

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
April 23, 2019 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Kevin Rainsford, Carmel Levy, Michael Reiskind, Vicky Arroyo, David Baron, Robin Cheung, Bernard Doherty, Max Glikman, Omer Hecht, Kevin Leary, Samantha Montano, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Emily Tabor, Esther Tutella-Chen, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Dana Gonsalves, Cathe Carpenter, Charlotte Miller, Alicia Payne (Office of City Councillor Michael Flaherty), Ethan Smith (Office of State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz), Sonia Chang-Diaz (State Senator), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm by Kevin Rainsford at Farnsworth House.

1. Introductions: Council members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of March minutes: Motion by David Baron to approve the March 26, 2019 minutes. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 12-0-3 (2 came late).

3. Announcements:

- There is a Blue Bikes station now on Centre Street near Seaverns Avenue.
- The JP Progressives are hosting an event on housing on Monday, April 29 entitled “What is a Progressive Position on Housing?” It will be at The First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, 633 Centre Street, starting at 7:15pm.
- The Shattuck Campus Planning Community Meeting #3 (originally scheduled for April 30) has been rescheduled to June 25.
- The next Fixit Clinic will be on Saturday, June 22 from 10:00am to 1:00pm at the JP Branch of the Boston Public Library, 30 South Street.
- There will also be a satellite Fixit Clinic at Jackson Square on June 22.
- Community Servings has opened its new facility on Amory Street.
- The annual Spring Clean-Up, “Love Your Block”, will be on Saturday, May 4.
- Wake Up The Earth will be on Saturday, May 4 at the area near Stony Brook station.
- The annual meeting of the JP Neighborhood Development Corporation (JP NDC) will be on Thursday, May 30 at 6:00pm at the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Hall, 45 Brookside Avenue.
- The 4th annual JP NDC Fundraiser will be on Thursday, April 25 starting at 6:30pm at Bella Luna, 284 Amory Street.
- The Franklin Park Coalition and Emerald Necklace Conservancy will be co-hosting a guided walk around the Scarboro Pond and former Heathfield area of Franklin Park on Sunday, April 28 at 11:00am starting at the tennis courts near the Shattuck Campus.
- The annual meeting of the Franklin Park Coalition will be on Saturday, May 4 at 10:00am at the Lena Park Community Development Center, 150 American Legion Highway.
- There will be celebration of the 197th birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted on Thursday, April 25 at the First Church in Jamaica Plain (Eliot Street and Centre Street) starting at 7:00pm.

4. State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz: State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz started by saying she has been a state senator for ten years. She focused her talk on education funding reform – this has taken a whole generation to try to achieve. Last year, the major bill almost passed but the conference committee could not agree at the last minute. However this has created strong momentum beginning this new session and there are high hopes that funding reform for grades K-12 will be successful. More than 50% of legislators of both houses have signed up as co-sponsors of this year’s “Education Promises Act”. There was also strong support at the public hearing in March.

Initiatives that she has been working on are: Last year, paid family leave was added alongside the revised minimum wage bill. The senator has been working on a carbon-pricing bill and a solar equity bill. Last year’s rules debate to increase transparency had been talking about publishing committee votes on-line – but that failed. It did allow committee chairs to voluntarily choose to publish the votes on-line. This year, the Senate budget has increased the reimbursement line item for charter schools. The senator is working on in-state tuition rates for undocumented

students. A new gun safety bill will be looking at illegally-obtained guns coming into the state; improving the interstate compact on guns; it will also have a provision to prevent the purchase of more than fifteen guns a year. A study order has been passed to reinstate voting rights to incarcerated people. Sen. Chang-Diaz chairs the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities. The legislature passed a bill banning gay conversion therapy on minors in Massachusetts, and the governor signed it quietly in April. The “cap on kids”, which refuses additional welfare benefits to a child conceived or born when parents are on welfare, was overturned by a bill this year, but it required an override when Gov. Baker vetoed it. Sen. Chang-Diaz spoke about how the foster care system is highly distressed. There are not enough beds, the number of foster parents is declining, and there is inadequate technology to track and assign children. We need to do a better job of encouraging foster parents by making it less adversarial between parents and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Questions from members were: Dana Gonsalves asked whether there is a campaign to increase the number of United States children adopted by US parents. Omer Hecht asked when will the Boston Public Schools be better-funded? What happened to all the convictions that were tainted by the dishonest state lab technician? Those convictions were overturned, and their voting rights were reinstated. There was a question on mandatory vaccinations; they are mandatory now for public schools unless there is a sincerely-held religious belief involved. The question was should it be mandatory for all? There is a new bill heading toward passage that should be in effect in time for schools in the fall. Dave Baron thanked the senator for all the work she did on equity funding for education. Kyle Smith asked about the senator leaving after eight years as chair of the Joint Committee on Education just as the Education Promises Act appears ready to pass. The senator also chairs the newly-formed Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy.

5. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

5.1. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Carolyn Royce reported that the H&DC met on April 16 and two issues were discussed. 1) The Boston Clean Energy Coalition gave an informational presentation on Net Zero Carbon that the City of Boston is looking into. This requires the building to be all electric. All energy needs would be developed on-site, and the building would produce more than it uses. The H&DC is looking into the idea of adding it to future guidelines for new construction only. 2) Shattuck campus: Discussion of a pedestrian easement to the City of Boston on the adjacent pathway to improve the connection from Rock Milton and Mount Wyatt to the rest of Franklin Park. Discussion of keeping vehicle access at two sites to Morton Street and improving access to transit from the Shattuck Campus to Morton Street.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21 at 7:00pm at the Bowditch School.

5.2. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on April 3 and April 17 and three requests were considered. One request (197-201 Green Street) was deferred and one request went before the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) before the JPNC meeting, so only one vote is needed. The request that went to the Executive Committee for a vote was 50 Stedman Street, a request by Helm Investments (Michael Forde, Sean Morrissey, and Bryan Austin), to construct a wood-frame residential structure with twenty-one (21) units. This petition went through a lengthy process with the local Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) over a period of months. The SNA was generally in favor, but some folks were in opposition and wanted more community benefits from the developer – specifically more new sidewalk further along Stedman Street. The recommendations of the ZC and Executive Committee were to approve.

The request needing a vote is 1 Rockwood Terrace, a request by Marc Lopilato, to construct a new single-family house with a two-car garage on an existing 9008 square foot lot. The local Jamaica Hills Association (JHA) had suggestions on the design of the house. The original proposal was for a very large and very wide house. The ZC and JHA ideas are pretty close, but the developer did not want to agree to any changes at the ZC meeting. The recommendation of the ZC is to deny with the proviso that if the applicant notifies the ZC before April 30 that they will defer at the ZBA, the ZC will hear the request again. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 1 Rockwood Terrace. Seconded by Carmel Levy. Passed 15-0-1 (1 left early).

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, May 1 and May 15 at 7:00pm at Farnsworth House. On May 1, there will be requests from 67 Forest Hills Street, 21 Rocky Nook Terrace, 32 Rockview Street, and the

return of 197-201 Green Street. On May 15 will be requests from 11 Minton Street and 17 Chestnut Avenue.

5.3. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported the Public Service Committee met on April 2 at Curtis Hall. On the agenda was continued discussion on bicycle safety, especially the proposal for protected bicycle lanes on Centre and South Streets. The Boston Transportation Department has promised to attend the May Public Service Committee meeting. In addition, the Committee developed a list of streets needing repair, and crosswalks and bicycle lanes needing repainting.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, May 6 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall. On the agenda will be a request from the Blue Nile Café for a change in its beer & wine license to add the serving of cordials, and the continued discussion on bicycle safety.

5.4. Environment, Parks & Energy Committee: The Committee is meeting without a Chair for a little while. Are there any immediate issues that would need a Chair to push forward? Members of the JP Neighborhood Council need to help guide the Committee and its mandate. Kevin Rainsford urged JPNC members to consider joining and think about chairing the EPE Committee. Esther Tutella-Chen will set a date for the next Committee meeting.

5.5. Ad Hoc Education Committee: Trevor Wissink-Adams reported the Committee met on April 16. They have reached out to Boston Public Schools (BPS) and State Rep. Nika Elugardo on helping parents register their children for a school for fall 2019. In addition, they discussed a one-year update on BuildBPS.

The next Education Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21.

6. Old Business/New Business:

- Omer Hecht asked that the Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee consider the matter of conflict of interest for JPNC members when they appear before the Zoning Committee.
- Omer Hecht asked the Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee to consider the issue of Zoning Committee members owning a lot of property in the neighborhood. Is this a conflict of interest?
- Kyle Smith asked that the meeting room be restored to its original configuration before the JPNC leaves.

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, May 28, 2019 at 7:00PM at Farnsworth House
Next Executive Committee meeting, Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 7:00pm at JP Licks.