

Inman Square Neighborhood Association

Meeting Notes March 2017

On March 21, 2017 ISNA held its monthly meeting at S&S Restaurant with another large crowd in attendance. After our customary social time, we met for 20 minutes in “committee” groups to talk about the issues that most concern us. Here are the updates from each group afterward:

1. Social

The Social Committee has three scheduled events they’d like everyone to join in on. RSVP to any of them through the website, Facebook, or to amy@revolutioncapital.net!

***Saturday, March 25th from 5 to 8:30 Adults Game Night at Lilypad.** Cambridge Local First is providing snacks and Lilypad will have a cash bar.

***April 3rd from 7 to 9 PM** is Find Your Craft Night at Gather Here. Cambridge Local First provides food and drink.

***April 29th at 9:15 7th Annual Spring Clean Up Day.** Residents and business owners gather at points on Cambridge Street from Inman Square to Lechmere to sweep, weed, mulch and clean our neighborhoods. We will be meeting in Vellucci Plaza to represent Inman Square. East Cambridge Business Association will serve us coffee, provide equipment and provide pizzas around noon for volunteers.

There are also a few events in the works, including: 3-course dinner for the neighborhood at Puritan & Co.; musical bingo to benefit a neighborhood charity at The Rising; and a May 13th and 14th “Paint the Town Throw Down” in which we challenge our “East side” neighborhood associations (East Cambridge Planning Team and Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Association) to compete with us in a Cambridge Street art project. More details on all of these to come!

2. Climate Action

The CA team would like to make Inman Square a Climate Action Area in 2017. To do this, they are researching solar programs, energy efficiency support programs and other resources and planning an outreach campaign to get residents and businesses involved. Their emphasis is on the proven effectiveness and accessibility of simple energy conservation measures. But they have also held two workshops and met with Jessica Nahijian and are continuing to look into solar programs that would work for us as a community.

The committee plans to offer residents and businesses a chance to sign up at the April meeting. They welcome prospective committee members with expertise, but not experience is necessary to join!

3. Beautification

The Beautification Committee helped 4 Inman businesses (1369 Coffee, Ginger Exchange, Cambridge Auto Shop, and Hops ‘N Scotch) to submit a proposal to the City for a \$1,000 grant to

install flower pots in front of the businesses. The Committee had interest from several other businesses.

Beautification is also looking at some landscaping work at the side of the Urgent Care parking lot and continuing the existing tree well planter project. They will need volunteers for both. The tree well planters take about 8 hours for each structure.

4. Economic Development

The Economic Development team had some interim meetings to talk more about how to reinvigorate commercial activity in our square. They found that the City had recently done a survey, and they would like to follow up with more questions for businesses and residents on how the square's commercial spaces might best be used and supported. The Committee noted that we are set to lose another business, as Boutique Fabulous is for sale because of poor revenues.

Among ideas the Committee is already exploring are family-friendly business to build off the Montessori schools and the influx of young families, and other daytime-oriented businesses. [One commenter recommended reaching out to urban planning graduate programs at local universities].

5. Intersection

The Intersection Committee reports that the City is near a decision on the reconfiguration. The two remaining options are Bend Northside and the Roundabout (both of which were introduced by residents & Inman-area bicyclists). The City has eliminated the option to make Springfield one-way based on strong feedback from residents. We expect the Transportation Department to hold a meeting in early May to announce their reconfiguration plan [there will be an additional process after that to work out details within the broader plan].

The Committee and, they suspect, the neighborhood as a whole is split on which of the two remaining proposals is best. The City received over 700 submitted comments (an astounding number) and is still combing through them. Anyone who has an opinion that he or she has not submitted yet should do so!

The bicyclists group has requested that the City create a simulation for each of the plans, and the Intersection Committee plans to support that request. The Cyclists have also sent around a video of a roundabout from Idaho, which will be shared with ISNA members.

New Leadership Invitation!

After the Committee reports, the current organizing group explained that we would like to remain active and helpful for ISNA but feel it is important that others take on the leadership as we work toward formalizing our structure and getting recognized by the City. We encourage anyone with even a slight interest in being a Chairperson, Treasurer, Clerk or Board Member to contact us. We will help in any ways we can! A draft of some Bylaws for the new leaders to hone is already posted on the website.

Cambridge Street Bike Lane Pilot

The City is installing pop-up bike lanes on Cambridge Street between Inman Square and Quincy Street soon, and we had Becca Wolfson from the Boston Cyclists Union present the details for us. The project site was chosen because 1. This route has no existing bike lanes at present; 2. Cambridge Street has the highest bike-car crash count in the City; 3. The route is used by students to get to the high school and provides access to hospitals, university buildings and the library. The pop-up lane means that there will be very little infrastructure change. Parking will be eliminated on one side of the street to create space for a bike lane on either side protected by flex-posts. The side with parking will have the bike lane positioned between the curb and the parked cars. This project will resemble lanes currently in place in Central Square on Mass Ave and on Mass Ave in Boston from the Bridge to Back Bay.

The City will take 6 months to a year to study the impact of these lanes before coming up with a final plan. As part of this study, the City and advocates will be looking for creative solutions to parking problems, including getting more use of existing lots in off-hours (i.e. resident parking at night). The goal is to eventually connect these stretches of protected bike lanes throughout the City.

The organizers expect that the next meeting will be on April 26th but will confirm by email. For more information follow us on Facebook at @inmansquare or on the website at <http://inmanneighbors.com>.