

## Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council

### October 22, 2019 Minutes

**JPNC Attendance:** Kevin Rainsford, Max Glikman, Michael Reiskind, Vicky Arroyo, Robin Cheung, Valerie Coimbra, Bernard Doherty, Marvin Mathelier, Samantha Montano, Peg Preble, Gert Thorn, Esther Tutella-Chen, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Sam Wohlforth.

**Other attendees:** Dana Gonsalves, Sarah Freeman, Dorothy Farrell, Boe Morgan, Aidan Foley, Adam Grenier, Will Cohen, Diane Simpson, Mary Brady, Delhia Emanuel, Vivian Carlo, Rickie Harvey (From Energy Security to Energy Shift), Nathan Phillips (From Energy Security to Energy Shift), Natalie Kaufman (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Justin McClarey (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

Meeting called to order at 7:10pm by Kevin Rainsford at Farnsworth House.

**1. Introductions:** Council members introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of July, August, and September minutes:** The minutes from the August 27 meeting were approved. The approval of the July and September minutes were tabled to the November meeting.

#### **3. Announcements:**

**Second Announcement of Vacancy on the Council:** Kevin Rainsford made the second announcement of the vacancy of an At-Large seat. There were two nominations at this meeting: Aidan Foley from 40 Chestnut Square said that he would commit to attending evening meetings of the Council. He is a developer of solar energy projects and works on land use and conservation issues. He has lived in Jamaica Plain twice: eight years presently and one year previously. He has an office on Green Street and is active in school issues, too. He would be interested in the Zoning Committee, Housing & Development Committee, or the Parks + Committee. Will Cohen from 61 Walk Hill Street said that he would like to be on the Neighborhood Council. He works at Utile as an urban planner and designer of neighborhood master plans. There was lot of discussion on when to vote on the vacancy. Motion by Max Glikman to wait and have the vote to fill the vacancy at the November meeting. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Failed 6-8-0. Motion by Esther Tutella-Chen to vote to fill the vacancy at today's meeting. Seconded by Max Glikman. Failed 2-11-1.

#### **3.2 Other Announcements:**

- City Councillor Matt O'Malley is hosting his 15th Annual Fall Fiesta on Saturday, October 26 from 34pm to 7pm at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church Hall, 7 VFW Parkway.
- JP Centre/South Main Streets has an Economic Vitality (EV) Committee that has been speaking to Chase Bank about their new storefront branch. Chase Bank has committed to doing things for the community. The EV Committee, which meets once a month, is looking for volunteers to help draft the commitments.
- The Zoo Howl at the Franklin Park Zoo will take place on October 26 and October 27 from 11:00am to 3:00pm.
- The 16th annual Canine Costume Parade will be on Saturday, October 26. Parade starts at 1:00pm, registration is at 12noon at First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain.
- The Project Notification Form (PNF) for the Faulkner Hospital expansion has been issued.
- Natalie Kaufman from Rep. Liz Malia's office said that the House is debating the Education Bill on October 23.

**4. Presentation on "From Energy Security to Energy Shift":** Boston University professor Nathan Phillips spoke about preparing the region for future large-scale energy outages such as in the Merrimack Valley or caused by climate change. Gas is the most vulnerable - affected by seawater and ground water infiltration - and electricity is the most resilient. They are looking for 100 volunteer homes in Boston's District 6 to assess their electric capacity (look at their electric panel). District 6 was chosen because of the diversity of housing stock. The goals are to (1) provide disaster responders with information about which houses are able to switch to electric-based heating/cooking in the event of future potential gas outages associated with deferred maintenance or climate change, and to (2) lay groundwork to prioritize electric upgrades in city housing stock for permanent electrification to meet future climate action plans. Members' questions were about whether heat pumps were part of the energy assessment (yes) and whether the audit results would be passed back to the homeowner (yes).

**5. Presentation by Core Empowerment:** Tomás Gonzalez, Chief Operating Officer of Core Empowerment, gave a status report on the proposed recreational cannabis facility proposed for Hyde Square and what has happened since they came in January this year. At that time they expected to open in October 2019, but it will be another six months before they can open (according to the State). Facilities in Roxbury and East Boston will probably open earlier than Core Empowerment. No hiring is being done yet; they are waiting until they get a provisional license. The plans are still the same: a 6,000 sq. ft. facility in the former Bella Luna space. (The open NETA in Brookline is 2,000-4,000 sq. ft.) They plan on accommodating up to 170 customers (twice as many as NETA) with all queuing inside the facility. All customers will be by appointment for the first month. Since January, they have met with the local merchants, Mayor Walsh, and Chris Osgood, the City's Chief of Streets (in charge of Transportation and Public Works). A transportation audit will be

done, perhaps leading to new regulations and signs on Barbara Street and So. Huntington Avenue. Core Empowerment is still hoping that the Transportation Department will approve the shared valet curb spaces with off-site parking spaces - maybe the MSPCA, the church on Estrella, and Stop & Shop. Still looking for 50-70 spaces. By Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) regulations, they must have at least 12 spaces. Gert Thorn repeatedly asked whether they would open if they do not get more than the minimum 12 spaces. Mr. Gonzalez promised that Core Empowerment will keep its commitments on parking made to the merchants and the community. Robin Cheung asked about the possibility of a delivery service. Core Empowerment does not plan on doing delivery at this time. "Equity Establishments" will get a 2-year priority. Sam Wohlforth asked if they will be fourth, fifth, or sixth to open in Boston. They will be tenth in the region. How will parking enforcement be done at Whole Foods and the MSPCA? There was agreement to Gert Thorn's request to check the JPNC minutes from January 2019 for the Core Empowerment promises and representations.

## **6. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**6.1. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on October 1 at Curtis Hall. On the agenda was discussion of the traffic plans for the Faulkner Hospital expansion. There was general agreement that a significant improvement in transit is needed for the expansion to proceed. Also, Eugene O'Neill's (at 3700 Washington Street) has contacted the Committee. They were supported by the JPNC in July for a neighborhood-restricted all alcohol license and entertainment license, but were denied by the Licensing Board (probably no licenses were available). They are now returning with a request to buy a license and transfer it to 3700 Washington Street. It is exactly the same request, same manager, same hours - except that the new licensee is a different corporation with the same equity. The Committee is asking the JPNC to support this repeat request with the changed licensee. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the petition of Creative Restaurant Concepts, Inc., doing business as "Whisky Saigon," at 110-116 Boylston Street in Boston for a transfer of their seven-day common victualler all alcohol license to Cill Dara, Inc., doing business as "Eugene O'Neill's," at 3700 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain with a 1:00 am closing hour, with Mellissa Hunt as manager, and also for an entertainment license for four TVs, trivia, karaoke, and up to three live performers. Seconded by Kevin Rainsford. Passed 14-0-0.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 5 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall. On the agenda will be two requests: a Dunkin' in the new building at 37 So. Huntington Avenue is asking for a common victualler license with a 5:00am opening, and Eugene O'Neill's at 3700 Washington Street will be coming as a courtesy to inform folks about their change in plans for an all-alcohol license and entertainment license.

**6.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Carolyn Royce was not in attendance. Sam Wohlforth reported that the H&DC met on October 15 at the Brookside Health Center. On the agenda was an update on the citywide Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) Campaign. The requests are to 1) lower the threshold on the number of units (now 10) that trigger the IDP with affordable units, 2) raise the minimum percentage of affordable units required to 33% (the JPNC now asks for 25%), 3) lower the percentage of Area Median Income (AMI) that qualifies applicants for an affordable unit below the present 100%, and 4) make all affordable units permanently affordable (they now expire in 30 years plus 20 years). The JPNC insists that the affordable units be on-site. They are working closely with the IDP Coalition. Bernie Doherty said that affordability is the most important issue in our community.

Should the JPNC have an Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee that gathers folks from the H&DC, Zoning Committee and Parks + Committee? Tabled to the next meeting.

Gert Thorn brought up the design for the Shattuck campus. After looking at the plans, he was dismayed that the concept is for densely-packed 4-storey buildings, making it look like a bad office park. We need to have community representatives on the RFP (Request for Proposals) process. The letter that the H&DC sent did ask for continued community input on Shattuck, specifically on the RFP both before its issuance and after.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, November 19 at 6:30pm at the Brookside Health Center (subsequently moved to the Bowditch School). On the agenda will be a presentation from the developers of 10 Stonley Road (35 Brookley Road). Their Article 80 meeting will be on October 24 at The English High School.

**6.3. Ad Hoc Parks + Committee:** Esther Tutella-Chen said that the Committee will meet on Thursday, October 24 at 7:00pm at Farnsworth House. On the agenda will be JoAnn Robinson, a landscape historian, who will be speaking on the history of Franklin Park as well as ways to ideally integrate supportive housing with the Park.

Marvin Mathelier asked about the possibility of dog parks in Franklin Park. Justin McClarey, from City Councillor Matt O'Malley's office, said the Councillor will have conversations with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on this issue. Gert Thorn asked to have better signage.

There will be no November meeting of the Parks + Committee, but Esther Tutella-Chen urged folks to participate in a mini clean-up and daffodil planting on Saturday, November 2 at the South Street Mall (South Street and Carolina Avenue) starting at 9:00am.

**6.4. Ad Hoc Education Committee:** Trevor Wissink-Adams reported that the Committee met on Monday, October 7 at 7pm at Curtis Hall. Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Brenda Cassellius will be coming to Jamaica Plain at The English High School on Monday, November 25 at 6:00pm in a community meeting for Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and West Roxbury. The Education Committee will do outreach for this meeting.

The Committee is working on a mobile welcome center in time for January 2020, to be set up on weekends and weekday

evenings.

The Committee is changing the date for its monthly meetings; they will be meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. The next Education Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, November 13 at 7:00pm at Curtis Hall or JP Licks.

**6.5. Zoning Committee (ZC):** Max Glikman reported that the Zoning Committee met on October 16 and four requests were considered. Two requests will be considered together, so three votes are needed tonight. 1) 32 Jamaica Street, a request by Nina Reis to rebuild enclosed porch in location and within existing footprint of existing porch. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. 2) 26 Jamaica Street, a request by Rebecca Rollins to confirm occupancy as a single-family residence and add bump-out additions on front and side, expand second floor above bump-outs, in connection with interior renovation and adding bathroom. This is an existing non-conforming use. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. 3) 9-11 and 13-15 Catherine Street, a request by 15 Catherine Street LLC (Bee Yeo, manager) to construct two 2-unit townhomes, each with a shared wall (four units in total). Each townhome to consist of three bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, first-floor garage parking sufficient for two cars, and a roof deck. These are really big units, 2,000 sq. ft. Each has a 2-car garage. Excessive FAR (Floor Area Ratio) and excessive height were the biggest issues in the neighborhood. The community wanted to reduce the size of the buildings, but the developer did not want to defer; there had already been nine meetings. The recommendation of the ZC is to deny. Motion by Bernie Doherty to support the recommendations of the Zoning Committee as presented on 32 Jamaica Street, 26 Jamaica Street, and 9-11 and 13-15 Catherine Street. Seconded by Sam Wohlforth. Comments from the nearby neighbors of Catherine Street were strongly to deny. The project is four times the size of the house it is replacing. The old building was a half-way house. Bernie Doherty said that this is a massive project that eats up the front, side and back yards. Passed 13-0-0 (1 left early). The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, November 6 and November 20 at 7:00pm at Farnsworth House.

**6.6. Ad Hoc Outreach Task Force:** Max Glikman said that the Outreach Task Force will meet on Monday, November 11 at 6:00pm at JP Licks.

**7. New Business:** Kevin Rainsford reminded everyone that the JPNC election of all members is scheduled for April 2020. If folks want to volunteer, please contact him.

- The next Federal Census will be in 2020. The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JP NDC) is helping with the City of Boston's Complete Count Committee. Should we invite Sebastian Zapata, coordinator for the City's Boston Counts 2020, to a future JPNC meeting?

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next JPNC meeting: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 at 7:00PM at Farnsworth House

Next Executive Committee meeting, Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 7:00pm at JP Licks.