

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council

May 28, 2019 Minutes

JPNC attendance: Kevin Rainsford, Carmel Levy, David Baron, Robin Cheung, Max Glikman, Marvin Mathelier, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Emily Tabor, Gert Thorn, Esther Tutella-Chen, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.
Other attendance: Louise Robbins, Sarah Freeman, Lisa Thompson, Dora Sandoval, Frezzia Herrera, Alex Ponte-Capellan, Steve Boris, Alicia Payne (Office of Councilor Flaherty), Lauren Bennett (JP Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin),

Meeting called to order at by Kevin Rainsford at Farnsworth House at 7:12pm.

1. Introductions: Council members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of April minutes: Motion by David Baron to approve the April 23, 2019 Minutes as written. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 11-0-2.

3. Announcements:

- Fix it clinic at Jamaica Plain Branch Library had to be moved from June 22, 2019 to June 15, 2019.
- Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation is having annual meeting on May 30, 2019 from 6:00pm – 8:30 pm at 45 Brookside Avenue.
- First announcement of vacancy on the Council in Area C (Woodbourne, Jamaica Hill, Moss Hill, Pondsider).
- Mayor's Coffee Hour, June 19, 2019 at Mozart Street Playground from 9:30am – 10:30am.

4. Committee reports/recommendations:

4.1. Public Service Committee (PSC): Kevin Rainsford reported that at the PSC there was one issue requiring a Council vote, i.e. the petition of Blue Nile, Inc., d/b/a "Blue Nile Restaurant," at 389 Centre Street in Jamaica Plain for a change in its seven-day common victualler malt and wine license to seven-day common victualler wine, malt beverages and liqueurs. Motion by Dave Baron to approve the recommendation of the committee. Seconded by Carmel Levy. The question was raised if there was a lot of discussion about the issue and there was not. Passed 13-0-0.
Next meeting June 4, 2019 at Curtis Hall at 7:00pm.

4.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Carolyn Royce reported on the campaign to update the City Inclusionary Development Plan, IDP. The committee heard from the IDP Coalition and they have begun reviewing data, but there have not been an in depth discussion. The BPDA is willing exploring changing the AMI based on the neighborhood as neighborhoods have different kinds of housing and costs may vary. Motion by Carolyn Royce to send a letter in support of the IDP Coalition request to Tim Davis from BPDA to have a "deep dive" conversation in JP on changes to the IDP. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 13-0-0.

Carolyn Royce reported on the annual request to submit a letter to MA Dept. of Transportation (MassDOT) to have funding for a permanent bus facility at the Arborway Yard to be included in MassDOT Capital Improvement Plan. Kevin Rainsford added that the current bus facility was designed to be temporary and has been there 17 years. Money has been allocated for all bus facility and MassDOT needs to address the Albany Street and Quincy facilities first prior to Arborway yard. The letter would also requests that the MBTA form a community advisory group to solicit neighbors concerns about the site. As well as the 8 acres of mitigation to be turned over to the city as promised in the MOU for community use. Within the City's Plan:JP/Rox the 8.0 acres are included.

Gert Thorn raised if an environmental study had ever been conducted, which had not happened because facility was temporary. Motion by Max Glikman to send a letter to MassDOT supporting the continued and future use of Arborway Yard as a bus facility, address current blight at the Yard and request an MBTA contact person who can handle neighbors' complaints/questions re noise/light/fumes, etc., and involve the community in further discussion about development of the site with stronger on the transfer of 8 + acres. Seconded by Caroline Royce. Passed 12-0-1.
Next meeting is June 18, 2019 at 7:00pm at Bowditch School.

5. Presentation by Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George - upon the arrival of the Councilor, the Committee reports were interrupted to allow the Councilor to speak. The Councilor has been on the Council for 3.5 years. She is a former HS Teacher and the current Chair of the Education Committee. She is also Chair of the Committee on Homelessness, Mental Health and Recovery. These 2 committees intersect with 4,200 BPS students experiencing homelessness this year, which

is up from 3,000 in early 2016. The actual number may not have risen but rather the City has gotten better at identifying homeless students.

The Councilor is advocating for the creation more housing opportunities close to schools – called Family-led Sustainability Project. The goal is to eliminate homelessness and is being piloted at 7 schools, and partnering with two non-profits. So far they have been able to house a few hundred families. They are finding that larger family, not just more children but multigenerational, are homeless and, therefore, the need for larger housing units is critical.

The Councilor called for formation of mental health commission, as many of our young people cannot access services. Half of the schools do not have mental health professional. With then- Councilor Pressley she work with BPD to respond to 911 calls that are non-emergency calls. Identified 60 licensed professionals to come to a series of meetings to talk about needs, including professional development, how schools could build relationships with mental health professionals, barriers to accessing mental health services, and creating pathways to accessing services.

The Councilor addressed the Opioid Crisis and the need to support those doing clinical work and improving the shelter and access to care. The question was raised, “ How do we deal with the impact on our neighborhoods? Although everyone is familiar with Mass and Cass, (i.e. Melnea Cass Blvd. and Mass, Ave.) the problem is happening across our city and the region. 3 years ago 40% of people using shelters in Boston were not from Boston. Today it might be as high as 70%. Therefore the City Council is advocating for additional resources. Our shelters are not able to provide the level of service needed to best serve people. In additional Project Ahope has improved tracking of openly discarded needles. The Councilor recently hosted a citywide needle take back day. Last year they collected over 600,000 needles, which is double the number it was 2 years ago. In addition, seeking an ordinance to require pharmacists to take back needles, which would add 100 more drop-off locations. The needle exchange can attach to the drug take back kiosks.

Q: Were any of the seven schools in Jamaica Plain? A: No. They have been able to serve 40 families, which is only a segment of the 800 families housed per year. There is a very low rate of housing achieved through BHA and therefore there is a need for private developers to open doors. Metro Housing and New Lease are two current partners, but the number of units is the challenge, they have the caseworkers.

Q: Do cities have to do drug take back? A: The Attorney General has begun to mandate this policy. Q: Are there school buildings available for conversion? A: There is only one “mothballed” school in Hyde Park ready to be converted to elderly housing. BPS and city need to evaluate assets.

Q: What is the future of rent control in Boston? A: The Council has advocated for rent control or a watered down version of rent control. The worry is the cost of construction for a new unit is \$400k - \$600k. The Councilor is advocating for the building of larger than 1-2 bedroom units across the city to include family-sized 3-4 bedroom units. Will be interesting to see if ADUs start to drive down costs.

The Councilor discussed the new BPS Superintendent. Although not a part of the search, she was part of the three public forums and she thinks they picked the best person to lead the district. Encouraged by the Superintendent’s willingness to take phone calls and eagerly meet with the city council. The Superintendent is a former teacher and her sister is a paraprofessional. She has shown a tremendous willingness to get to know Boston and called city council colleagues. She engages on Twitter with people who have been critical of her and the hope is this will lead to a more transparent school committee and a more independent voice.

The Councilor discussed ADU and the need for more Affordability. The city needs to revisit IDP. BPDA starting to take a provisional look at it. Council has advocated for higher than 25 and higher IDP. Luxury tax on units over \$1M proposed by Clr. Edwards. In addition, cannot make all 80% AMI, need variety. There is a need to start looking at fair housing law, and help individuals who can get into the housing that is available

Q: What are your hopes for recovery service in neighborhoods? A: More people in government are talking about recovery beds. There is a problem with poorly run sober houses, which are often for- profit organizations that are hurting people seeking recovery. We need 2,500 recovery beds across MA and the Shattuck plays a small role in that. Treatment time frames are not long enough, which adds to the risk of overdose.

Q: What cities are doing safe injection well? A: Not impressed by Vancouver, but will try Toronto this summer. Vancouver was not talking to participants about recovery. Safe injection saves lives, but also need to think about recovery.

Q: The process in which affordable units are made available is rumored to be cumbersome result in units remaining empty? A: There is a uniform application process and what Chris Norris was saying is that affordable units are not actually affordable because AMI is set regionally and not on the City. Part of the challenge is people don’t want density in their neighborhood.

Q: How can JPNC be helpful? Please forward along what the city councilors are doing and the work they are focused on. Right now there are 44 schools without a school nurse. We need additional BEST Team clinicians at least 5, (2 are currently grant-funded). More resources for mobile sharps team to improve needle pick up. Improve student outcomes at Madison Park, the only vocational school in the district. Finally working with Clr. Matt O'Malley on vaping restrictions.

4.3. Zoning Committee (ZC) met May 1 and May 15 and heard 6 requests. 1) 67 Forest Hills, a property owned by Jake Hart, who has been involved with JPNC for a long time. The request was to subdivide property and build a 3-family on the second lot. The variance violation was a modal setback, and he wants to pull the building back further in order to preserve old trees in the front. The recommendation was to approve. 2) 197-201 Green Street, a potential 23 unit development that has gone through a long process with Union Ave. The ZC feels that the project is an approvable design, but there was opposition mainly because of City Realty's lack of engagement and their displacement of tenants. City Realty defended their business practice of suing tenants that they try to evict claiming they are trying to recover in damages the difference between market rate and what they pay in rent. Recommendation was to deny. City Realty went to ZBA anyway and a letter was sent in. They were told to seek deferral. On for July 9, 2019 and will go back through ZC. 3) 11 Minton Street, wanting to add third floor addition. Not many particular complaints, except that it was City Realty. It was a split vote with a recommendation to deny. There was no answer as to why they were suing people they were trying to evict. 4) 17 Chestnut Ave, a request to turn a derelict commercial property into a 3-family. Recommendation was to approve. 5) 137 Carolina in which the JPNDNC needed to engage in land-swap with a neighbor. This created violations on the neighbor's side. Recommendation was to approve. 6) 78-81 Spring Park Ave. a request to put in skylights and finish the attic space. Neighbors are concerned that the AC unit is too loud. Screening and buffering around the air condenser was discussed. Recommendation was to approve. Motion by Carmel Levy to vote in the affirmative for all of the committee recommendations, except 197 Green Street and 11 Minton. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Passed 13-0-0. Motion to delay a recommendation on 11 Minton. Discussion, if vote to deny, the ZBA will automatically have the opportunity to vote on it. If we vote to delay, then they cannot go to ZBA and need to come back to the table with real answers. The relationship between the JPNC and the ZBA is socially agreed upon and to try to use the letter of the rule to our advantage might fail. A number of community members voiced concerned about being current City Realty tenant. Mother of 3 children, have to leave June 30th. One of the tenants gave her a year to find a new place. Has applied to many places, added to waitlists, asking for more one more year from City Realty to find housing. She has another court date on July 9th after date she has to move out. City Realty had said no. Motion by Carmel Levy to approve the recommendation to deny request. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Passed 11-2-0.

Committee voted to recommend Kendra Hallowell to replace Ann Barrett as a community member. Motion by David Baron to approve the new roster. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 13-0-0.
Next meeting June 5, 2019 at 7:00 pm at Farnsworth House.

4.4. Environment, Parks, and Energy Committee (EPE) remains in flux and will continue discussion of next steps.
Next meeting June 7, 2019 at 6:00pm at JP Licks.

4.5 Education Ad Hoc Committee provide an update on mobile enrollment centers and explained that currently City has 3 Enrollment Center and a mobile unit would make more assessable, similar to mobile City Hall. Committee is working to recruit new members and engage elected officials.
Next meeting June 18, 2019 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall.

6. New business:

- In the June Meeting there will be updates on Bylaws and Outreach efforts.
- Motion by Carmel Levy to begin the process of removing Bruce Marks from the Council for Just Cause after missing more than 5 of the last 12 Council meetings. Seconded by Kevin Rainsford. Passed 13-0-0.
- Marvin Mathelier expressed concerns about the concerns raised by the community members and the practices of City Reality. Is there more that the Council can or should be doing?
- Kyle Smith noted that the "hard hat" tour of the Goddard House is June 7 at 2:30pm.
- The Final Shattuck public meeting is June 25, 2019.

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm

Minutes submitted by Trevor Wissink-Adams, with additional information by Kevin Rainsford.

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at 7:00pm at Farnsworth House.
Next Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 7:00pm at JP Licks.