

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council December 18, 2012 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Ben Day, Red Burrows, Michael Reiskind, Erin Colgan-Snyder, Oliver DeLeon, Ara Reyes, Martha Rodriguez, Ken Sazama, Hyun Shin, Jesse White, Jeffrey Wiesner, and Joseph Wight.

Community Attendance: Gerry Wright, Ashley Brooks, Michelle Medeiros, Dana Gonsalves, Ayan Hassan, Naomi Karp, Jen Rogers, Cam Wilson, Natalie VanLandingham, Michael Silverman, Vanessa Snow, Sarah Freeman, Nina Brown (Arnold Arboretum Conservancy), Ned Friedman (Arnold Arboretum), and Michael Baker (Rep. Jeffrey Sánchez's office).

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm by Ben Day at the First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain.

I. JPNC Member Introductions: Members introduced themselves and audience members introduced themselves.

II. Introductions of Potential New Council Members: Several residents in the audience were interested in filling one of the five vacancies on the JP Neighborhood Council and introduced themselves. The following spoke about themselves, the neighborhood and the JP Neighborhood Council: Ayan Hassan, Natalie VanLandingham, and

Ashley Brooks.

III. Announcements:

- Three Kings Day Celebration on Friday, January 4 at 3:00pm at the Connolly Branch Library.

- Local JP author Susan Naimark discusses her book "The Education of a White Parent" on Monday, January 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Connolly Branch Library.

- Second of three meetings on renovations to the JP Branch Library. It will be on Thursday, January 10 at 6pm at the JP Branch, 12 Sedgwick Street.

IV. Approval of November minutes: Motion by Ken Sazama to approve the November 2012 minutes. Seconded

by Red Burrows. Passed 12-0-0. The September minutes will be presented at the next meeting.

V. Arnold Arboretum: Ned Friedman from the Arnold Arboretum spoke about the Arnold Arboretum, its history, its programs and its connections to the community. The Arnold Arboretum is 281 acres with 15,000 plants (tagged with GPS labels) in 2,200 species. There are 70 staff people and the entire budget comes from endowments and gifts. It is known for Lilac Sunday, but its crabapple collection is world class. The Arboretum was founded by Harvard in 1872 from the 1840's donation of land from Benjamin Bussey and the 1868 will of James Arnold of New Bedford. In 1882, Harvard donated all their land to the City of Boston with a lease back to Harvard of 1000 years at \$1.00 per year, renewable - once - in 2882. Harvard is responsible for the plants and Boston is responsible for the policing, roads and walls. Because Boston is responsible, Dr. Friedman urged all folks who complain about dogs off leash at the Arboretum to please call 911, not the Arboretum.

The Arnold Arboretum attracts 250,000 visitors a year. The new building on Weld Hill opened in 2011 with 43,000 sq. ft., allowing more public communication. In summer 2012, tours in twelve different languages were given during International Month. The Arboretum has apps for smart phones and iPads and field notebooks are available to visitors. They have started "Tree Mobs", where an expert pops up at one plant, bush or tree and just starts to talk. They have worked with the Boston Preservation Alliance to work on the preservation of the Lewis Dawson farmhouse at 1300 Centre Street, hoping to rehabilitate it and open it up as community space. The Bussey Brook Meadow, former MBTA and Harvard land, is being improved as part of a movement to protect biodiversity. They are working to repair the walls along South Street. There is a new program in the nearby BTU School on Walk Hill Street run by the Arnold Arboretum Committee. While the Arnold Arboretum is in the Jamaica Plain and Roslindale neighborhoods, it draws a lot of nearby residents from West Roxbury and Brookline. Joining with a yearly membership in the Arnold Arboretum is very important to the success of the Arboretum.

Nina Brown from the Arnold Arboretum Conservancy spoke about the South Street/Bussey Brook Meadow area, where they are trying to improve the land. The stone walls are being repaired: 1000 linear feet last year and 600 feet this year. Grants may be coming. She also mentioned the Magnificent Maples event on April 21. Ms. Brown said

that she loves the work Ed Friedman is doing, because public access is really important to him.

VI. Committee Reports:

a. Parks & Open Space: *No report.*

b. Zoning: Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on December 6. There were one item that was brought to the JPNC Executive Committee: 6-8 Cheshire Street, a request by Riva Development to demolish the existing house and build a new 2-family dwelling. The Executive Committee confirmed the Zoning Committee recommendation for approval

with the proviso that a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) be finalized in writing with the neighbors. The following three recommendations do need a vote of the JPNC: 1) 64 Moraine Street, a request by Peter & Susanne Steiger to renovate the 2-family dwelling by adding a rear dormer and decks, and add the attic to the living space. The Committee recommends approval. Motion by Red Burrows to recommend approval of the request on 64 Moraine Street. Seconded by Ken Sazama. Passed 12-0-0. 2) 21 Lamartine Street, a request by Ben Uyeda to build a new 3-family dwelling. While the neighbors were comfortable with the zoning variances and parking issues, the neighbors to the rear were very unhappy with the extremely modern design. The Committee recommends approval. Motion by Red Burrows to recommend approval of the request on 21 Lamartine Street. Seconded by Ken Sazama. Passed 10-0-2. 3) 16 Estrella Street, a request by Vasilis Moutsouris to allow a change from indoor parking to indoor and outdoor parking, and indoor and outdoor storage. This is a request to legalize a long-standing landscaping business at this site. Many neighbors were in opposition because of noise and chemicals at the location. The Committee recommended approval with three provisos: that use extend to this applicant only; that use expire on 12/31/13; that plans with particular attention to screening and buffering be submitted to the BRA for design review. Motion by Red Burrows to recommend approval of the request with provisos on 16 Estrella Street. Seconded by Ken Sazama. Passed 8-0-4.

The next meeting of the Zoning Committee will be Thursday, December 20 at Farnsworth House, 90 South Street, at 7:00pm.

c. Public Service: Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on December 4 at the State Laboratories on South Street. On the agenda was a request of Simpli Bar & Bites at 3840 Washington Street in Forest Hills for a 7-day all-alcohol license. This will be a new establishment with the hours of 5:30am to 1:00am, in a new building being built across from the Harvest Coop Market. The proposed manager/owner, Kevin Walker, is purchasing a license from another establishment in Roslindale. While it is an unusual three-part concept, neighbors were comfortable with a combined café/restaurant/lounge at this location. There was some discussion about forbidding music on the outside patios, but the Committee did not support that proposal because it was away from neighbors except for the MBTA rail line. Motion by Ken Sazama to recommend approval of the request of Beara Pub, Inc., doing business as “Maggie Mae’s”, at 635-637 Hyde Park Avenue in Roslindale for a transfer of its Common Victualler Seven-Day All-Alcoholic Beverages License to Craft Café, LLC, doing business as “Simpli Bar & Bites”, at 3840 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain, with a 1:00am closing, with Kevin R. Walker as manager, with outdoor patios with 28 seats on private land, with the provisos that no alcohol be served before 11:00am on weekdays and no alcohol be served before 10:00am on weekends. Also to recommend an Entertainment License for recorded music and two TVs. Seconded by Red Burrows. Passed 9-0-3.

The next meeting of the Public Service Committee will be Tuesday, January 8 at the State Laboratories at 305 South Street at 7:00pm. On the agenda will be a presentation from the Public Works Department about new hours for street cleaning in Jamaica Plain.

d. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Joseph Wright reported on the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s (BRA) South Huntington Avenue Corridor Planning Study meeting. The study area extends from Perkins Street to Huntington Avenue. the process will be at least three months long, and they will be coming out with guidelines only - not changing the underlying zoning. The emotional comments mainly related to existing development proposals for 161 So. Huntington and 105A So. Huntington, and there were few planning comments. Jesse White encouraged everyone to contact the BRA about the South Huntington Avenue Corridor. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 9. Norbert School - Ben Day reported that the BRA has not approved any changes at the Blessed Sacrament site relating to the Norbert School. They may be asking for some affordable housing
Parcel U - Joseph Wight reported that the MBTA received two bids for this Forest Hills parcel. Both fall within the Forest Hills Planning Initiative guidelines of 50% affordable units. They are very similar: both have some

commercial and mainly residential space.

e. Ad-Hoc Racial Justice Committee: Ben Day reported that the Committee had one meeting. The main focus is to change the institutional and structural inequities of the JPNC. They are picking volunteers to work individually with each Committee of the JPNC.

f. Casey Arborway Design Advisory Group (DAG): There was a MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) public meeting on the project on Thursday, December 13. About 100 people attended. Written comments are due before January 8, 2013. The next DAG meeting date is unknown.

g. Jackson Square Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC): Ara Reyes reported that there were no September or October meetings because of conflicts for John Fitzgerald, the BRA planner. At the November 28 meeting, there were requests by some small business owners about leasing commercial space. The possibility of a Spanish grocery store made the bodega owners unhappy. Higher rents (\$35-\$45/sq. ft.) may set a bad precedent and change the mix of JP businesses.

The hiring practices on the 225 Centre construction project may affect the whole project. The issue is whether the Minority Business hiring is correct, or whether there has been double counting. There should be a joint JPNC and Roxbury Neighborhood Council meeting on the issue in early 2013. There was a question on what other retail uses could be at 225 Centre Street. Martha Rodriguez said that some folks may be happy with a new market, such as

Compadres Market, at 225 Centre.

Building K may be starting construction soon, It will be developed by the JP Neighborhood Development

Corporation along Amory Avenue and be 100% affordable rental housing. It is planned for a Fall 2014 opening.

VII. New Business/Old Business:

Ben Day said that some members have brought up the possibility of the JPNC engaging in some legal action on the 161 So. Huntington Avenue project and may go into Executive Session to discuss strategy. If so, the JPNC will keep minutes of the Executive Session , but not release them until after the litigation would not be affected. Motion by Red Burrows to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy on a legal matter relating to the 161 So. Huntington Avenue project, and to engage Jeffrey Wiesner of Stern, Shapiro, Weissberg and Garin as counsel representing the JP Neighborhood Council in this matter. Seconded by Ara Reyes. Passed 9-1-2 by roll call vote as follows:

Red Burrows - Aye	Erin Colgan-Snyder - Nay	Ben Day - Aye
Oliver DeLeon - Abstain	Michael Reiskind - Aye	Ara Reyes - Aye
	Martha Rodriguez - Aye	Ken Sazama - Aye Hyun
Shin - Aye		Jesse White - Abstain Jeffrey
Wiesner - Aye	Joseph Wight - Aye	

Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 8:46pm.

The JP Neighborhood Council returned from Executive Session at 9:37pm.

There was a motion by Red Burrows that the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council commence litigation to appeal the ruling of the Zoning Board of Appeal on 161 So. Huntington Avenue. Seconded by Ara Reyes.

Passed 8-0-0(4 absent).

Meeting was adjourned at 9:38pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, January 29 at 7:00PM, place TBA.

Next Executive Committee meeting: Wednesday, January 23 at 6:30PM, JP Licks, 659 Centre Street