

# Harvard Square Advisory Committee

## February 15, 2023 - Draft Meeting Notes

### **Members In Attendance:**

Alexandra Offiong, Frank Kramer, John DiGiovanni, Kari Kuelzer, Lauren Curry, Nicola Williams, Steven Ng, Allison Crosbie, Jemel Derbali, Matthew Simitis, Sara Li

### **Members Absent:**

### **Staff In Attendance:**

Daniel Messplay

### **Staff Absent:**

Daniel Wolf, Mason Wells

### **Notes**

- **Project Review & Discussion – 1380 Mass Ave (Blank Street Coffee)**
  - The Applicant gave a presentation on the history of the company and then presented plans for the interior layout as well as the building exterior and signage. The Applicant would be installing one exterior wall sign and one blade sign; no changes are proposed to the façade or colors.
  - HSAC Committee members were generally supportive of the proposal, noting that the business will be filling a need in the neighborhood.
  - Committee members asked about the product offering. In addition to coffee, they will offer matcha, teas, and hot chocolates, as well as standard pastries, scones, rosemary bread, tomato and cheese focaccia, and banana bread.
  - Committee members expressed concern about queuing given the high-traffic location. The Applicant stated there will be two POS systems to move through lines quicker as well as an app for customers to order ahead.
  - Committee members asked about exterior signage and the operability of the large windows. The Applicant explained that the windows will remain inoperable to prevent insects from entering the restaurant. New signage will replace what was there previously as to not create more penetrations in the façade.
  - Committee members encouraged the Applicant to consider extending their planned hours of operation from 4pm to 7pm and incorporate outdoor seating to activate the public realm.
  - Some Committee members expressed concern about trash control and encouraged the applicant to coordinate with the landlord and other building occupants to more effectively manage service needs for the business.
  - Committee members asked about ADA compliant bathrooms. The Applicant confirmed that one bathroom will be 100% compliant.

- Committee members asked the Applicant to clarify the ownership model. The Applicant stated that all locations are under central ownership as opposed to a franchise model.
- The Committee voted to support the Application and encourage them to apply for longer hours at licensing and scale back as they see appropriate. And encourage them to be open a full twelve months before adjusting. Also support appropriate pathways for outdoor seating. Emphasize issues about trash control and coordination with landlord.
  - All voting yes, one abstain.
- **General Business**
  - Committee Procedure for Documenting Minutes
    - The Committee discussed procedures for documenting meeting minutes in order to better record discussions had by the Committee, especially those that do not pertain to items within the direct purview of the group (written recommendations to Planning Board or BZA).
    - The Committee generally agreed that keeping a written record of meeting discussions would be helpful, especially when Committee Members are absent.
    - Some Committee members stated meeting minutes should not replace Planning Board reports but did express concerns about overburdening staff.
    - Committee Members agreed that City staff should prepare a meeting summary to be reviewed by members via email through the Chair.
    - There was support from the members to strengthen the role of the Chair, tasking them with running meetings, receiving previews of meeting notes and reports, and interacting with commentary from the rest of the Committee.