

ESNA – February 11, 2019 – Winter Meeting Notes

State Rep. Aaron Michelwitz – Chairman of House Ways and Means Committee

- House Ways and Means Committee is responsible for crafting and enacting the state's budget of \$43 billion. Aaron spoke about some of the sectors in which the state will be investing: housing, homelessness, education, and the transportation infrastructure.
 - Created a new formula for funding K-12 public schools. Past formula dates back to 1993. It didn't take into account health care. It allows for more Chapter 70 funding. Boston won't see as much of this funding because we have a good property tax base.
 - Working on raising revenue to fund transportation infrastructure work. Considering a tax on gas (only raised \$.03 in 30 years), or TNC fees (Transportation Network Company – rideshare companies)
- Questions/Concerns raised to Aaron:
 - Proposed tax of 2% on all properties sales over \$2 million. Is that being made into a constitutional amendment? Aaron had not heard anything about that.
 - Proper treatment center for drug abusers. Shattuck in JP? Bridge in Quincy?
 - Concern about shortage of police officers in Boston. Veteran's preference may be barring others from going for these jobs.
- He will be holding a coffee in Spring, ~early April. He does his own social media, so you can reach out to him that way as well.
- Legislative Update and contact details below.





Legislative Update

- In 2018, Representative Michlewitz spearheaded enacting statewide legislation that taxes and regulates Short-Term Rentals such as Airbnb. The law requires that rentals meet consumer protection and public safety standards and will take the pressure off the housing market that short-term rentals cause, by diverting tax revenue to affordable housing programs.
- In February of 2019, Representative Michlewitz was named the House Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, which is responsible for crafting and enacting the State's \$43 billion annual budget.
- This past July, Representative Michlewitz was able to help ensure historic levels of investments in programs directed at education, housing & homelessness, and family planning, and increased the State's contribution into the Community Preservation Act.
- The budget also includes first in the nation language that will allow the Commonwealth to directly negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to obtain drug price rebates for MassHealth, saving the State over \$30 million annually.

Connect with Aaron

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Also in this year's budget, Representative Michlewitz was able to secure much needed funding for local programs across the 3rd Suffolk District.

Highlights Include:

North End

- \$200,000 for the North End Music & Performing Arts Center to help with capital needs;
- \$250,000 for Christopher Columbus Park to assist with climate resiliency improvements;
- \$50,000 for the Nazzaro Community Center to help make improvements to its programming and facilities;

Chinatown

- \$25,000 to repair and improve welcome signs around Chinatown;
- \$50,000 to the Chinese Historical Society for programming needs;
- \$100,000 to the Asian American Women's Political Initiative for programming needs;

South End

- \$250,000 to the Ellis Memorial Center to make needed capital improvements;
- \$200,000 to Peters Park to help improve its facilities;
- \$40,000 to South End Soccer to help purchase new equipment for the players;

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Rear Deck Variance – 37 Dwight Street

- Norberto Leon, the architect for 37 Dwight Street, presented the plan for the rear deck on the 4th floor. (Floor above parlor)
- He clarified that the new deck would be the same dimensions as the deck one floor below it. It will extend 19'2" in width and at most 6' in depth from the current back wall. The deck will be curved, so the depth will decrease to 4'6" on either side. It will also be attached to the brick in the same fashion as the deck below.
- Question raised about whether the renovations require a ground water recharge system.
- Suggestion to reduce the impact of the A/C condensers both from a visual and sound perspective.

- Suggestion to get a support letter from direct abutters
- Roof Deck only needs to be cleared by Landmarks, does not need a variance.

Other Business

- Peters Park – garbage trucks are still driving over the areas with newly-planted grass. Faisa Sharif will notify Public Works.
- Berkeley Gardens – lottery will take place in early spring. It doesn't look like many spots opening up.
- Street Sweeping --- Faisa Sharif notified everyone that the street sweeping weeks will be changing on some of the streets. The plan is to sweep the odd-numbered side of the streets on odd weeks (1st, 3rd, 5th) and the even-numbered side of the streets on even weeks.

**Next ESNA meeting/social is Tuesday, April 14th, 7pm
Location: TBD**