

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
June 25, 2013 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Ben Day, Red Burrows, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Dana Gonsalves, Andrea Howley, Jamey Lionette, Martha Rodriguez, Ken Sazama, Natalie VanLandingham, and Jesse White.

Community Attendance: Thom Davey, Teronda Ellis, Donald Walker, Toney Jones (City of Boston Inspectional Services Department), Michael Baker (Rep. Jeffrey Sánchez's office), Jullianne Doherty (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), and Bret Silverberg (Jamaica Plain Patch).

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. Announcements:

- There will be a community meeting to discuss the design for the upcoming parklets in front of Sonia's Bridal and Tacos El Charro on Wednesday, June 26 at 6:30pm at the Kennedy School, 7 Bolster Street.

- The Boston Children's Museum Big Cake Birthday Tour will be coming to Pinebank on Jamaica Pond on Sunday, July 14 at 3pm. The Museum is celebrating its 100th birthday. There will also be a 6pm concert at the site given by the Boston Landmarks Orchestra.

III. Approval of minutes: Motion by Red Burrows to approve the May 2013 minutes. Seconded by Ken Sazama. Passed 9-0-0 (2 late).

IV. Council Vacancies: Ben Day repeated that the JP Neighborhood Council has three vacancies: one each in Area A, Area C and At-Large. No nominations were forthcoming at this meeting.

V. Inspectional Services Department: Toney Jones, from the City of Boston's Inspectional Services Department (ISD), gave a presentation on the new Rental Registration and Inspection Program. The City of Boston has passed a new ordinance requiring all private residential rental unit owners to register their units and have them inspected at least every five years. This is a way to keep the housing stock of Boston, a city with a lot of old housing, minimally safe and within code standards. Owners can register on-line for \$25.00. The annual renewal is \$15.00 and there is a fine for late renewal. There is a free landlord seminar offered at 6:00pm on the third Wednesday of every month to help landlords understand the provisions of the new ordinance.

Questions from members were about the fairness of inspectors and uniformity of inspections, whether there is a hearing process to appeal to, whether there is an internal referral program within the City, and whether there is an alternative to condemning a unit in cases of overwhelming safety violations. Vacant units, which already have to be registered under a previous ordinance, must register a second time under this new ordinance. There is a new point-system for non-compliance which can lead to owners being put on a "chronic offender list". There also is a five-year alternate inspection plan to help large-scale property owners.

VI. Committee Reports:

a. Public Service: Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on June 4 at Curtis Hall. On the agenda were public works issues. Michael Reiskind handed around a list of Jamaica Plain streets that are scheduled for resurfacing in 2013. The Committee also discussed the new anti-litter campaign, JP Shines. The next meeting of the Public Service Committee will be Tuesday, July 2 at Curtis Hall at 7:00pm.

b. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Jamey Lionette reported that the H&DC met on June 18. The MBTA development Parcel U at Forest Hills came up for discussion and the designated developer, Urbanica, has agreed to meet with the H&DC in the future. 75 Amory Avenue (formerly Parcel K in Jackson Square), a project of the JP Neighborhood Development Corporation that has already appeared before the H&DC and the JPNC, needs a support letter to the BRA for a small change in the project. The project is 39 units (100% affordable), 74% of which are family-sized. Motion by Jamey Lionette to write a letter of support for the 75 Amory Avenue project. Seconded by Red Burrows. Passed 9-0-0 (1 late)(Dana Gonsalves recused himself).

Washington Street development came up for discussion: 1) Hughes Oil development parcel at 3593 Washington Street is proposed at 280-290 residential units. The community, including the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA), agrees that the affordable housing component is the key issue. 2) The Washington/Burnett/McBride development, consisting of housing, a personal storage facility and parking, made a presentation before the JPNC in April. 30 There is a request for a Washington Street corridor planning study from Egleston to Forest Hills - similar to the So. Huntington Avenue corridor study and the Forest Hills Improvement Initiative - being proposed by the SNA. This could be done by a local college with student urban planners. Motion by Jesse White to support a Washington Street corridor planning study. Seconded by Red Burrows. Passed 10-0-0 (1 late).

The next meeting of the H&DC will be on Tuesday, July 23 at 6:30pm at the Bowditch School, 82 Green Street.

c. Zoning: Dave Baron reported that the Committee met once, on June 13. The June 27 meeting is coming up.

There were four items that came before the Committee, three that need a vote of the JPNC: 1) 111 Perkins Street, a request by Sprint Spectrum L.P. (acting as agent for Jamaicaway Tower) for an extension of a non-conforming use to update their antennae and equipment to 4G. This is a very small change and will not be visible from the street. The Jamaica Pond Association (JPA) voted not to oppose. The Committee recommends approval. 2) 116 Neponset Avenue, a request by Susan Hubert to convert the attic to living space with a bedroom and bathroom and add a 28-foot shed dormer. The dormer side of the building faces the cemetery. All the neighbors who came were enthusiastically in favor. The Committee recommends approval. 3) 27 Lamartine Street, a request by John Moran of Alpine Advisory (acting as agent for AAA Properties, LLC) to extend the living space of Unit One into the basement and install two tandem parking spaces in the side yard. This is a return to the Zoning Committee after redesign. This responsive applicant has reconfigured the basement by adding more common space, moving the kitchen to the upper level of the unit, and reducing parking. The Committee recommends approval. 4) 197 Green Street/3371-3375 Washington Street. This is a new proposal for a mixed-use 4-storey building with parking area and two bakeries. It requires demolition of an existing house and building an ell-shaped 4-storey 20-unit building. This was a very well-attended meeting, especially from Union Avenue. There were concerns about height from a Union Avenue abutter. There were also concerns about traffic, the loading zone variance and adequate truck turn-around space. It has 15% affordability and is Healthy Housing compliant. It is subject to Small Project Review and will have the Article 80 meetings this summer. No action is needed yet by the JPNC. Motion by Red Burrows to recommend approval of the first three requests at 111 Perkins Street, 116 Neponset Ave., and 27 Lamartine Street. Seconded by Andrea Howley. Passed 11-0-0.

The next three meetings of the Zoning Committee will be Thursday, June 27, Thursday, July 11 and Thursday, July 25 at Farnsworth House, 90 South Street, at 7:00pm.

d. Parks & Open Space (POSC): Andrea Howley was reported on the meeting of Thursday, June 20 at JP Licks.

- 15 trees were planted along the Arborway Hillside.
 - The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is looking at the tree pits along Centre and South Streets.
 - Signature Drive from September to November to get a ballot question on an expanded Bottle Bill.
 - Please save 2-weeks-worth of 5 cent deposit bottles and bring them to Natalie VanLandingham to benefit the Summer Dancing Camp Scholarship fund at Tony Williams Dance Center.
 - CIRCLE THE CITY needs volunteers for the July 14 event on the Avenue of the Arts. Contact the Emerald Necklace Conservancy.
 - The new playground has opened at Bromley-Heath on the Southwest Corridor. It is called the Lorber Family Jackson Square Playground.
 - A Franklin Park Clean-Up took place on June 1.
 - The Hennigan School may need to have twelve trees cut down for an NStar project. The POSC is asking for a two-to-one replacement, so 24 trees need to be planted in the area.
- There will be no POSC meeting in July.

e. Casey Arborway Design Advisory Group (DAG): Red Burrows reported that MassDOT organized a well-planned 75% Public Meeting on the Casey Arborway project, with planners sincerely answering neighbors design questions. The JPNC needs to designate a representative for the Design Advisory Group.

f. Jackson Square Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC): The Boston Redevelopment Authority has dissolved the Jackson Square Citizen Advisory Committee, probably because there were only two community attendees and the process had become stagnant.

g. Ad-Hoc Elections Committee: Red Burrows reported that the Elections Committee met on June 18. The Committee is proposing that the bi-annual JPNC Election be on Saturday, October 19 and also discussed nominees for the Ombuds Board. Red reminded everyone that all JPNC members need to recruit three volunteers each to help with the election on October 19 (two-hour shifts). While the Ombuds Board acts as a referee and overseer of the election, it is the Elections Committee and volunteers that actually run the election. The Committee is proposing that the new Harvest Coop in Forest Hills be used as the Forest Hills area polling place, instead of Forest Hills T Station. Ken Sazama thought that the move to Harvest was not a good idea, because it is a less diverse location. Motion by Red Burrows to 1)accept October 19, 2013 as the date of the JPNC Election, 2)accept Jeremy Harold, Pam Bender, and Kosta Demos as Ombudsman, and 3) accept Red Burrows as chair of the Ad-Hoc Elections Committee. Seconded by Jesse White. Passed 11-0-0. The Committee is still looking for two more Ombudsmen. The next meeting of the Elections Committee will be on Monday, July 22 at 6:30pm at the Dogwood Café.

VII. Old/New Business:

- Thom Davey, from Starr Lane, asked whether there is any news on the Stamatou properties at 656-666 Centre Street being redeveloped for chain stores or other uses. There is nothing new beyond initial rumors.
- There was a proposal to invite MassDOT to the JPNC to give a presentation on the Casey Arborway design plans and have JPNC get more involved. There would be an invitation to Bridging Forest Hills also.

- There was a discussion of the development process in the city and how it affects the Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Members thought that it needs fundamental changes. Because of the wide-open Mayor and City Councillor races, it was suggested that the JP Neighborhood Council help sponsor a forum in October after the preliminary election.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, July 30 at 7:00PM, at the First Baptist Church.

Next Executive Committee meeting: Wednesday, July 24 at 6:30PM, JP Licks, 659 Centre Street