



Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Implementation Committee

Date: December 10, 2019

Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: ACMi, Studio A, 85 Park Avenue, Arlington Heights

Minutes

Attendance: Ali Carter, Economic Development Coordinator; Janet O’Riordan, Old Schwamb Mill Board of Directors; Rob Davison, resident; Len Diggins, ACMi; Rachel Zsembery, Arlington Redevelopment Board; Jason Forney, resident; Julie Horvath, Century 21 Adams; Kristin Anderson, Forced Exposure; Pam Hallett, Housing Corporation of Arlington.

Guests: Don Seltzer, Lidia Kenig-Scher.

1. Approval of minutes of 11/5/19 meeting---No copies available for review, therefore a vote is tabled until next meeting.
2. Presentation by Aaron Greiner, Director of Culture House
“From Vacant to Vibrant: Creating Pop-up Social Infrastructure.” Social infrastructure defined as the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact.
Culture House creates pop-up social infrastructure, i.e. indoor public spaces in greater Boston. Have had successful pop ups in Boston (Allston), Cambridge (Harvard and Kendall Squares), and Somerville (Bow Market).
Impacts that a CultureHouse pop-up has on the community: remediates both the physical and social stress people experience in underactive areas, increases livability and joy in the community, reverses neighborhood stigma by developing a positive sense of place.
CultureHouse is a low-lift, high-impact way to create the conditions for strong community development. Many factors including high rent and changing commerce patterns are leaving downtowns riddled with vacancies. Vacant storefronts are bad for communities and hurt local businesses. CultureHouse activates these storefronts to revive downtown cores by creating an element of “stickiness” that gets people to come and stay in the area
CultureHouse as a model can be expanded outside of Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville. They have open-sourced their concept through the CultureHouse Manual, available on their website, that goes through the process they took to open our first pop-up.
3. Update on conversations with MBTA regarding 1389 Mass Ave---Ali has been in conversations with the MBTA’s real estate management company, Greystone Management Solutions, for several months regarding the vacant storefront at 1389 Mass Ave. The property is currently vacant but leased

and is therefore not subject to the Town's vacant storefront bylaw. They are going to put out a call for new tenants in the spring of 2020. Ali is going to schedule a meeting with them to discuss the allowance for pop-up or temporary uses in the space while they are looking for a long-term tenant. She plans on using the example of Culture House as a case study in how pop-ups can be leveraged to help property owners find quality longer-term tenants.

4. 1389 Mass Ave brainstorming---Lidia Kenig-Scher asked about the potential for artists to be involved in pop-ups. Aaron responded that they have had successful collaborations with local artists at Culture House, including an art gallery in the Out of Town Newsstand in Harvard Square. Lidia would like to leverage the artist community and Artlinks to activate the space. Rob Davison mentioned how First Thursday events could be hosted here, which have been very successful in communities throughout the country. He also mentioned that infrastructure to support cyclists along the Minuteman Bikeway, like a repair station with a pump, could serve a critical need and also draw people off the bike path into the neighborhood. Other ideas generated by the committee included a "wish wall" (e.g. "I wish I had a space to... where the public could leave ideas) on the outside of the building; general improvements to amenities for bus riders with better lighting, benches, indoor space to stay warm while waiting for the bus; window paintings in the retail space; a space to hold book clubs, community meetings, musical performances, etc.
5. Closing and next steps---Ali informed the committee that the next meeting would be on Tuesday January 14 at 6:30 pm at ACMi, and Neighborways Design would be making a presentation to the group.
6. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.