

Meeting of Friends of Elliot Norton Park / Friends of Bay Village Parks

May 20, 2015 7pm at Bay Village Neighborhood Park

Final

Mission: *"to make green spaces in & around Bay Village thriving urban oases for plants and people."*

Attending: Stig Bjernebye, Prilla Brackett, George Brackett, Bernice Broyde, Sue Buta, Jo Campbell, Leslie Colburn, Richard Junghans, George Klauber, Daniel Krulewitch, Kathy McDermott, Bill Nigreen, Len Phillips, Anne Sanford.

President Bill Nigreen welcomed everyone and reiterated the two priorities of his tenure:

1. Complete the renovation of Elliot Norton Park
2. Operate the organization so as to encourage other initiatives that further the mission.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the **Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting:**

- it was approved unanimously.

The tentative date for the 2015 Annual Meeting is June 24th.

Update on Renovation of Elliot Norton Park

- **Phase One:** The Parks Dept. Project Manager said recently they are still aiming for a July completion. Yesterday the Parks Commissioner met with Lyndeboro Place abutters about the placement of the fence on the north/south border and about the kind of fencing that would enclose the Charles Street garden area. The current plan calls for ornamental fencing along Charles Street and Warrenton Street, with chain link fencing along the Lyndeboro driveway. Meeting attendees expressed support for using ornamental fencing all around the Lyndeboro garden, to match the fencing across the street in Bay Village Neighborhood Park, with a gate or opening to allow direct access from Lyndeboro. The Parks Commissioner will make the final decision, expected imminently.
- **Phase Two:** The money for the completion of the northeast corner of the Park is in the Mayor's Budget but it still needs to be approved by the City Council. President Bill Nigreen testified in Favor of Phase Two at the City Council Hearing on the Parks Department Budget on May 21st, following up with the letter attached below. We will continue to advocate with BVNA and our City Councilor, Bill Linehan, for approval and completion of Phase Two.

There was discussion about recent activity in the round brick building at **333 Tremont**. There is a long term multi-use lease for office and function space. There is a website at <http://333tremont.com/> but the plan for specific uses will not be finalized until next month.

Call for Initiatives: Bill asked if anyone would like to propose other Initiatives that would require budget approval and there were no nominations. Parks Captains may continue to utilize funds already approved in this year's budget by working directly with Treasurer Daniel Krulewitch.

There being no other business, the President called for a motion to adjourn, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen McDermott (for Clerk Megan Castro).

ATTACHMENT: Letter from President Bill Nigreen to the City Council

May 22, 2015
Councilor Mark Ciommo, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Boston City Council, City Hall
One City Hall Square

Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Please Retain Phase Two of Elliot Norton Park Renovation Project in the Parks Budget

Dear Councilor Ciommo,

An extensive and inclusive public process led by the Parks Department created an excellent Plan for the renovation of Elliot Norton Park. Late in the process Little Panda Early Learning and Care objected to the Plan as it required that they relinquish private use of a corner of the park. The Parks Department agreed to delay construction in their corner until the children were out of the building. This portion was separated and identified as Phase Two of the Elliot Norton Park Renovation Project.

Phase One is under construction, scheduled for completion this July.

Phase Two is in the upcoming Budget and needs to be approved by the City Council.

The public interest requires that Phase Two be approved:

1. Phase Two space is public property. Little Panda is using this public space as a private playground - locked and completely off limits to the general public.
2. Relocating the fence to the legal border legitimately reclaims public space for public use.
3. It is unfair to all other persons and businesses that a private business gets to use public land for private benefit.
4. The equipment is already in the Park for Phase One and would readily move into Phase Two this summer.
5. If we miss this opportunity to reclaim the public land, it is likely to be many years before we ever get a chance again.

It is the job of the City and the Parks Department to steward public land for public use. We commend you and rely on you to safeguard our public trust.

That public parkland may not be encroached upon by private abutters is a view shared strongly by others in the park's vicinity, including China Altman, much honored 28 year leader of the Friends of the Boston Public Garden's Rose Brigade. She is out of town but asked that her statement be included (attached).

Yours truly,

Bill Nigreen
President, Friends of Elliot Norton Park
7 Fayette Street, Boston
(617) 338-5358

cc: City Council President William Linehan
Parks Commissioner Christopher Cook

[Statement from China Altman \(1 Melrose Street, 02116\) Leader of the Rose Brigade,](#)

“In our history as a society few things have disturbed the people more than an attempt by any person or persons to claim a privilege denied to their fellow citizens. Fencing part of the public land belonging to the Elliot Norton Park to provide a buffer for private use illustrates that kind of questionable privilege.

Park land is arguably the most precious land in Boston. In the sense that parks and public areas of recreation exist for all the people to use and enjoy they can be considered any city's greatest amenity. They represent one of the tenets at the very heart of our society. No part of public park land should ever be locked apart for private use.”