

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
August 25, 2020 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Kevin Rainsford, Max Glikman, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Robin Cheung, Bernard Doherty, Valerie Coimbra, Marvin Mathelier, Samantha Montano, Peg Preble, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Gert Thorn, Esther Tutella-Chen, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Dottie Farrell, Celeste Walker, S. Hale, Paige Sparks, Colin Turner, Shawn Fitzpatrick, John Wilshire Carrera, David Carnochan, Matthew G., Nancy Kelly, Marie Turley, James Lesnick, Charlie Rosenberg, Joseph Lekach (Apothca), Becca Ruttenberg (Apothca), Michael Morris (Apothca), Liana Poston (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Natalie Kaufman (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Lena Shapiro (Office of Sen. Chang-Diaz), Rachel Nagin (Office of City Councillor Anissa Essaibi-George), Justin McClarey (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm by Kevin Rainsford via Zoom.

1. Introductions: Council members introduced themselves. Aides to elected officials introduced themselves.

2. Approval of July minutes: Motion by David Baron to approve the minutes from the July 28, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Trevor Wissink-Adams. Passed 10-0-2 (4 came late).

3. Announcements:

- Early voting will be on August 27 at Margarita Muñiz Academy.

- Everyone was urged to vote on Primary Voting Day, Tuesday, September 1. Deadline to apply for the primary is Aug. 26.

- Folks in Egleston Square are developing a series of open dialogues - "Call It Out" - on systemic and social racism in Egleston Square. The first one was on August 1 and it went well. Members were urged to reach out to Marvin Mathelier to help with the effort.

4. Presentation by Apothca Inc: Joseph Lekach, Chief Executive Officer of Apothca Inc. introduced Becca Ruttenberg and Michael Morris from Apothca's public relations team. They are here to give an update on their permitting process for a medical marijuana facility at 54A Hyde Park Avenue and to ask for formal support or non-opposition to the request to co-locate an adult-use marijuana dispensary at 54A Hyde Park Avenue (near Weld Hill Street). Mr. Lekach summarized last month's meeting on the proposed operation and the organization. Tonight, he showed floor plans, and patient and customer flow within the facility. He also reiterated all the promises made to the community during the approval process for the medical marijuana facility: they will have a Boston Police detail upon opening and until no longer needed, will host quarterly community meetings in the first year and annual ones after year one, Mr. Lekach's email and cell phone will be available to the community to relay concerns, coordinate with Lemuel Shattuck Hospital to minimize disruption, and Apothca will give preference to local hiring where possible. Mr. Lekach renewed his promises to advocate for a crosswalk across Hyde Park Avenue, have their security officers enforce parking regulations and refuse access to customers who park illegally, pay special attention to noise issues and fix them quickly, and encourage public transit. If a letter of support is received from the JPNC, there is still a lot of process that must follow: support from City Councillor O'Malley and the Boston Cannabis Board, zoning approval, and approval by the state Cannabis Control Commission (followed by multiple state inspections). The state license has to be renewed annually. There was a question about home delivery; it is not allowed for adult use, but after two years, it would be a good option for their medical patients. They expect to generate fewer than fifty car trips a day. Question about the Host Community Agreements (HCA) in general and the whole City permitting process; the City wants to see community non-opposition before an applicant goes to the newly-formed Boston Cannabis Board. Dave Baron wanted an early discussion with the City on changing the focus of the Host Community Agreements. This could be done at the formal Boston Cannabis Board hearing. Mr. Lekach offered to advocate for more local improvements during HCA negotiations if the JPNC generated a list. Question about why they decided to change and add adult-use instead of being only medical marijuana; the addition of a proposed adult-use facility in Hyde Square changed the economics, because many patients prefer to buy at adult-use facilities (less record-keeping). Council members expressed concerns that Apothca owes it to the community to go back and explain that they are making a change from medical marijuana use only to an addition of retail adult-use, why they are making the change, and how it affects the community. Apothca must provide an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the new proposal. Is having an adult-use facility at a major transit transfer point for school-age children going to be a problem? Having two adult-use facilities in Jamaica Plain might mitigate the issues of having only one at Hyde Square. Mr. Lekach said again that the medical marijuana opening is planned for December 2020 or January 2021. If a co-located adult-use facility is supported by the community, operations could start in August 2021, but probably later. There was a request for a thorough traffic study earlier in the process. Mr. Lekach offered to have Apothca conduct a full traffic study to be submitted at the September JPNC meeting. Motion by David Baron to have the JPNC Executive Committee draft a letter, to be brought back to the full JPNC on September 22, as an interim first step of non-opposition to Apothca co-locating an adult-use marijuana dispensary at 54A Hyde Park Avenue. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 11-3-2.

5. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

5.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on August 5 as a virtual meeting. One matter was heard and needs a vote tonight. 1) 12 Everett Street, a petition by Alterac Valley LLC to construct a three-

story multifamily residence with seven (7) residential units and basement-level parking on a 13,231 square foot vacant parcel. This had appeared at the ZC before and attendance was high, with a lot of letters received. It was a fairly controversial proposal which has evolved a lot during the process: it was originally nine units (with an affordable unit), then seven, and then five units was offered at the most recent abutters meeting. The actual legal proposal still has six units. The two variances needed are for more than three units and lot frontage is insufficient. While it is a large lot, it has very little frontage - only the width of a driveway. It is also right between the newly-constructed 16 Everett Street and a large Victorian house renovation at the front of this lot. There are no dimensional variances being requested. The main concerns of those opposing the proposal are that the building is too big and has too many units. The Sumner Hill Association changed its position from being opposed to being neutral. There was a great deal of opposition at the meetings. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend denial. The vote of the ZC was split and very close (4-3-3 with 2 recusals). Motion by Bernard Doherty to support the recommendation of the Zoning Committee to recommend denial on 12 Everett Street. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 14-0-1 (1 left early).

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, September 2 and September 16 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On September 2, the agenda will have the return of 395 Centre Street (Rockstar Body Piercing), as well as 68 South Street (tattoo parlor) and 34-36 Rossmore Road.

5.2. Ad-hoc Education Committee: Trevor Wissink-Adams reported that the Education Committee met on August 12. The Committee discussed ways to support BPS' efforts to get resources to families as learning restarts' perhaps helping with remote learning before and after school hours; also to help "learning pods" become more accessible to families. Just last Friday, August 21, the Boston School Committee released their plans for the upcoming school year. It will begin all-remotely on September 21. A hybrid model will begin to be phased in on October 1 - it will allow on-site learning two days a week and remote learning three days a week. On September 8, all staff will be called in for professional development and outreach. The state has asked that teachers teach the remote classes from the actual school buildings. Teachers seem opposed to this idea.

The next Ad-hoc Education Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, September 9 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

5.3. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on August 4 via Zoom. There was a presentation on the near finalized plans for the Columbus Avenue Bus Lane project. This is to improve the travel times for three bus routes on Columbus Avenue from Walnut Avenue to Jackson Square. Buses (and emergency vehicles) will have a dedicated lane in each direction, with the other moving lane for vehicles and bike travel. The third lane in each direction will be for parking, where space permits. The MBTA is paying but the project is managed by the Boston Transportation Department. There are no dedicated bicycle lanes proposed for this project area, and the MBTA will not allow bicycles in the bus lane because of the grade and frequency of buses. Questions were mostly about the lack of bike lanes. There will be a parallel process on improving bike access on nearby cross streets (such as School Street). Gert Thorn said that bus usage is projected to fall in the future and bicycle use will increase. Bernie Doherty asked about safe bicycle use in the neighborhood and State laws.

The Committee continued its discussion on reforming the Boston Police Department. The Committee decided to create a subcommittee to allow for more meetings and greater range of opinions. Issues that have come up are police overtime, school police, militarization of police, use of facial recognition and drones and helicopters, no-knock warrants, qualified immunity, and body cameras.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 8 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a request by CADA DIA Nutrition for a new common victualler license at 7 Burroughs Street. Also on the agenda will be a report from the Subcommittee on reforming the Boston Police Department.

5.4. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Carolyn Royce reported that the H&DC met on August 18 via Zoom. The first discussion was on the lawsuit filed against the Pine Street Inn/The Community Builders' project at 3368 Washington Street. The H&DC felt that the project is unique with subsidized housing for the homeless and affordable housing, and it went through a good community process. Interestingly, the person who brought the lawsuit was on the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) and was active in the process. The Committee wanted to oppose the lawsuit in order to support the project, and hopes that the lawsuit is settled out of court and not causes delay. A draft letter was sent to the Executive Committee and approved. It was sent to the Gazette and Boston Bulletin.

Also, there was an informational presentation by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JP NDC) and New Atlantic Development for the potential development of 3371 Washington Street. It is a 40-unit all-affordable housing development for seniors. A significant issue is that there is no access to the lot, because they are not allowed to put a curb cut along Washington Street.

The Net Zero subcommittee will start meeting on Monday, August 31 via Zoom. Ms. Royce encouraged folks to join.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, September 15 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

6. Old Business/New Business: None

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, September 22 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, September 17 at 7:00PM via Zoom.