

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**  
**November 24, 2020 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Kevin Rainsford, Max Glikman, Michael Reiskind, Vicky Arroyo, David Baron, Bernard Doherty, Robin Cheung, Will Cohen, Marvin Mathelier. Samantha Montaña, Peg Preble, Carolyn Royce, Kyle Smith, Gert Thorn, Trevor Wissink-Adams, and Priscilla Yang.

**Other attendees:** Sarah Freeman, Dottie Farrell, Celeste Walker, Louise Johnson, Louise Robbins, Robert Kordenbrock, Paige Sparks, Colin Turner, Kristine Grimes, Ruan Oliveira, Frank, Deb Asbrand (Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association), Lena Shapiro (Office of Sen. Chang-Diaz), Justin McClarey (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Lindsey Santana (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin), and one by phone number only.

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm by Kevin Rainsford via Zoom.

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

**2. Approval of October minutes:** Motion by David Baron to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Samantha Montaña. Passed 10-0-4 (2 came late).

**3. Announcements:**

- The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announced they will be making \$20,000 of improvements with lane markings within the Arborway Parkway Improvements Project.
- Because of reduced ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is proposing changes in service, including eliminating Heath Street Station as the terminus of the E- Line branch of the Green Line. The line is proposed to terminate at Brigham Circle. Kevin Rainsford is asking the MBTA to come to the JPNC, perhaps at a special meeting in late November or early December.
- There will be a virtual hearing of the Boston City Council's Committee on Government Operations about the possibility of establishing a police Civilian Review Board in Boston and an Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT). It will be on Tuesday, December 1 starting at 12:30pm.
- More turkeys for Thanksgiving are probably still needed for Mildred Hailey Apartments. Contact State Rep. Nika Elugardo's office.

**4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**4.1. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on November 10 via Zoom. There was re-discussion of a request from LANA (the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association) and the Roslindale Wetlands Task Force for a letter of support for their efforts to have the City purchase 104 and 108 Walter Street in Roslindale. This is for affordable housing at 104 Walter Street and green space protection at 108 Walter Street. There was an excellent presentation from the president of LANA at the Committee meeting. Questions at the JPNC related to the size of the existing Roslindale Urban Wetlands (10 Acres), do the two parcels have to be linked (yes, they have always had common ownership and are being sold together), how locked in a developer might be on the design of the affordable housing development (the community has already vetted the 4-unit proposal). Deb Asbrand, from the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association, was in attendance and answered many questions. At the Committee, there was pushback on the open space proposal because of the abundance of green space in this area of the City. The money should be spent in areas more in need of green space. There was also pushback on the affordable housing proposal; the thought was that it was economically unfeasible. Motion by Michael Reiskind to write letters to the Mayor, the City Council, and the City's Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space to support the purchase of 104 and 108 Walter Street in Roslindale for up to four units of affordable housing at 104 Walter Street and green space protection at 108 Walter Street. Seconded by Max Glikman. Passed 11-1-4.

The Committee also considered a request from La Patrona for a new common victualler license at 360 Centre Street. This is a small taqueria in the long storefront block between Forbes and Wyman Streets. It is a small restaurant with no seats and a 9:00pm closing hour. There will be no alcohol served, no solid security grates on the front of the store, and the owner and manager is Elizabeth Cabral. Since this is a take-out restaurant, Ms. Cabral agreed to put the name "La Patrona" on all bags and take-out containers. There are two motions related to the restaurant which will be considered together: Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the petition of La Patrona Mexican Grill LLC, doing business as "La Patrona Mexican Grill" at 360 Centre Street in Jamaica Plain for a Common Victualler License, with the hours of 11:00am to 9:00pm, with Elizabeth Cabral as manager; AND to support the petition of Alberto Vassallo, jr. at 360 Centre 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 360 Centre Street, La Patrona Mexican Grill. Seconded by Bernard Doherty. Passed 15-0-0 (1 absent).

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, December 1 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Carolyn Royce reported that the H&DC met on November 16 via Zoom. The Subcommittee on Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Construction continues to meet. New zoning guidelines are coming

for net zero construction that will affect everybody, new standards have been written for NZC construction for affordable housing, and rules for bigger buildings (the Building Energy Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO)) are being revised - BERDO 2.0. The H&DC's Healthy Homes Guidelines are being looked at to be updated for NZC construction. Matt Henry from the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JP NDC) informed the H&DC that they are changing the affordability rates for the housing that they are building on the former MassDOT parcels at 71-85 Call Street (Southwest Corridor). Because of financial issues, they are switching from four rental units and four home-ownership units to all eight units being home-ownership; the affordability rates are going from 60-80-100% of AMI (Area Median Income) to 80-100% of AMI. Discussion is continuing on whether the AMI rates can be lowered on one or two of those units. In response to a question, the Council was informed that the change came because the JPNDC funder, MassHousing, was not allowed to lend on this model of own-and-rent. They hope to change the rules to allow this model in the future. There was discussion on the H&DC doing advocacy to change the rules.

632-638 Centre Street (known as the Zuroff building) has been under construction for at least two years. It has now begun an Article 80 small project review, but about a year ago it had already come and been approved by the Zoning Committee. This project has a long history with the neighbors that the H&DC does not know about. The H&DC is recommending a letter go out on the Article 80 submission on 632-638 Centre Street with some recommendations, but without commenting on support for the project. The recommendations were about infrastructure improvements to allow future electric use, more conversations with neighbors to resolve outstanding issues, and strong communications between neighbors and builder to mitigate construction impacts. All affordable units will be on-site and the City has already made some positive changes to the proposal. Motion by Carolyn Royce to submit an Article 80 comment letter to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) regarding 632-638 Centre Street for a 4-story building with 18 residential units and 4 commercial units. Seconded by Dave Baron. Gert Thorn felt that while the exterior facade has become much better, this project sets a bad precedent; the building is too high now at three stories and when a fourth floor is added, it will overwhelm its neighbors. Future additional stories added to the one-story buildings all along Centre Street will result in a whole strip of four-story buildings, even some with a fifth-floor penthouse. He said that this is a vote on the future look of Centre Street and a four-story building here will be a mistake. Also, there is not enough benefit coming back to the community in mitigation for the additional height. There was a lot of discussion on the convoluted process for this project and the community process for all Article 80 projects. Passed 10-4-1 (1 absent). The comment period on this project will be open until November 27.

The Net Zero Carbon Construction subcommittee will meet next on Monday, December 14 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, December 15 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.3. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on November 4 as a virtual meeting. Two matters were heard and need votes tonight. 1) 17 Kingsboro Park, a petition by David Yassa to renovate a third-floor space to add additional living area for a second-story condo unit. This building is actually a condominium and the condominium documents allow them to use the third story. It is needed for additional work space for the existing family. The original design had a curved arch "parapet roof" in the front, but after discussion it was changed. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval, with the proviso that the parapet roof be removed from the design. 2) 3305-3307 Washington Street, a petition by 3305-3309 Washington LLC (Bryan Murkland) to combine existing lots into one 9,378 sq. ft lot; construct a 3-4 story, mixed-use building with commercial space, ~~nine~~ ten (10) residential units (including one affordable unit at 70% AMI), and ~~nine~~ 10 parking spaces; upper-floor units to have individual roof decks; building to be fully sprinklered. This proposal had come to the Zoning Committee before. The original proposal had twelve units in a newly-constructed building on a double lot. It would be a victorian-looking building almost three times the size of the present building. The Brookside Neighborhood Association (BNA), Egleston Square Neighborhood Association (ESNA), and the Zoning Committee all liked the plan. However, the Zoning Board of Appeal denied it, asking that it be made smaller and look different. The new proposal has a different design and ten units; one additional affordable unit has been added for a total of ten. The BNA and ESNA have approved the new design. An abutting neighbor on Ophir Street, who had a concerns about a fence, reached a written agreement with the developer and came to the meeting to support. The recommendation of the ZC is to recommend approval, subject to the Memorandum of Understanding with the abutting Ophir Street neighbor. Gert Thorn asked for drawings to be available to look at during these JPNC meetings. Motion by Dave Baron to support the recommendations of the Zoning Committee on 17 Kingsboro Park and 3305-3307 Washington Street. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Passed 15-0-1.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be 97 and 99 Williams Street, 8 Robeson Street, and 15 Nira Avenue.

**4.4. Outreach/Election Committee:** Max Glikman said that the Committee met on Monday, November 9 and discussed plans for the next JP Neighborhood Council Election on April 24, 2021. The Committee is exploring ways to maintain everyone's safety in light of the pandemic. Nomination packets will be available on February 26, 2021. Any signatures that had been collected for the election that was scheduled for last April 2020 will be accepted for this Election. Max Glikman encouraged folks to join the meeting and help in outreach for the Election.

The next Outreach/Election Committee meeting will be on Monday, December 14 at 6:30pm via Zoom

**5. First Announcement of Council vacancy:** Kevin Rainsford made the official announcement that there is a vacancy on the JP Neighborhood Council in Area B, because Emily Tabor has resigned from the Council. According to the By-Laws, nominations for a replacement for her Area B seat may be accepted starting at the December meeting.

**6. Old Business/New Business:**

- Dave Baron asked that the JPNC make use of a Rule of Cloture so that discussion does not go on too long. A member may be recognized and call for a vote, move the question, or debate to be ended. This motion to cut off debate takes precedence and must be voted on with a 2/3 majority. Mr. Baron asked that JPNC members look at the Rule of Cloture to learn about it. It can be a useful tool.
- Gert Thorn asked again that at least one drawing of Zoning Committee proposals be available to look at during these JPNC meetings. It should show the building in relation to its immediate neighbors. He asked that it be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Lindsey Santana said there is a proposal for another recreational cannabis facility in Jamaica Plain at 1589 Columbus Avenue. She asked what should the community process be? After they meet with local neighborhood associations, should they come to the Zoning Committee, the Public Service Committee or the full JP Neighborhood Council? For the past two businesses, the applicants met with the full JPNC and then came back to the Zoning Committee. It was agreed that this same process should be followed - a first informational meeting with leafletting and posting a notice on the site, then a second meeting after traffic and other studies are done, then a meeting with the Zoning Committee.
- Michael Reiskind asked, as a favor, whether this video can be released (just this once) to the reporter from the Boston Bulletin for help in writing an article. The video is not to be disseminated. Kevin Rainsford asked again about the big question whether the JPNC should make these videos public. Motion by Dave Baron to release the recording (without the chat) of this meeting for Richard Heath's own use as a journalist for the Boston Bulletin, with the understanding that the recording itself is not for publication. Seconded by Carolyn Royce. Richard Heath withdrew his request, so there was no vote taken.
- Sarah Freeman said that some groups now add a disclaimer at the start of virtual meetings that there is always an option for participants to turn off their video camera so that they are not visible and their background remains private.
- Sam Wohlforth has not been attending JPNC meetings since March. Kevin Rainsford reached out to him and did not get an answer. Motion by Kevin Rainsford that the JPNC start the process of removing Mr. Wohlforth from the Council for just cause (absence). Seconded by Max Glikman. The process is to reach out again by letter and invite him to respond or come to the Council to answer. Passed 14-0-0 (2 left early).
- The Holiday TrolleyTour is cancelled this year due to the pandemic. There will be a lit Holiday Tree at the Monument.

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:54pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, December 22 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, December 17 at 7:00PM via Zoom.