

Notice of Public Meeting

Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, Board of Directors
October 14, 2025, 5:30PM – 7:30PM

This meeting will be held in a hybrid format. There will be in-person attendance at

MassDOT District 6

First Floor Conference Room
185 Kneeland Street
Boston, MA 02111

Board In Person: Hilina Ajakaiye, Matt Conti, Kathryn Friedman, Rory Harrington, Jenny Harding, Kirsten Hoffman, Jessica Hughes, Rebecca Lee, Midori Morikawa, Susanne Lavoie, Jennifer Fang, Conan Harris

Board on Zoom: Luz Arregoces, Conor Finley, Tom O'Brien, Linda See, Michael Bonetti

Board not present: Micheal Carragher, Chris Loh, Sayed Saleh

Greenway Staff In Person: Chris Cook, Caleb Friday, Brian Gibbons, Bwiza Kironyo, Audrey Lopez, Alex Rogers, Robert Stigberg, Michael Dockray

Greenway On Zoom: David Dalena

Public Attendance in person: Anita Yip

Open session

1. **Hilina Ajakaiye called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2025 meeting of the Board of Directors. Upon a motion made by Rebecca Lee and seconded by Matt Conti, the minutes were unanimously approved.**
2. Caleb Friday, Director of Finance and Administration, reported that although the initial FY 2026 budget projection showed a slight deficit, the team expects to present a balanced budget for the December Board Meeting. Friday noted that revenue reductions from major grant makers remain the largest challenges. Expenses will increase due to cost-of-living adjustments and benefits; no new staff positions are being added.

Eileen Ong, Director of Programs and Outreach, shared that earned income is being forecast conservatively—kept flat due to this year's lower earnings and uncertainties around the 2026 season. Ong added that marketing initiatives, such as partnering with agencies like LEGO, have helped offset other unanticipated revenue declines.

Chris Cook, Executive Director, noted that this is *not an aspirational budget* and emphasized alignment with anticipated major 2026 events including SailBoston, Mass250, City2050, and other tall ship programming opportunities. However, FIFA's

reduced activation footprint due to budget constraints limits expected earned revenue and adds unpredictability to the operating plan.

Ajakaiye acknowledged the anticipated budget adjustments, and Rebecca Lee raised concerns around horticulture damage expected during high-traffic event periods.

Friday emphasized that large recurring events require the organization to keep pace with rising maintenance and operational costs. Susanne Lavoie inquired about the impact these types of events have had on other cities. Cook explained that SailBoston activities tend to be concentrated in predetermined areas such as the waterfront. The impact of FIFA is unknown because the location of the fan festival has not been determined.

Quarterly reforecasting will continue throughout 2026 to stay responsive to revenue and event-related fluctuations.

3. Lee discussed the current work of the Nominating Committee.

Upon a motion made by Lee and seconded by Jenny Harding, Samira Ahmadi was appointed to the Rose Kennedy Greenway seat for an initial three-year board term beginning January 1, 2026, ending December 31, 2028 by unanimous vote.

Lee also noted that several board members will roll off on December 31, 2025, including Herself, Conor Finley and Linda See. The Nominating Committee will bring forward successor nominations at the next meeting. A new Nominating Committee Chair will also need to be appointed.

4. Alex Rogers Pittman, Director of Development, presented the Development Committee Update. The board discussed the possibility of moving the location of the 2026 Gala to the new South Station Tower. The board requested direct cost details and contract terms if discussions of this location go forward with Hines. A final decision on location will be made before the December meeting. Costs for tents, overnight security, and lawn protection were reviewed. Jessica Hughes inquired about tent logistics.

Rogers Pittman highlighted a capital proposal to restore eight shade trees previously removed from Dewey Square. Brian Gibbons, Director of Horticulture explained the project restores original tree pits while increasing species diversity and leveraging existing underground conduit for irrigation.

Rogers Pittman reported that Meet Boston will no longer exclusively sponsor the Greenway carousel or Playway family programming. This opens valuable new branding opportunities for 2026. She encouraged the board to share corporate recommendations for sponsorship levels between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

5. Matt Conti, Chair of the Investment Committee, reported that the endowment and reserves total \$22.1 million, with approximately 15% growth this year and strong three-year performance. After transitioning to a lower-cost advisor, returns remain aligned with benchmarks while supporting the organization's green portfolio strategy.

The committee outlined proposed updates to the Investment Policy Statement, particularly regarding reserve fund management. Reserves—distinct from the endowment and not subject to the 4% draw—will move to a 50/50 equity–fixed income allocation, with liquidity available within 2–5 business days. This provides faster access and reduces risk.

The updated policy will be voted on by the Investment Committee at its next meeting and presented to the full board in December.

6. Eileen Ong reported that the Rowes Wharf Drinkery location is up for renewal in October 2026. The Greenway will issue a competitive RFP for the location. Trillium is expected to rebid.

Brand activations grew significantly in 2025. The team will promote the Greenway as a high-visibility platform for 2026 events.

The Greenway marketing video, featuring community voices and historical footage, is underway and will be released in early 2026.

Ong highlighted upcoming winter activities including the installation of large trumpet flowers at Dewey Square in partnership with the Downtown Business Alliance and a seasonal ferris wheel sponsored by Meet Boston.

7. Audrey Lopez, Director of Public Art, shared program updates. The *Near and Far* Project was discussed in detail. Lee inquired on the project timeline. Cook shared that a go/no-go decision must be made by Fall 2025

Lee inquired about the mural lighting project. Lopez shared that infrastructure will be installed by November 2025, enabling nighttime illumination by Spring 2026 and projection mapping beginning winter 2026–27.

Lavoie asked whether tree growth would block mural visibility. Cook explained that updated lighting and path improvements will help, while Gibbons noted that pruning strategies are being evaluated.

8. Cook provided updates on ongoing capital and community initiatives:

- Lighting and Pathways: Major upgrades remain on schedule.
- Armenian Heritage Park: Agreement expected for board approval in December 2025.
- Chinatown Vent Stack Project: Construction may start in 2025 pending MassDOT

confirmation; displacement impacts and community coordination needs are significant. •
Chinatown Mural: MFA scrim discussions continue; Greenway may need to provide administrative support.

- MassDOT & Community Engagement: Emphasis on transparent communication and improved coordination across city/state partners.
- Reggie Wong Park: A 15-year lease has been secured, enabling long-term stewardship and protection. Coordination with BCNC is ongoing.
- City of Boston Trust / Greenway Fund: The 10-year fund is sunsetting; discussions are underway about continuation to sustain critical funding.
- Grant & Signage: Hilina Ajakaiye noted pending grant opportunities, including wayfinding improvements planned for early 2025.
- DOT Lease: Renewal discussions for the June 2027 MassDOT lease will include clarifying responsibilities and removing outdated obligations.

9. There were no questions from the public.

10. Upon a motion made by Jessica Hughes and seconded by Matt Conti, the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm.