

## **Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**

### **March 26, 2019 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Kevin Rainsford, Carmel Levy, Michael Reiskind, Vicky Arroyo, David Baron, Robin Cheung, Max Glikman, Kevin Leary, Bruce Marks, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

**Other attendees:** Sarah Freeman, Celeste Walker, Dana Gonsalves, Dottie Farrell, Louise Robbins, Pat Feeley, Tom Kieffer, Ethan Smith (Office of State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz), Nika Elugardo (State Representative), Will Poff-Webster (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Matt O'Malley (City Councillor), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm by Kevin Rainsford at Farnsworth House.

**1. Introductions:** Council members introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of February minutes:** Motion by David Baron to approve the February 26, 2019 minutes. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 8-0-3 (2 came late).

**3. Announcements:**

- There will be a celebration of Frederick Law Olmsted's 197th birthday on Thursday, April 25 starting at 7:00pm at The First Church in Jamaica Plain, Centre and Eliot Streets. Organized by Olmsted 2022.

- On Monday, April 1, there will be a meeting on the proposal by Giving Tree Health Center to open a recreational marijuana dispensary in Jamaica Plain. It is organized by the Jamaica Pond Association and starts at 7:00pm at the First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, 633 Centre Street.

- There will be a community meeting on plans for replacing the Egleston Square Engine 42 Fire Station on Wednesday, April 3 at 6:00pm at 125 Amory Street.

- Wake Up The Earth will be on Saturday, May 4 at the area near Stony Brook station.

- The second annual fundraising evening in Jamaica Plain to support Mary Mulvey Jacobson's Families in Need will be on Saturday, March 30 starting at 8:00pm at Costello's Tavern, 723 Centre Street.

- The annual Jamaica Pond Trout Stocking Event will be on Thursday, April 25 from 10:00am to 12noon. It is organized by MassWildlife.

**4. City Councillor Matt O'Malley:** City Councillor Matt O'Malley started by introducing his Jamaica Plain liaison, Will Poff-Webster. Councillor O'Malley chairs the Committee on Environment, Sustainability, and Parks and has advanced three Initiatives over the last year: 1) The Gas Leaks Bill was passed. Boston's ordinance was the first in the state which spurred on the State Bill, but it had a split legal decision. 2) Community Choice Energy (CCE); this is the bulk purchase of energy to enable more renewable energy to be used at no added cost. There will be a public awareness campaign to start, then on to a working group and a public education campaign, leading to negotiating with the suppliers and then implementation. Customers can opt out if they choose. Boston now uses 13% renewable energy, while Newton uses between 40% and 60%, with their rate lower than the default rate. 3) The Plastic Bag Ordinance was a two-year process that produced tangible results. There are now fewer single-use plastic bags in the trash. Newer initiatives he is working on are: 1) Net Zero Carbon initiative for new construction. 70.4% of carbon emissions come from buildings. We can lower our emissions greatly by improving building. Lexington has an ordinance that all new buildings must be Net Zero Carbon. Its new Hastings Elementary School will actually produce more energy than it uses, saving the town \$400,000 per year. Kyle Smith asked whether this data on Net Zero Carbon can be shared with the Housing & Development Committee to help the Committee when talking to developers about their carbon footprint. 2) Vacancy Fee Ordinance - vacancies in business blocks affect nearby businesses, reducing revenue up to 25%. 3) Councillor O'Malley also chairs the Committee on Healthy Women, Families, and Communities. Black women are 25% more likely to die in childbirth than other women. This is unconscionable. 4) Micro-Mobility - the Transportation Department will start to develop regulations for the use of electric scooters in Boston. These will be good for certain neighborhoods that are "transit deserts". 5) Pedestrian Safety - West Roxbury has to go on a "traffic lane diet". 6) Curbside Composting - China has been turning back and refusing to accept some recycling products. Recycling is not as valuable a commodity. Boston's tipping fee (cost for garbage going to a landfill) is \$85-\$90/ton. When Boston started recycling, the City received \$5/ton; now it costs the City \$15-20/ton. If the City gets to recycle its compostable garbage, it will reduce the weight of trash going to landfill. Boston's rate of recycling is lower than other cities.

Questions from members were: Kyle Smith asked what needs to be done so that Plan:JP/Rox can move forward. It is moribund without the zoning piece and without the traffic piece. There are fewer 9-unit projects being proposed.

Councillor O'Malley thinks it is a good plan and it can be implemented. He will work on implementing the zoning regulations. Carmel Levy asked whether the raising of MBTA fares will affect transportation in the southwest section of the City. Commuter rail fares of \$6.00 a ride are unfair to Hyde Park and West Roxbury riders. We need better, more reliable service. Kyle Smith thought that improving bus routes works well, especially the dedicated bus lane on Washington Street. Should there be a Boston representative on the MBTA decision-making body? Robin Cheung said that in Washington, DC, electric scooters are chaotic, like the Wild West. The micro-mobility resolution that was passed asks

the Transportation Commissioner to come up with guidelines such as pick-up and drop-off locations, geo-fencing to restrict use in certain areas, and helmets.

Robin Cheung talked about the Mildred Hailey Apartments. They have a great tenants organization led by Wendy Polanco. The new rehabilitation project will be a very expensive and long process. Councilor O'Malley said that the Hot Dog Nights will continue. They will be on Wednesdays and he and Rep. Elugardo are contributing hamburgers, too. A new playground is going to be built next to Martha Eliot Health Center. Priscilla Yang talked about the Fix-It Clinics and said that there needs to be legislation for a "right to repair" one's personal electronics. Trevor Wissink-Adams said that there is a dangerous pedestrian crossing which needs improvement at Paul Gore Street. Councilor O'Malley said that he stole an idea from his predecessor, John Tobin, and has distributed "Slow Down, Boston" signs in his district. There was a question on the proposal to allow additional dwelling units (ADU) city-wide. How has the pilot worked in Jamaica Plain? Almost no new ADU were added, because of code and permitting issues. Councilor O'Malley said that September 1, 2019 is the deadline for registering for AirBnB and other short-term rentals. He wondered whether it will lead to an overabundance of lodging house licenses.

**5. Old Business:** Kevin Rainsford updated the Council regarding the official bylaws letter sent to Kevin Leary about his absences. Mr. Leary was in attendance and said that he would like to stay on the JP Neighborhood Council and will not be absent going forward. Motion by David Baron that Kevin Leary remain a member of the JP Neighborhood Council and the JPNC Zoning Committee. Seconded by Kyle Smith. Passed 10-1-1 (1 came late). Robin Cheung would like to see the bylaws changed to make it an automatic forfeiture of a seat when a member reaches the number of absences specified. David Baron offered that a bylaws committee has been set up in the past and might work well on this issue. Motion by Max Glikman to create an Ad Hoc Bylaws Modification Committee. Seconded by Carmel Levy. The Committee is to review all JPNC bylaws and come up with recommended changes. The Committee will have three months to complete its work and report at the June 2019 JPNC meeting. Passed 11-0-1 (1 came late). Volunteering for the Committee were David Baron, Max Glikman, Robin Cheung, and Michael Reiskind. Kyle Smith reminded folks that the Outreach Task Force, established in June 2018, needs to report to the Council. He asked that they also report at the June 2019 JPNC meeting.

## **6. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**6.1. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Carolyn Royce reported that the H&DC met on March 19 and two issues were discussed. 1) Pine Street Inn gave an informational presentation on their proposal for a new development - with The Community Builders - at 3368 Washington Street for 225 units of housing, with one wing of 140 units for supportive housing. There will also be space for support staff and maintenance. The cost will be both publicly and privately funded, with a reserve fund for the support staff. The Pine Street Inn has started a capital funding campaign. The units are small, almost micro-units, with shared areas such as cooking areas. A studio unit is around 310 to 330 sq. ft. Comments were generally supportive, with most questions related to the development becoming less carbon dependent. 2) The Shattuck campus planning process has scheduled only one more public meeting. It will be on Tuesday, April 30. There are programs for addictions and supportive housing proposed, but what else could go on the site? Health Resources in Action (HRIA), the consultant leading the planning process, says it is open to new ideas and different uses for the Shattuck campus. The next Community Advisory Board meeting will be on April 2. The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, April 16 at 7:00pm at the Bowditch School.

**6.2. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on March 6 and March 20 and four requests were considered. During the transition at the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, protection for the community process has been lost; all four requests went before the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) before the JPNC meeting, so no votes are needed. All requests went to the Executive Committee for a vote: 1) 3231 Washington Street, a request by Matt Javitch for a change of occupancy from two to four residential units; renovations of existing triple-decker including kitchen, baths, building systems; existing siding to be painted or replaced and sprinkler system to be installed. Discussion centered on density and traffic and parking. There was some opposition. The recommendation of the ZC and Executive Committee was to approve with the proviso that open space next to building be landscaped or fenced to prevent off-street parking. 2) 16R Robeson Street, a request by Ritta Horsley to construct a new single-family house with roof deck above two-car garage on existing 5,730 square foot vacant lot. Two off-street parking spaces to be accessed through 16 Robeson Street driveway. The parcel is actually on both Robeson Street and Rocky Nook Terrace. This proposal was highly contentious and both sides spoke. Those opposing this request were passionate, mainly because the adjoining parcel (14 Robeson Street) is owned by City Realty and also has a garage on Rocky Nook Terrace. The request at 16R Robeson Street is not affiliated with City Realty. The recommendation of the ZC and Executive Committee was to approve. The matter was deferred at the ZBA. 3) 79 Jamaica Street, a request by 79 Jamaica Street, LLC (Anthony Bellanti, Manager) to construct a new two-family dwelling. This lot is the smallest lot on the street and the proposed building would be the largest house on the street. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would go from .5 to 1.44. This was the second time around for the request; the first time, the developer asked for a deferral. The strong recommendation of the ZC and Executive Committee was to deny. Councilor Matt O'Malley spoke at the ZBA hearing and asked for a denial. The ZBA allowed the request by 79 Jamaica Street, LLC. The lawyer for the applicant was Derric Small. 4) 106 Forest Hills Street, a request by Alan Sharaf to demolish existing structure and erect a three-story building with nine (9)

residential units with balconies and roof decks and twelve (12) off-street parking spaces. This request has changed to: Relocate the existing structure and erect a three-story residential addition for a total of 8 units and 10 parking spaces. This proposal has come to the Zoning Committee three times. The existing building is in disrepair and the applicant is affiliated with City Realty. There were many, many meetings with the Parkside neighbors, who wanted to save the building. The new proposal moves the building to a new site on the lot and builds a second similar building married to the original building. The number of units is reduced by one to eight units. This new proposal also saves a 200-year-old tree and moves the parking area. The number of parking spaces was reduced to preserve the tree. The recommendation of the ZC and Executive Committee was to approve with the provisos that the number of parking spaces be reduced to 8; and subject to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reached with neighbors.

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, April 3 and April 17 at 7:00pm at Farnsworth House. On April 3, there will be requests from 50 Stedman Street, and 197-201 Green Street.

**6.3. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported the Public Service Committee met on March 5 at Curtis Hall. On the agenda was continued discussion on bicycle safety, especially the proposal for protected bicycle lanes (between the parking lane and the sidewalk) on Centre and South Streets. The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) could not attend in March or April, but has committed to coming to the May Public Service Committee meeting. The Committee is developing a list of crosswalks and bicycle lanes needing repainting and streets needing repair.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, April 2 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall. On the agenda will be making a list of crosswalks and bike lanes needing repainting and streets needing repair, and continued discussion on bicycle safety.

**6.4. Environment, Parks & Energy Committee:** No report. Esther Tutella-Chen, who said that she would think about taking on the Chair, was absent.

**6.5. Ad Hoc Education Committee:** Trevor Wissink-Adams reported the Committee met on March 19 with Valerie Coimbra, Spanish teacher in Boston Public Schools (BPS), and discussed goals that the JPNC and BPS could work on together. One initiative may be to help parents register their children for a school. The BPS has three Welcome Centers. The Committee will reach out to the BPS registration team. It would be very helpful if Jamaica Plain had a local registration event. Michael Reiskind said that a new privately-funded group has been established, called SchoolFacts Boston, to help parents register kids for school. He said that since it is funded by the Barr Foundation, a very pro-charter school group, it may not be as neutral a school-registration organization as it appears.

The next Education Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, April 16 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall, 20 South Street.

**7. Old Business/New Business:** Kyle Smith said that there will be a public meeting on the proposed citywide zoning amendment for additional dwelling units (ADU) on Monday, April 8 at 6:30pm at the Hyde Park Branch Library.

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:52pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 7:00PM at Farnsworth House  
Next Executive Committee meeting, Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 7:00pm at JP Licks.