

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
March 23, 2021 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Kevin Rainsford, Max Glikman, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Robin Cheung, Will Cohen, Bernard Doherty, Patrick Dubey, Brandon Iizuka, Robert Kordenbrock, Marvin Mathelier, Samantha Montaño, Peg Preble, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Gert Thorn, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

Elected at the meeting: My'Kel McMillen.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Dottie Farrell. Louise Johnson, Louise Robbins, Kristine Grimes, Paige Sparks, Jennifer Uhrhane, Micah Sachs, Derek Campbell, Jaclyn Youngblood, David Halbert, Annika Jensen, Lena Shapiro (Office of State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz), Liana Poston (Office of State Rep. Liz Malia), Frank Mendoza (Office of State Rep. Nika Elugardo), Rachel Nagin (Office of City Councillor Annissa Essaibi-George), Tali Robbins (Office of City Councillor Michelle Wu), Justin McClarey (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Lindsey Santana (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), 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 January and February minutes: Motion by Dave Baron to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2021 and February 23, 2021 meetings. Seconded by Brandon Iizuka. Passed 16-0-0 (2 came late).

3. Announcements:

3.1. Announcements of Council vacancies: Kevin Rainsford made the second official announcement of a vacancy in Area B. Nominations will be considered later in the agenda for this meeting.

3.2. Community Announcements:

- Jennifer Uhrhane announced that as part of a community benefits package between the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association and developers of the complex at McBride and Washington Streets, there will be two murals on the Extra Space Storage building. Artists will be selected by a jury and the process will be completed by the end of the summer. Artists can submit now at https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=7716.
- The art project, "Lights in the Necklace", lighting select bridges in the Emerald Necklace in emerald green, will continue until March 31.
- There will be a community meeting for the Faulkner Hospital proposed addition on Zoom on Thursday, March 25 starting at 6:00pm. Register at www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_KVx5NJmDQgeziIHoOdaEpw.
- There will be a community meeting for the new Doyle's proposal at Washington and Williams Streets. It will be on Zoom on Thursday, April 1 starting at 6:00pm.
- There will be a community meeting on a proposed zoning change for accessory parking in neighborhood business subdistricts. It will be on Zoom on Wednesday, March 31 starting at 5:30pm. Information at bit.ly/3kUXdqQ.

4. A Discussion with Kendra Hicks: Kendra Hicks, candidate for District 6 City Council, could not attend due to a family emergency.

5. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

5.1. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Carolyn Royce reported that the H&DC met on March 16 via Zoom. The Subcommittee on Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Construction is starting to wrap up their work on Healthy Home Guidelines and Article 80 projects. They will go to the Zoning Committee on March 24 to present some of their findings. The H&DC heard from the Friends of Blessed Sacrament, who hope that the former church building can still fulfill a previous vision and become a cultural center, with affordable housing and retention of the front plaza. This issue will be continued at the next H&DC meeting.

Most of the agenda was on the development proposal for 3390 Washington Street (BMS Paper) and the Committee submitted a draft comment letter for approval by the JPNC. This is a large project for Jamaica Plain which includes retaining and expanding BMS Paper, adding a restaurant on the second floor, 151 units of housing, and parking. The main concern of the H&DC is not enough clarity on the level of affordability, and the large number of smaller units (studios and one-bedrooms). There is a shared easement with their neighbor on the left (to the north), Pine Street Inn. There were concerns about traffic increasing at the nearby intersection of Green Street, Washington Street, and Glen Road. There were also comments about improving the design of the building in its massing and appearance. It will be a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold project with the housing units being all-electric. BMS Paper committed to continue its policy of local hiring. Bernie Doherty asked again what the actual income thresholds are for families trying to get an affordable unit at 50% AMI (Area Median Income). Mr. Doherty also urged folks to look at the parking needs of all the projects in the nearby area in a coordinated way. Gert Thorn asked that language in the letter be sharpened so that the important outstanding issues don't get ignored. Motion by Dave Baron to send the draft comment letter to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA). Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 14-0-2 (2 came late).

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, April 20 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be the return of Friends of Blessed Sacrament and the Hyde Square Task Force. There may also be an Article 80 Project for the new Doyle's.

5.2. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on March 2 via Zoom. On the agenda was a request for a transfer of the package store license of Egleston Liquors at 3086 Washington Street. Solomon Lemma, owner of this long-established package store is retiring and selling to Carlos Castillo, owner of Castillo Egleston Liquors, LLC who wants to do business under the same name of Egleston Liquors at the same location. Mr. Castillo has wide experience in the alcohol industry, operating two other package stores in Boston. This very small package store will be completely remodeled and reopen with a selection that will also appeal to women customers. There was no opposition from the audience at the well-attended meeting. The area was extensively leafletted. The Egleston Square Neighborhood Association (ESNA) and the Chilcott Place-Granada Park Neighborhood Association supported the proposed transfer. Egleston Square Main Street also supported the request. The Public Service Committee voted to recommend approval, but the Licensing Board hearing was scheduled before today's JPNC meeting and the issue had to go before the Executive Committee, which voted to approve. In addition, the Public Service Committee voted to recommend approval of a small 500 sq. ft. addition to the rear, but Mr. Castillo has not sent that request to the Licensing Board yet, so no vote of the JPNC is needed at this time. The main discussion at the Public Service Committee meeting was about selling nips and single beers. There was more debate about nips and single beers during this JPNC meeting. Mr. Reiskind also gave a summary of the work of the Public Service Committee's Subcommittee on Police Procedures, which has been meeting every two weeks to talk about police reform and related issues.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, April 7 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be requests from The Haven for a new all-alcohol restaurant license at 284 Amory Street (at the former Bella Luna location) and from Evergreen Eatery for a beer & wine with liqueurs restaurant license at their present location of 154 Green Street (subsequently deferred).

5.3. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on March 3 as a virtual meeting. The one matter needing a vote tonight is: 1) 16 Malcolm Road, a petition by David Naimark and Griffin Thomas to remove an existing three-season porch to allow year-round use; construct new bathroom in basement, relocate laundry facilities, construct new deck and patio per plans. This was entirely non-controversial. The plans of the new porch extend to the second floor and they plan to add a grotto under the second floor porch with a hot tub. The local Jamaica Hills Association was not opposed. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval. Motion by David Baron to support the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 16 Malcolm Road. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Passed 18-0-0. Also on the agenda was discussion about improving notice for these virtual meetings. Better instructions were developed for the applicants about posting notices on the property. Also extensively discussed at the Zoning Committee was voting protocols for Committee members who also serve on neighborhood associations.

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, March 24 and April 7 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be 22 Castleton Street, 632-638 Centre Street, 180-190 Hyde Park Avenue, 203 Chestnut Avenue, 3813-3815 Washington Street (Croft School), and 12-14 Ennis Road. The Subcommittee on Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Construction will also give a Healthy Homes Guidelines update at the March 24 meeting.

6. Old Business:

6.1. Nominations for Vacancy in Area B: There were three self-nomination for the one available vacancy in Area B: Micah Sachs from 8 Newsome Park, Paige Sparks of 96 Brookley Road, and My'Kel McMillen from Mildred C. Hailey Apartments. Paige Sparks later withdrew her nomination. Mr. Sachs said he actually lives in Area C, has been on the Board of the Jamaica Pond Association for two years, and was active on the JPNC's Parks+ Committee with Esther Tutella-Chen and Robin Cheung. He is a former local journalist. He is an advocate for affordable housing, optimizing and improving public spaces especially Franklin Park, and promoting active pedestrian life in the business districts. Mr. Sachs said he is interested in serving on the H&DC - especially on Article 80 projects to increase affordable housing - or the Public Service Committee. My'Kel McMillen said he actually lives in Area A, has lived in Bromley-Heath/Mildred C. Hailey Apartments for 29 years, is the Youth Program Director at the Youth Center, and on the Board of the Mildred C. Hailey Apartments Tenants Organization. Mr. McMillen said he is interested in community development, police reform, and the parks committee. He is an advocate for grass roots organizing and supporting existing local businesses and organizations that have built the community during the hard times. He feels we need to speak out for the little guy who's voice is drowned out when making policy - to speak truth to power. Mr. McMillen said he is interested in serving on the H&DC for the affordable housing, or the Public Service Committee's Subcommittee on Police Procedures. Priscilla Yang announced that she will have to move out of Jamaica Plain soon and will resign her seat in Area B. My'Kel McMillen was elected (via Chat) and welcomed onto the JP Neighborhood Council.

The Parks Committee does not currently have a Chair and has not been meeting; Paige Sparks asked if a Parks Committee could be led by the community as a grass-roots committee. Kevin Rainsford said it would have to have a JPNC member as Chair, but this Chair need only report back to the JPNC; all other tasks could be delegated.

6.2. Kevin Rainsford brought up the issue about members of non-profit boards recusing themselves or abstaining when an issue involving the non-profit comes before the JPNC. The state conflict of interest guidelines says that a "public

employee may not participate in a public matter if he is a director of a business organization [*including non-profits doing business*] that has a financial interest in that matter.” Max Glikman showed that the JPNC Bylaws have a paragraph in Article 16 - Conflict of Interest that says “Recognizing that many Council and committee members are active in other volunteer civic organizations throughout Jamaica Plain and Boston, it shall not be a conflict of interest for any Council or committee member to discuss and vote on matters which they have considered before as members of other volunteer councils, committees, commissions, or similar organizations.” Mr. Glikman said that he is on the Board of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JP NDC), which is an important group doing good work in the community. He has zero financial interest in the JP NDC and has never received any financial compensation from the JP NDC. He also said he is a strong advocate for affordable housing and ran for the JPNC on that platform. Michael Reiskind was of the opinion that the By-law was directed toward volunteer members of organizations and that Board members who legally direct an organization and set policy are in a different category and have a conflict. Carolyn Royce emphasized that civic organizations do not depend on business developments for their livelihood, but the JP NDC does. Samantha Montaña pointed out that civic organizations do have an indirect financial interest when they vote on a development, because it affects the property values of their homes, and that has influenced organizations’ votes. She also said that the Board of the JP NDC does not really set policy: Micah Sachs is only advancing the mission of the organization which is to build more affordable housing. There was a question about how much of a business is a community non-profit like the JP NDC? There were also questions about folks serving as board members of subcommittees of the JP NDC, and the appearance of a conflict of interest. Max Glikman asked for a vote on the interpretation of the By-laws on this issue of conflict of interest. Motion by Max Glikman to include serving on the boards of organizations shall not be a conflict of interest for any Council or committee member to discuss and vote on matters. Seconded by Samantha Montaña. Kevin Rainsford said that this motion would be contrary to the state’s conflict of interest guidelines he referred to earlier. Dave Baron asked that no vote need be taken, because present By-laws say that if there is a potential conflict of interest, one should immediately disclose it and the Committee or Council will vote on the recusal at that time. Mr. Baron thought that this ad hoc manner of dealing with this issue is adequate. Carolyn Royce asked that the matter be tabled to get more clarity on the motion and its conflict with the state’s guidelines. The matter was tabled by agreement.

7. New Business:

- Gert Thorn thanked Priscilla Yang for her service on the JP Neighborhood Council.
- Kim Janey will be sworn in as Mayor of Boston at 11:45am tomorrow, March 24.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: April 22, 2021 at 7:00PM via Zoom.