BRA introduces $3 million package to create home-owner opportunities

Anthony Vitale  
Staff Reporter

If Harvard University wants to renovate and build in the Charlesview area in Allston, local residents are going to make sure their voices are heard on the matter.

A BRA rep goes over a possible $3 million package to create home-owner opportunities, while residents asked to be more involved.

Photo by Anthony Vitale

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) met with a local Allston task force Monday night at the Josephine A. Fiorentino Community Center to discuss the negotiations between the Harvard project and the community benefits package. The main goal of the $3 million package is to target the creation of homeownership opportunities for the current and future long-term residents.

“What we heard over the course of the process last fall was that there was a specific interest from the task force and from the housing sub-committee trying to stabilize the housing stock in the neighborhood,” said Gerald Autler of the BRA.

Homeownership
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City Council to examine childcare

Joe Dilworth  
Staff Reporter

In the wake of a horrific tragedy, the Boston City Council is looking to address the status of private and public childcare facilities.

Just weeks after two-year-old Daylan Walker fell to his death from atop a Dorchester day-care center, Councillor Charles Yancey introduced an order aiming to better protect children. Yancey expressed his desire to hear from experts in the field as well as government officials to discuss existing procedures, protocol and accreditation.

“We have hundreds of Child Care
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Curley K-8 School in Jamaica Plain honored at Greenovate Summit

Joe Dilworth  
Staff Reporter

The Curley K-8 School has taken a leadership role in the Boston Public School system with their waste reduction efforts. They recently started to recycle milk and juice cartons in their cafeteria during breakfast and lunch. Each of their approximately 822 students receive at least two milk cartons each day, which adds up to over 9,000 cartons each week. The material that milk and juice cartons are made of is a valuable recyclable material, however, recycling cartons requires the extra step of emptying liquids. The project was a team effort that took dedication and coordination from the teacher and staff lunch monitors, custodians and administrators. Teachers and students were honored at the Greenovate Boston Community Summit on May 31. From left to right: Jessica Feldish, Stephanie Selznick, Sam Snekvik, Noah Magaziner, Lee Durcan and Mayor Marty Walsh.

Freedom Trail receives facelift

Boston’s most historic path-way is undergoing a makeover in hopes of preserving the route for years to come.

Mayor Marty Walsh announced that nearly 2,000 feet of the painted sections of the Freedom Trail are being replaced with “a new thermoplastic treatment.” According to Walsh, the multi-colored strips are being applied with heat and are expected to last up to eight years, improving on the time consuming and inefficient seasonal painting of the non-bricked areas.

“The Freedom Trail is a Boston landmark and its visibility is important for visitors,” said Walsh. “As the City enters its peak tourism season, the newly laid pathway will guide our residents and tourists to popular destinations and also save the City money in future costs associated with the annual painting of the path.”

The new thermoplastic strip is red, white and blue-gray, approximately ten inches wide, and will be laid through crosswalks and on the concrete sections of the painted trail throughout Downtown Cross-ing, Charlestown and the North End. The Walsh administration says Public Works will carry out the project at a cost of $50,000 and the bricked areas of the Freedom Trail will not be impacted by the striping process.

The two-and-a-half mile trail brings visitors to some of Freedom Trail
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Allston-Brighton Task Force gives local teens an escape through art

Austin Hall
Staff Reporter

Allston-Brighton will be a little more artsy after some organizations got together to support kids who’d rather paint than do drugs.

As a result, more than 40 businesses and organizations in Allston-Brighton will be on display on three billboards as part of the “Above the Influence” (ATI) campaign, a release states.

“It was a fun experience being able to express our ideas and creativity and to be able to impact our community for the better,” Julia Roberto, an ABSATF member said. “I hope to make a difference and promote healthy decision making.”

“This project is one of several alcohol and drug abuse prevention strategies implemented by the youth coalition. Underage drinking has been identified as a problem due in part to the vast numbers of college age students who live in the community.”

Helen Connolly, the project Manager for the ABSATF, said that this empowerment project’s goal is to do just that. “The meaning behind this project is to mobilize youth to think about the positive outcomes as a result of staying above the influence from alcohol and other drugs and to communicate these positives to other youth and adults in the community,” Connolly said.

Yet, this is just one of the ways in which they try to keep kids away from drugs.

“This fund is going to have to be fair and shared in order to compete with those buying homes in the area and not just being bought by investors, and being bought with cash. They’re being bought by investors, and they’re being bought by folks that aren’t from here. This was one way to compete with those buyers,” said Dillon.

However, despite the plan to cooperate with the community, local were upset with the inconsistencies with the community’s involvement in the creation of the benefits package.

“This is an awful lot of money coming into this community, and the community ought to decide what it’s spent on),” said task force member Bruce Houghton. “They ought to be involved and assured that.”

“All I’m saying is that there’s no accounting that I can see in most of the money that was granted for community programs in this neighborhood,” said Houghton.

The arguments didn’t end with goals of the project, when task force member Harry Mattison passed out a list of requested amendments to the Corporate Agreement, he expressed his frustration with some of the answers the BRA was providing.

“Honestly, I have no idea what any of that means, and whether that means if there’s a great project in two years it can get the money, or if the money’s not available yet,” Mattison said. “Something in writing clarifying when these funds are available would be much appreciated.”

However, Autor provided some assurance that the money allocation process is going to be public and based on the requests of the community.

“This fund is going to have a committee. It’s going to be an open process, taking, accepting proposals, deliberating on them, and making a recommendation. There’s going to be no lack of clarity on what’s going to be funded and how much it’s going to cost,” said Autor.

One issue in particular was the allotment of $80,000 to upkeep Malone Park, with Mattison angrily stating, “It doesn’t cost $80,000 to man the park.”

Again, Autor gave a promise to the task force that the leftover money wouldn’t go to waste.

“If for some reason fewer dollars are spent than were contemplated in the original package of community benefits, then there should be a process for ensuring that they get reallocated to some other pool of benefits. They don’t just go away because they didn’t get spent for no reason,” Autor said.

An agreement was reached that the future terms of the contract may not include a price-tag on how much money was to be spent on the local park, but instead a standard to be set outlining how the park should be kept.

In addition to the renovations to the Charlestown area, Harvard is also planning a project to renovate Rena Park in Allston. The meeting to discuss those improvements will be Thursday, June 12 at 6 p.m.