

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council

September 22, 2020 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Kevin Rainsford, Max Glikman, Michael Reiskind, Will Cohen, Valerie Coimbra, Bernard Doherty, Samantha Montano, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Gert Thorn, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Dottie Farrell, Paige Sparks, Colin Turner, Cheyanne Devaney, Ava Cheloff, Robert Kordenbrock, Roxanne Longoria, Maggie Owens (Boston Parks and Recreation), State Rep. Nika Elugardo, Liana Poston (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Natalie Kaufman (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Lena Shapiro (Office of Sen. Chang-Diaz), Alicia Payne (Office of City Councillor Michael Flaherty), Rachel Nagin (Office of City Councillor Annissa Essaibi-George), 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 7:08pm by Kevin Rainsford via Zoom.

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

2. Approval of August minutes: There was a change needed in the August minutes. Under the section on Apothca, there should be two additional sentences which read "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." Motion by Max Glikman to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2020 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Bernard Doherty. Passed 10-0-2.

3. Announcements:

- There will be an Abutters Meeting via Webex on Thursday, September 24 at 6:00pm on the proposal by Apothca for a retail marijuana shop at 54A Hyde Park Avenue.
- Folks in Egleston Square are continuing the series of open dialogues - "Call It Out" - on structural racism in Egleston Square. The second one will be Sunday, September 27 from 12:30pm-2:30pm at the yard at the Egleston Branch Library.
- There will be a Family Mindfulness 5K COVID-safe walk on Saturday, October 3 as a fundraiser for the South Street Youth Center. Please register on-line ahead of time to get a registration time and walk time.
- There was a complaint about very loud music and noise from midnight to 4am coming from the Arnold Arboretum's South Street Gate area and Franklin Park. Bernie Doherty urged the press to make residents aware of this blight in our neighborhoods.
- The Boston Police Reform Task Force is accepting comments on their draft report until Friday, September 25.
- There will be a retirement party for Richard Thal, long-time Executive Director of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, It will be on Friday, October 16 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm.
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation. (DCR) is making physical improvements to the Arborway from Jamaica Pond to Forest Hills, consisting of newer sidewalks and ramps. In the next phase, they will do lane striping at Murray Circle and for new bike lanes. Written comments will be accepted until October 2.

4. Presentation on Parcel Priority Plan: Maggie Owens, planner at the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, said that the Parcel Priority Plan is a way for the Parks Department to choose which areas in the City should be protected or acquired for open space use. Because this is about open space, a very spatial-oriented tool is needed to gather data, and the Parks Department is using an online survey (at www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/parcel-priority-plan#survey) where folks can point to specific areas they are interested in. The survey results will be key in developing a Priority Parcel List which will help develop the City's 2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan update. She urged JPNC members to help with the outreach for the survey. She also spoke about how to reach folks with limited internet access. There is a Virtual Open House on their website (sepia-clarinet-xdjd.squarespace.com) where residents can learn more about the project, look at neighborhood maps, and are then urged to take the survey. The City has nearly 175,000 parcels of land, and with the rapid development occurring, an updated open space plan is needed. Also, the parcels could be parks or open space now, but need more protection from development in perpetuity. Other entities could also assist the Parks Department in protecting parcels. Parcels should be looked at through the lenses of climate, equity, and access. Strategies could include more funds for acquisition of parcels and better relationships with allied non-profit groups. Ms. Owens said she was available for comments on all aspects of this Plan and asked for comments and questions. Gert Thorn complimented the design of the survey on its comprehensiveness. Ms. Owens added that parcels do not have to be vacant to be considered for the Plan. Also, residents can advocate for general areas, as well as for specific parcels. Parcels brought up by members were: Forest Hills Cemetery, Shattuck Hospital, Hellenic Hill, and the Lorber Family Playground near Mildred Hailey Apartments. Kevin Rainsford again urged everyone to take the survey.

5. Rep. Nika Elugardo: State Representative Nika Elugardo started by saying that she was happy to update the JPNC on matters of policy that have been happening since February. The State House is practically on hold; there are five important areas of legislation that haven't come out of their Conference Committees: climate, policing, health care, economic development, and transportation funding. There will 'probably' not be a vote on this year's budget before the November

election. There is an \$8-10Billion deficit spread across the two recent fiscal years. Massachusetts will have to balance its budget by itself, because of the lack of Federal contributions. Calendar year 2021 should be a better year. There are over 150 bills related to COVID-19 backlogged in the House; all bills have to be looked at by the Ways & Means Committee. With the deficit, this is even more important this year. On the good side, Ways & Means has promised to make no cuts in the area of education funding. Rep. Elugardo is also trying to prioritize no cuts in the areas of small business (especially businesses of color), elders, disabilities, health care, and public safety. She is emphasizing thinking strategically about spending any new COVID-19 funds, such as using some for mental health for kids. She has found that residents in Boston Housing Authority (BHA) housing are great at getting the word out on where folks need help. She had asked for \$2Million for youth jobs and PPE/Testing/Tracking. \$1Million was passed in the supplemental budget, but the funds have not been released. Youth jobs are intimately tied to public safety in their communities - the more youth jobs, the less crime. Her district encompasses half of Jamaica Plain, as well as some of Roslindale, Mission Hill, and Brookline. By thinking about the district as a whole, it helps bring folks from disparate parts of the district together. Right now, Jamaica Plain has a need for volunteer proctors; please reach out to Isabel Torres (isabel.torres@mahouse.gov). In Mission Hill, she has been asking the whole district to contribute to a critical need for school kids: "Tools for School" is a request for 800 headsets for 800 kids in school. The noise in a home with lots of kids is too high to focus on remote learning. Interns are also going into every household to assess their needs for remote learning. She is also running a photo contest with cash prizes which helps the kids and adults realize that the whole community is looking out for them.

Question: Trevor Wissink-Adams asked a followup question on the volunteers needed in Jamaica Plain. In summary, the Representative offered to speak to anyone who wants to talk policy or other issues and shared her cell phone number.

6. Apothca, Inc.: Kevin Rainsford reminded folks that Apothca, Inc. has come to the last two JPNC meetings and is now asking for a letter of limited, non-opposition for Apothca, Inc. to begin exploring the possibility of opening a recreational cannabis dispensary at 54 Hyde Park Avenue. The draft letter was shared with members. Mr. Rainsford emphasized that this was not an endorsement, but an agreement that Apothca can begin the Boston Cannabis Board process. Conversation was about the lack of Economic Empowerment candidates, and that Apothca not only elicit community feedback, but also respond to it. Gert Thorn thought that the traffic study was poorly designed and insufficient; it did not even address the issue of parking in the neighborhood. It compares Jamaica Plain, Brookline and Lynn, and separates normal trips and bypass trips. It says that Brookline, which also has a nearby transit station, has 76% of its visitors come by car. It offers no conclusions and offers no specific action steps for Jamaica Plain. The whole study has an overtone of marketing and salesmanship. Mr. Thorn would like to know what is the impact of parking on this neighborhood and this study does not address that. Bernie Doherty agreed that we need to make sure further studies are done much better. Gert Thorn asked that the link for the Abutters Meeting on September 24 go out to the JPNC members.

Motion by Kevin Rainsford to send a letter of non-opposition for Apothca, Inc. to at least begin the process with the expectation that Apothca will come before the JPNC in the future if and when they request a change in Zoning and Licensing. Seconded by Michael Reiskind. Passed 8-0-4.

7. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

7.1. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on September 8 via Zoom. There were two requests for business licenses; the first was a request by CADA DIA Nutrition for a new common victualler (CV) license at 7 Burroughs Street. This is a nutrition smoothie café with the hours of 7:00am to 6:00pm, with Nicole Gunn as manager. The recommendation of the Public Service Committee was to approve. Their legal hearing at the Licensing Board for the CV license was on September 16, so the matter had to go through the Executive Committee. However, there are only six seats in the café, and the applicant may need a variance for take-out, so we are recommending approval of take out for CADA DIA at this time. (Remember that zoning variances go to the building owner, so we add on the standard proviso.) Motion by Michael Reiskind that the JPNC support the petition of Burroughs Street Partners LLC at 7 Burroughs Street in Jamaica Plain to change the legal occupancy to include restaurant with #36A take-out use at this address, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay with the current business tenant at 7 Burroughs Street 1R, Nicole Gunn, doing business as "CADA DIA Nutrition." Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 12-0-0.

The second request was by Mangú Dominican Bistro at 264 Hyde Park Avenue for a change in its closing hour from 9:00pm to 1:00am. At the meeting, there were neighbors both in favor and opposed to the change. The applicant, Ernis De Los Santos was very aware of the issues, promised to run a quiet operation and be available by cell phone to his neighbors. Motion by Michael Reiskind that the JPNC support the petition of DLS Kitchen Inc., doing business as "Mangú Dominican Bistro" at 264 Hyde Park Avenue in Jamaica Plain for a change in hours of its 7-Day Common Victualler License from 8:00 am - 9:00 pm to 8:00 am - 1:00 am. Seconded by Kevin Rainsford. Bernie Doherty thought that this was too late a closing for a neighborhood restaurant and would become a problem. Gert Thorn thought the Committee should have listened more to the opposing neighbors and voted to support the opposition, Passed 10-0-2. The Committee also continued its discussion on reforming the Boston Police Department. The Subcommittee on Police Procedures has been meeting weekly. The focus this week is on the Boston Police Reform Task Force's interim recommendations.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, October 6 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a

report from the Subcommittee on reforming the Boston Police Department.

7.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Kevin Rainsford reported that the H&DC met on September 15 via Zoom. The Subcommittee on Net Carbon Zero Construction continues to meet. The Subcommittee recommends a vote on a letter supporting The Community Builders in the redevelopment of the Mildred Hailey apartments. Motion by Kevin Rainsford to send the letter supporting The Community Builders in their pursuit to find funding for the upcoming phase of redevelopment of the Mildred Hailey apartments. Seconded by Samantha Montano. Carolyn Royce recommended that the third paragraph become the first paragraph. There was a lot of discussion on the larger aspects of affordable housing and the greater needs of residents. Passed 9-0-3.

The Net Zero subcommittee will meet next on Monday, October 19 at 6:30pm via Zoom.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

7.3. Zoning Committee (ZC): Max Glikman reported that the Zoning Committee met on September 2 and September 16 as virtual meetings. Three matters were heard and need votes tonight. 1) 387-399 Centre Street, a petition by Robert Murphy/Rock Star Body Piercing LLC (acting as agent for Hyde Square Realty Company LLC) to convert the existing beauty salon to a body piercing studio. The Zoning Committee spent a lot of time on this matter. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval, with provisos that the conditional use is for this business and this applicant only, and that the JPNC takes no position on the dispute between the landlord and the former tenant. 2) 68 South Street, a petition by Gabrielle Hahn (acting as agent for McCormack & Scanlan LLC) to change the use to allow a tattoo studio. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval, with proviso that the conditional use is for this business and this applicant only. 3) 34-36 Rossmore Road, a petition by Richard Jarrell to demolish the existing building at 34 Rossmore Road and construct two new three-family residences. The applicant has gained the approval of the local Stonybrook Neighborhood Association. How much open space is on the lot? The square footage of each of the lots is 3,600 sq. ft. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval, with proviso that the exterior mechanicals are to be hidden or screened. Motion by Max Glikman to support the recommendations of the Zoning Committee on 387-399 Centre Street, 68 South Street, and 34-36 Rossmore Road. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Passed 11-1-0.

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, October 7 and October 21 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

8. Old Business/New Business: Kevin Rainsford is thinking about restarting the ad hoc Parks + Committee. Please contact him if you are interested.

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

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

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