

The Hyde Park Bulletin

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The ever-present problem of ATV riders and dirt bikers was discussed at the recent meeting, as well as what the police department is doing to combat the issue.

PHOTO BY BPDNEWS.COM

SWBCA calls for more responsiveness from government leaders

Mary Ellen Gambon
Staff Reporter

More than 30 members of the Southwest Boston Civic Association (SWBCA) called for government officials to be more responsive at a virtual community meeting on Wednesday, May 5.

The two-hour meeting brought up a number of concerns for police and politicians where residents called for action, including the noise generated by dirt bikes, all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and fireworks, which was a citywide issue last year.

One resident identified as Lady-T brought up an incident to police about a block party at 650 American Legion Hwy. in Roslindale at the Save A Lot parking lot on May 2. She said about 400 people had gathered with dirt bikes and four-wheelers blaring music from about 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

"A number of our residents here called 911 several times," she said. "They came out at about 9:54, shut them down for about 20 minutes, and they came back and stayed until 1 a.m. This is just a preview of what's going to happen this summer."

Boston Police Department (BPD) Sgt. Daniel Keane of District E-18 said that there is a plan that started that weekend with E-18, E-13 and B-3 where additional cars were placed in the area that Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, the cars may have been pulled to cover other incidents, he explained.

"We are hoping that the plan will get expanded, but



Residents also raised concerns regarding notification of the public process for the proposed development at 4198 Washington St.

COURTESY PHOTO

that is up to headquarters," he added. "The department is well aware of it, and there are meetings and planning being done."

He told residents to call 911 rather than the city's hotline at 311 to get "immediate action" and to better track data.

"I also suggest you call your elected officials," added E-18 Captain Joseph Gillespie. "This is a problem that is actually citywide, and they're trying to come up with a citywide policy."

Meeting organizer Beth Columbo, co-chair of the Dale Street Crime Watch in Roslindale, brought up that the fireworks started last week. She asked if there was an official plan and was told by Keane that there was none in place yet.

"Even though last year was a total nightmare, there was no legislation put into effect?" she asked. "Everybody on this call needs to contact your City Councilor and State Rep. and tell them they need to do something about these fireworks because last year was unbearable."

Cisnell Baez from Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia's office noted that her office created a task force on the issue last year and held several forums, noting it is a quality-of-life issue that affects veterans and animals, among others.

Joe Coppinger, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS) liaison for Roslindale, said he was meeting with Acting Mayor Kim Janey the next day. He said he would ask her to draft a home rule petition "to push the state a little further" on the fireworks issue.

Columbo called out District 5 City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo for not attending this meeting or the previous three. She said he was "invited by myself and by two of the other co-runners of this meeting, and he didn't even acknowledge us."

This brought up a
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Some parents are claiming foul at the new BPS entrance policy for exam schools.

COURTESY PHOTO

ZIP codes a sticking point on exam schools

Greta Gaffin
Staff Reporter

A federal judge ruled last month that the Boston Public Schools (BPS) could change the admissions guidelines for the exam schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

The new rules would admit students based on GPA and ZIP code, as opposed to GPA and exam scores. Due to COVID-19, exams could not be given for this year, and so Judge William Young told BPS schools they could not use this exact set of guidelines for subsequent school years.

This proposed change angered some city residents, leading to the formation of Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence (BPCAE). They argue that these new guidelines

are unfair and discriminatory, especially toward white and Asian-American students. They stated, "We respectfully disagree with the court's decision, and we are going to appeal."

BPS said "[w]e believe this is the most equitable way to identify students for admissions to the three exam schools during the pandemic and are moving forward."

The exam schools have had an uneasy past with race. BPS used to have a racial quota system for the exam schools; however, this was deemed illegal in the 1990s. As ZIP codes are not racially-determined – or at least aren't currently intended to be – they are currently allowed to be used to determine admissions. The exam schools, espe-

Exam Schools
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Egleston Library meeting about housing

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

In a classic case of closing the barn door after the cows have escaped, the Housing Innovation Lab, the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) and the Boston Public Library (BPL) held a virtual public meeting on April 29 to explain why a new Egleston Branch Library might be combined with housing.

Since the joint agency plan-

ning process began on Oct. 29, 2020, the premise was always that a new Egleston branch would be a good site for added housing, what they called "co-location."

Not surprisingly, the joint agencies got a fair deal of grief from the neighborhood. The last two public meetings were so acrimonious that this meeting began with Taylor Cain of the ILab asking that callers

Egleston Housing
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Mayor Janey engages Hyde Park at community forum

Mary Ellen Gambon
Staff Reporter

More than 150 people attended a virtual Hyde Park community forum with Acting Mayor Kim Janey on Monday, May 3, where she discussed a range of topics from creating a community health center to building “a joy agenda” citywide.

The hour-long discussion, organized by the West Fairmount Hill Community Group (WFHCG), was moderated by the two elected officials who call West Fairmount home – State Rep. Rob Consalvo and District 5 City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo. It was an opportunity to get to know the new mayor and pose questions

to her on topics including development, crime, business support and ways to promote the arts.

“We love our community, and we want you to learn to love us, too,” said Marcia Kimm Jackson, the WFHCG co-chair.

“I already do,” Janey replied.

“Boston is the city that raised me,” Janey said, noting her career in education advocacy before running for the City Council in 2017 and becoming its president in January 2020. “I learned a lot here and I love my city. If I didn’t love my city, I wouldn’t fight so hard for my city.”

She noted that, although people are ready to return to

normal after surviving the COVID-19 pandemic, normal never was equitable for many Bostonians.

“For me, it is just very clear that we cannot go back to normal,” Janey said. “I want to remind folks that that normal is a quarter-of-a-million-dollar wealth gap between Black households and white households. That normal is mass incarceration. That normal is a housing crisis. That normal is too many people being left out of opportunity.”

Janey addressed a number of neighborhood-specific questions that had been pre-submitted.

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firestorm of comments about lack of action from city officials from the participants.

“We are looking for some leadership here,” said a man identified as Chris. “I don’t come here to pick on any one official. But we don’t seem to have a handle on what’s going to happen next.”

Development was a key issue. Several people in Roslindale said abutters were not notified about the recent six-story building proposed in Roslindale Square.

“People learned about this development on social media,” said Laurie Radwin. “It has been tenuous to get information. I just want to get a better playing field. This is not unique to me and it’s not unique to Roslindale.”

Jim Kirker, the outgoing president of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA), agreed.

“What we’re trying to do is to put political pressure on the ZBA and the BPDA to follow

their own damn rules,” he said. “What’s the point of having a zoning code if nobody follows it? And politicians need to know that their jobs are at stake if they are not going to respond to the people that elected them.”

“I love this meeting because we all have the same issues,” added Ginny Gass, the head of the Bellevue Hill Improvement Association (BHIA).

Lisa Beatman from the Crane Ledge Woods Coalition gave a presentation on the efforts of seven area neighborhood groups and other activists who have united in an attempt to stop the development of 12 acres of a 22-acre woodland on the Hyde Park-Roslindale border. She highlighted the health, recreational and environmental benefits of preserving the only undeveloped natural resource in this area. However, she did note that the property is privately owned by Jubilee Christian Church and a 270-unit complex is currently proposed

there. Kirker read part of a letter he received from Arroyo that the church is “not willing to negotiate with any third party, including the City.”

Pat Alvarez, the head of the Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation (SWBCDC), said she was hoping that the City could go to the church with a “win-win proposal” that would preserve the land – which is what more than 120 community residents expressed at a recent meeting – while offering the church fair market value.

“I think that speaks to why we should look at the legal issues that could prevent development,” she said, noting that the property is in an environmental justice area.

Dennis Kirkpatrick of Roslindale said development is also starting to “crush the business district in Roslindale Square” because there is no parking included.

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