Cragnoine, Jennifer Koerber, Brittany Vetter, Michelle Machado Moreira, Ben Elgart, Jesse Clingan, and Ben Ewen-Campen. Jack Lister arrived late.

CAC Members Absent: Lisa Natale.

Staff Present: Rachel Nadkarni (Senior Planner), Tom Galligani (Director of Economic Development), and Nick Schonberger (Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

As a general note, this was an organizational and introductory meeting of the Gilman Square Civic Advisory Committee.

1. Staff presented on the meeting format and the GoToWebinar platform.

2. Member Introductions

CAC members introduced themselves to each other and shared some of their favorite places to spend time in the neighborhood.

3. Staff presented the draft CAC Charter and there was a discussion on meeting organizational topics.

The Civic Advisory Committee reviewed the draft CAC Charter. There was consensus that the charter with the corrections suggested by staff was acceptable as the final version.

The Civic Advisory Committee reviewed the planned meeting times. There was consensus that the regular meetings from 5:30-7:00 pm on the fourth Thursday of the month would be the meeting times going forward. There was also consensus that larger community meetings will occur on non-Council days with a 6:00 pm start time, understanding that will mean some members will need to drop off early.

The Civic Advisory Committee discussed when to hold public comment in the course of the meeting. It was determined that 10 minutes of public comment will be taken at the beginning, with additional public comment taken at the end of each meeting. To be respectful of the initial 10 min, the consensus was to try for chat only questions if things are busy in public comment, with spoken comments taken at the end.

4. Staff presented the conceptual schedule and topics for community engagement in the upcoming months, February to June 2022.

There was a discussion about publicizing the March 14th meeting and ways for the members to help publicize the meeting.

There was a discussion about the sites that the group will be discussing. There was a discussion about where this process is in terms of making a decision about the future of the sites and that this project is still at an early stage with a great deal of decisions still to be made.

There was a discussion about the lion sculpture from the Homans site. It was noted that it has been

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saved and it's return to the site is one of the few known outcomes.

There was a discussion about the name of Gilman Square and aspects of the neighborhood history, including the history of the college in the square.

Additionally, there was a discussion about the current uses on the sites, particularly the Mobil station, and the importance of engaging with the property owner and the business owner as well as thinking creatively about the options for incorporating that site or not and the technical challenge for redevelopment

There were some initial ideas about engaging the public:

- Connecting the process to the MBTA green line station opening and tabling around the station opening
- Connecting with high school students
- Somerville open studios will be happening in person (April 30/May 1), and could be an opportunity for tabling
- GSNA spring events
- Including a "parking lot" in notes for comments received that are related to other sites in Gilman Square that are not in the scope of the project area
- Having a meeting about how all of the projects occurring in the Gilman Square area fit together physically as well as in terms of the timelines

In the course of the evening there were several initial ideas for the site. Among them were:

- YMCA
- Grocery store
- Green space
- A replacement for the sledding hill that was at the library
- Restaurants, particularly daytime food businesses like coffee shops
- Accessible gathering spaces, open and friendly to many
- Keeping the quiet feel of the neighborhood

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.