

Feeney drops in from the cold

By Jessica M. Smith

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With almost one-third of the Boston City Council at the West Roxbury Pub last week, the Ward 20 Democrats learned what matters most to newly elected City Council President Maureen Feeney of Dorchester.

A member of the Ward 16 Democrats, Feeney was curious about the longevity of those who braved a cold night to hear her speak.

“How many people have been doing this for 20 years?” asked Feeney of the largely veteran audience. She added that government relies on the leadership of civic associations.

“It speaks to the vitality of the city,” said Feeney, who said that liveliness extended to those who serve alongside her.

“I can’t imagine being part of a better team,” said Feeney of her colleagues on the city council.

Feeney, who has represented Dorchester since 1993, was elected by her peers this January to the council’s top post. She was joined in one of Boston’s most active political wards by District 5 Councilor Rob Consalvo, District 6 City Councilor John Tobin and At-Large City Councilor Sam Yoon. At-Large Councilor Michael Flaherty, the council’s past president, was scheduled to attend, but canceled at the last minute due to a family emergency.

After offering praise for the 13-member council, Feeney turned to a more serious subject: the economy of Boston.

“We are the economic engine for the state. The real problem is everyone [in state government] perceives that [Boston] gets everything,” said Feeney, who added that she is concerned about the decreasing availability of revenue.

The economy, according to Feeney, is only part of the picture. Like her colleagues, she also considers public safety to be of primary importance. Speaking to the issue of home break-ins, which has recently affected West Roxbury and Roslindale, Feeney said she believes that every neighborhood has issues.

“There’s no ‘us’ and ‘them.’ It’s just us,” said Feeney of crime in Boston.

For Consalvo, his legislative priorities include putting more police officers on the street, stemming gang and drug activity, and focusing on youth issues such as education.

As far as Consalvo’s commitments to fighting crime are concerned, he also took the opportunity to tell the Ward 20 committee about his efforts to bring new anti-crime technology called ShotSpotter to

the city. ShotSpotter, which is acoustic gunshot technology, will tell police when shots have been fired. It is unlikely that it will see the Parkway given the relatively low amount of gunfire that takes place there, but Consalvo said that's something to be grateful about.

"Thankfully Ward 20 is not facing as much [gunfire] as other parts of the city," said Consalvo. In Feeney's district, the story is different.

"We don't have kids [carrying guns] because they know they can get arrested. We have community guns," said Feeney as she described the weapons that are put in communal locations.

Tobin, who graduated from Catholic Memorial High School with Consalvo, echoed his colleague's sentiments

"We're losing kids in the city. We're not paying attention to young people," said Tobin, adding that a "not in my backyard" attitude isn't working.

"Wherever [violence occurs], act like it happened the next street over from you," cautioned Tobin, who represents West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for Consalvo to announce his intention to run for re-election this fall. Consalvo, whose district includes Roslindale, Hyde Park and Mattapan, said he hoped members of the ward would sign his re-election papers.

"I'm obviously running for re-election. This is a full-time job for me and I love being in public service," said Consalvo, who was first elected in 2002.

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