

Residents Want Open Space at 142 Shawmut

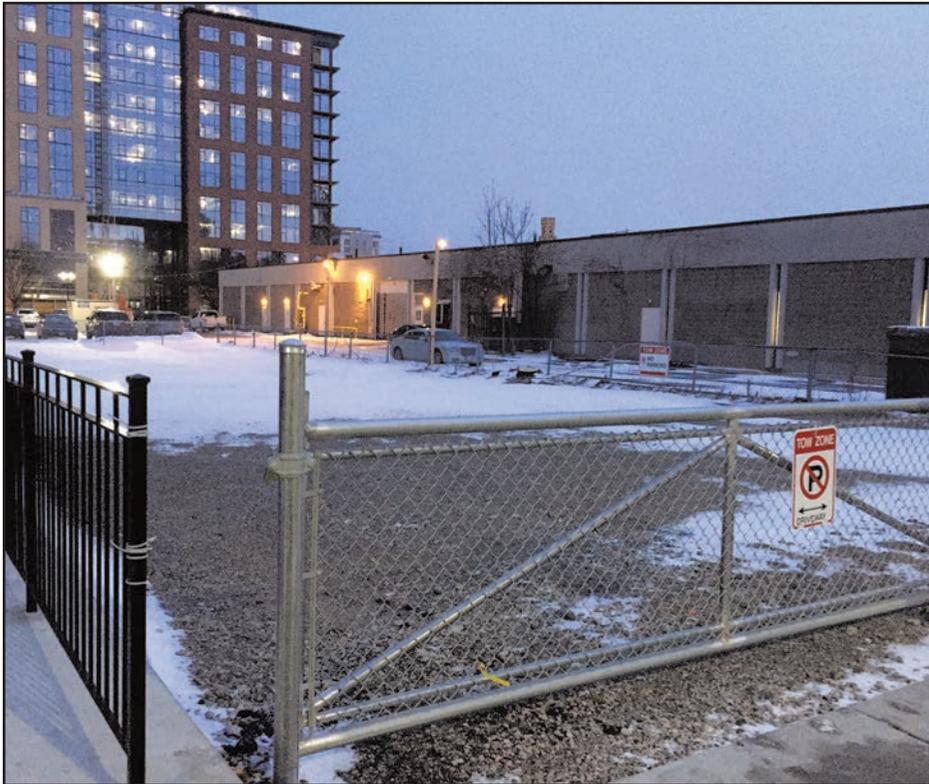


Photo: Christopher Gavin

by Christopher Gavin

Nearly 50 South End residents packed into the Castle Square Community Center Tuesday and made clear to city officials they someday want to see green, open space fill a vacant lot at 142 Shawmut Avenue.

Not one attendee of the Boston Planning & Development Agency's public meeting regarding the future of the lot objected to the idea as the group collected feedback to begin its disposition process of the public site.

Marie Mercurio, senior planner for the agency, said the 8,543-square-foot property is currently zoned for economic development use and could allow for affordable housing.

But residents said the area lacks open space amid rising buildings, and the property could serve as a shortcut for those walking the neighborhood.

For many, it already does, a few said. "There's a list of things that could go there for open space, but it would enhance the pedestrian experience cutting through all the new developments that are being done," said Jamie Curtis, of Traveler Street.

Officials will create a Request for Proposals (RP) for the parcel, which sits in the South End's Urban Renewal Area, so a private developer can purchase and redesign the site, according to Reay Pannesi, the agency's senior manager for disposition services.

The group has not yet appraised the property, Pannesi said, adding that it would need to determine what the development would be used for before discussing prices.

Tuesday's meeting sought to get public input on what the request should include.

Mercurio said officials plan to reflect on the recommendations from a 2012 strategic plan for the neighborhood, which states the Shawmut Avenue area serves as an important economic link between the South End, Chinatown and downtown Boston.

The agency said it intends to also consider how a project could improve pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow in the area, among other goals.

Deborah Backus, executive director of the Castle Square Tenants Organization, which represents an affordable housing development across from the lot, said tenants backed the idea of a park or open space that could benefit community health.

"We don't want to be overwhelmed with a number of apartment buildings on Shawmut Avenue," she said.

Others, such as Mark Walsh, who will soon live next to the site, said making the lot into a park would serve those who walk across it already to maneuver around buildings and side streets.

"That space is used as an access to get to Whole Foods and the whole neighborhood there," Walsh said. "It seems like a public benefit from my point of view, would be some kind of public access...if not, we create this big wall."

Pannesi said officials are often concerned about the required maintenance of open space projects, but said non-profit organizations and land trust groups are among those who may be interested in submitting a proposal for that kind of project.

The agency is accepting public comments on the RP until Wednesday, February 14, she said.



Photo: Courtesy of Union Park Neighborhood Association

Evening in the Park 2017

Thank the Locals for Union Park's Beauty

by Mark Fuehlec

Residents living nearby think of Union Park as their own front yard, and they have cultivated the feeling of a neighborhood-run park through generous donations for its upkeep.

The Union Park Neighborhood Association (UPNA), through their Friends of

Union Park (FUP) group, collects about \$10,000 a year for park maintenance from residents, businesses and sometimes from the filming that is done in the pristine neighborhood.

UPNA pays for things like fertilizer, mowing, sprinkler systems and fountains,

Continued on Page 8



Fundraising party for
Blackstone Franklin Square
Neighborhood Association's scholarship program
Thursday, February 8, 2018 at Estragon
700 Harrison Avenue, 6:00-8:00pm
Tickets \$50. Purchase yours today at blackstonefranklin.org

LEGAL NOTICE

ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING

Notice is hereby given that the Mayor's Office of Consumer Affairs and Licensing has received the following application:

To maintain and operate the categories of disc jockey, three (3) instrumental musicians, and one (1) vocalist to their existing Entertainment License.

At: **16 North Street, Boston, MA, 02109**

Known as: **Koy**

The applicant is: **Korean Fusion Inc.**

Manager of record is: **Catarina Chang**

A public hearing on this application will be held at

Boston City Hall, Room 809A, on **Wednesday, March 7, 2018, at 11:30 a.m.**

Anyone wishing to speak on this matter is invited to attend the hearing. Interpretation Services in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole and American Sign Language may be available upon request if the request is made two weeks prior to the public hearing. Call 617-635-4165 to request an interpreter. Written comments may be made prior to the hearing by writing to:

Christine A. Pulgini, Esq., Executive Director
Mayor's Office of Consumer Affairs and Licensing
Room 817, Boston City Hall, Boston, MA 02201
Telephone 617-635-4165
Fax 617-635-0709

Boy Scouts

Continued from Page 1

scouting badges that were on display during the ceremony.

Giacomo Turco, a fifth-grade Boy Scout, said he felt great about the whole ceremony and graduation.

"I just feel a higher responsibility, more privileges and like more fun stuff and everything," he said.

During the ceremony, Turco's dad Mario and colleague Brennan Thomas, committee chair of Boy Scout Troop #74, recognized Kershaw as an honorary founding member of the scouts.

"It's really a special treat for me, but the emergence of a new Boy Scout troop was very important to me," Kershaw said, encouraging the scouts to read their manuals and enjoy scouting.

In addition to earning merit badges, Boy Scouts will create structures and leadership positions within their pack, run meetings and plan future trips.

"These experiences empower the boys with a sense of what they can do," Thomas said. "Everybody benefits from scouting."

Dahlene Fusco, a parent of a Boy Scout who lives in the West End, said she was thrilled about the return of the Boy Scout Troop after a 10-year hiatus.

"I think they will learn a lot of values in terms of teamwork and outdoors skills," Fusco said. "We're really appreciative that this could happen."

Back Bay resident and mother Alexi Conine said she heard about the Cub Scouts three years ago from her son's friend on the soccer field.

"My husband joined as a den leader [for the Cub Scouts]," Conine said. "We're just so happy that the experience with scouting can continue with the reestablishment of Troop #74."

Arts Funding

Continued from Page 1

"This is an exciting time for the City of Boston because we are investing in organizations and projects that have the potential to enhance Boston's arts and culture community," he said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how these organizations use art to unite, lift up and inspire Boston's communities."

One of the criteria for selection was the project's potential for advancing the goals of the Boston Creates Cultural Plan, the City of Boston's cultural planning process. Successful applicants showed their plan to increase access to the arts, elevate the work of creatives, inspire new artworks and support high-quality arts and culture in the city.

"The Boston Creates planning process led us to realize the disparity of arts opportunities across the various neighborhoods of Boston," said Julie Burros, chief of arts and culture for the city. "By investing in arts organizations

across the city, we're a partner in their success and we're helping to expand access to arts opportunities in every community."

Recipients come from an array of artistic disciplines: visual arts, theater, film, music, dance and the humanities.

They also make use of the funds in a variety of ways. While representatives from organizations like Boston City Singers and the Boch Center spoke of their increased ability to serve Boston's youth, literary journal and theatre company Aforementioned Productions will use the grant to have a greater impact on Boston's artists and art patrons.

"Financial support from the [Boston Cultural Council] allows us to both help local writers and reach local readers," said Carissa Halston, co-founder of Aforementioned Productions. "We can host more live events, which is where we've met so many of our contributors, and continue to develop our catalog by taking risks on authors who take risks on the page and the stage."

"I talked to the council president and the other councilors and to people throughout the district about what's important to them," he said. "I think [my assignments] are a great opportunity to be a strong advocate and to work closely with the city."

As vice chair of the CRC, Flynn said he looks forward to helping make sure those in the disability community have equal access to city services. He is working with current committee chair City Councilor Josh Zakim and the mayor's office on a proposal.

Ed Flynn

Continued from Page 3

I've been active on many issues for a long time."

When it comes to future proposals, Flynn said he will combine his experiences working as a probation officer and in the public safety field with a commitment to speak with and listen to the concerns of his constituents.

CLASSIFIEDS CALL (857) 265-3022

Custom Flooring & Millwork

—Wide Plank & Long Length Flooring
—White Oak & Antique Heart Pine
—Genuine Mahogany Decking
T.S. Mann Lumber 978-249-2206

www.MannLumber.com

Kitchens Baths Tile Work Finish Work Windows & Doors Additions Painting Roofing Gutters Decks Demolition Masonry Plumbing Electrical HVAC	DIPIERRO Design • Build • Remodel
	Gerry DiPierro President 617-592-6447 www.dipierroconstruction.com info@dipierroconstruction.com Fully Licensed & Insured

1241 Boylston

Continued from Page 6

Tim Czerwienski, BPDA project manager, but ultimately that is an Inspectional Services Department decision that has not yet been made.

Impact Advisory Group (IAG) member Marie Fukuda said the job of forming a comment letter with the zoning issue still outstanding would be difficult and she hoped for more time.

"It's hard for me as an IAG member," she said. "This has only been our second meeting and we still are curious to see whether this project is within zoning or requires a variance. My recommendation would be to extend the comment period."

Job creation was another issue of concern. Many in attendance, including IAG members, expressed frustration with Wiest's inability to commit to higher wage levels, training and local hiring for the hotel's future staff.

With no operator yet chosen for the future hotel, it will be some time before the developer makes any operational decisions, said Wiest. He added the

developer cannot make binding commitments for parties that are not yet involved in the project.

Wiest argued the proposal would bring a lot to the neighborhood, replacing a traffic-generating gas station, creating jobs and filling a "missing tooth" in the streetscape. Even without a written commitment, he said the market would ensure the new jobs would be good.

"Whatever jobs are here we are sure they are going to be good jobs," he said. "Boston is a robust hotel market. Hotel jobs pay very well in Boston."

Wiest committed to meeting with members of the Fenway Community Development Corporation's (CDC) "Walk to Work" workforce development program, but with only days left before the project's IAG was required to submit its opinion many believed it would not produce any substantial change.

"This is a pro forma meeting," said John Labella, Fenway CDC board member. "It's very unsatisfying for most of us in the room. You can quantify what a good job is and we need to be a part of that quantification, not just have someone say that."

Union Park

Continued from Page 7

said James Alan Fox, acting president of UPNA. The cost gives residents control over the speed of maintenance and improvements to the park, as well as the park's appearance and use.

"Union Park is a really beautiful piece of property, arguably the nicest [park] in the South End," he said. "We want to keep it that way. I'm not saying the city wouldn't do a good job, but if there's something we want we might have to wait for it. We just like to have control over how it's maintained and when it's maintained."

The city still owns the park, however. It provides maintenance for the electrical and plumbing systems, as well as trimming the park's trees every few years. UPNA fundraising allows the neighborhood to hire its own landscaping company to handle the more everyday maintenance needs of the park.

Union Park has been primarily orna-

mental since crime and a trend of day drinking in the '70s caused neighborhood residents to request the park's fence remain locked for most of the year. Jerry Frank, past president of UPNA, said there has not been much desire to change that.

The park opens to the public for three concerts a year, called Evenings in the Park, which have seen up to 200 people in attendance. Union Park is also part of the South End Garden Tour and people regularly come in for wedding photos.

With more than 300 properties throughout the city, Ryan Woods, a Parks Department spokesman, said the city's 161 friends groups are a tremendous help. He called UPNA a model friends group, but noted that not all neighborhoods can maintain the same level of fundraising.

"There's a large range in terms of the resources they have," he said. "Some can actually raise a lot of money, while some just kind of serve as the eyes and ears."