

## **Gilman Square Neighborhood Council Community Meeting**

Monday March 3, 2025

### Attendees

17 in attendance, including 4 GSNC board members

### Meeting Notes

#### **Homans Site**

- No new meeting between GSNC and the city. City staff hope to be available late March or early April.

#### **Comments by mayoral candidate Jake Wilson in response to questions by attendees (This is not a transcript)**

##### Self Introduction

- Before becoming a City Councilor, led Somerville youth soccer, a large city nonprofit
- We are a city of culture and innovation, yet decisions are slow
- Need to rebuild city workforce, 1 in 8 city jobs are vacant, but it is improving with the new contract
- Two-way communication is of primary importance: broadcasting and feedback
- Gilman Square: Want to get an RFP out for the Homans site as soon as the stormwater issue (i.e. the underground tank) is decided, interested in exploring air rights

##### North-South Transit?

- Sponsored orders on the Council and Mobility Division about this
- Goal is to connect Somerville Ave to Assembly via Gilman Square using Walnut St., Temple St., and School St with small buses that can manage the hills

##### Vision of Leadership?

- Important decisions seem like they are being deferred: Highland Ave redesign, school consolidation, Homans site, etc. I will make bold decisions and be accountable
- I will hold regular office hours, prioritize collaboration between city departments, and be receptive to expertise from the community

##### Location of possible combined Winter Hill and Brown school?

- Need a cohesive plan with a strategic approach
- Each school community wants to keep their current location
- Would consult school committees about future enrollment across schools given additional transit-oriented development to understand impact

If we lose federal funding for things like lowering the McGrath Highway, how do we recoup it?

- There would be tough decisions statewide about immediate needs
- Possibly turn to voters for a Prop 2.5 override for city initiatives if state and federal taxes decline

Safety infrastructure?

- Need to spend money on street resurfacing to enhance safety for all modes of transportation
- Continue traffic calming measures; majority want them on their street
- Work with businesses about parking goals so that we have smart parking tailored for the businesses

10 minute neighborhood? (I.e. Everything you need within a 10 minute walk.)

- Need amenities developed in Gilman Square to reduce car dependence
- City planners need to make sure developers and city projects are responsive to community needs

Safety measures for distracted driving?

- There was a deliberate shift to warnings rather than tickets to build community, may need to shift back
- Traffic camera enforcement for speed, and red light and stop sign enforcement could be necessary

Lack of street parking?

- If we charge more for permits, it could reduce street parking by those with driveways that require tandem parking

Opportunities for this stagnating area?

- Lack of amenities means having to go elsewhere for almost every errand
- We have city-owned land that is easily developable, we need to aggressively activate these parcels
- We're going to make Gilman Square Happen!

Contact Info

[Jake@Jake4Somerville.org](mailto:Jake@Jake4Somerville.org)

**Gilman T Station Accessibility**

- Only non-accessible stop on Green Line Extension
- Ideas to address until Homans site development

- Somernova shuttle
- Minibus
- MBTA bus route adjustment
- Benches for rests
- Other ideas?

### **Gilman Square Civic Advisory Committee (CAC)**

- No updates. May have had its final meeting.

### **A+ Auto Body (297 Medford St.)**

- [Link to survey](#) for community input about this affordable housing development was sent by email and is on our website. **Please respond by Monday March 10, 2025**
- Hosting event for abutters on Wednesday March 5, 2025 at the Public Library
- In due diligence period for environmental assessment, etc
- Not clear on if they would use all 7 allowed stories if they get the variance, the project would not be viable without the variance

### **G'25 Festival**

- Kickoff meeting last week
- Formalized relationship with Somerville Arts Council for mutual benefit, we are now part of the SomerStreets series
- Looking for a possible theme, one that could be playful or creative
- Will start calls for vendors and artists around late April or May

### **Western Pearl Street Reconstruction**

- [Bowman](#) contracted for work, same firm as West Broadway
- Spring review for designs

### **234-236 Pearl Street**

- No developments, looking at summertime sale

### **Piano Building (343 Medford St.)**

- Dinner restaurants are interested, because people walk further for dinner
- Potential breakfast and lunch restaurants have backed out due to lack of quick pick-up parking
- Questions around foot traffic through square given T entrances leading people away from square and lack of entrance at Medford and Pearl St
- Summer activation faced same issues, Nibble Kitchen restaurateurs were unwilling to launch a popup on the Homans site without foot traffic data

- Piano Building space is just under 5K sqft
- Can also split the space to host two businesses instead of just one

### **GSNC Business Development Committee**

- GSNC is reviving a committee that had formed before Covid
- Meet with owners of potential project sites in order to encourage business activity
- Local real estate brokers may be able to provide connections
- Contact Christine via [board@gilmansquarenc.org](mailto:board@gilmansquarenc.org) with ideas or to get involved!

### **Winter Hill Community Innovation School**

- Next meeting of the [School Construction Advisory Group \(CAG\)](#) will be on Thursday March 6, 2025

### **Somerville Y (101 Highland Ave.)**

- No updates

### **Social Event**

- Something later in March

**Next GSNC Community Meeting Monday April 7, 2025, 6:30pm-8pm (or less)**