

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
October 26, 2021 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Samantha Montaña, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Marvin Mathelier, Peg Preble, Micah Sachs, Gert Thorn, and Trevor Wissink-Adams.

Elected at the meeting: Kevin Rainsford and Alexis Rickmers.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Paige Sparks, Dottie Farrell, Sarah Horsley, Kristine Grimes, Julie Damiano, Dan Herrow, Jay Flynn (Transit Matters), Lena Shapiro (Office of State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz), Michael Giordano (Office of City Councillor Matt O'Malley), Tiffani Caballero (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm via Zoom by Samantha Montaña.

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

2. Approval of September minutes: Tabled

3. Announcements:

3.1 Recording of JPNC meetings: There was a question in the Housing & Development Committee about sharing the Zoom recordings of the Committee's meetings. Samantha Montaña also wondered whether the JPNC should keep recording all meetings, because it uses an awful lot of storage space; if we do record, should we share the recordings with folks who could not attend the meetings and want to view them later? Opinion was varied: to not record; to record and share to the public, but delete after a month or two; and to use only as an aid to the written minutes. Motion by David Baron to not record the full JPNC monthly meetings (JPNC committees are allowed to record and share their recordings). Seconded by Trevor Wissink-Adams. Passed 7-2-0.

3.3 Committee Membership Approvals: The Chair reminded committees that the roster of their membership - both Council and community members - need to be approved by the full Council. On behalf of the Housing & Development Committee, Marvin Mathelier nominated two people as new community members and two former Council members as community members: Marvin J. Watkins of 1953 Columbus Avenue, Jaya Civita Ayer of 76 Wenham Street, Kevin Rainsford of 70 Paul Gore Street, and Carolyn Royce of 19 Olmstead Street. On behalf of the Public Service Committee, Michael Reiskind submitted two people as new members: Peg Preble of 79 Eastland Road as a Council member and Robin Cheung of 173 Moss Hill Road as a community member. David Baron asked that the Zoning Committee submit their roster changes next month. Motion by Gert Thorn to accept Marvin J. Watkins, Jaya Civita Ayer, Kevin Rainsford, and Carolyn Royce as community members of the Housing & Development Committee, Peg Preble as a Council member of the Public Service Committee and Robin Cheung as a community member of the Public Service Committee. Seconded by Micah Sachs. Passed 9-0-0.

3.3 Council Vacancies and Council Officers: The Chair made the second announcement of Council vacancies. There are presently two vacancies in Area A, five vacancies in Area B, one vacancy in Area C, and one vacancy At-Large. Since at least 60 days has passed since the first announcement of vacancies, the vacancies may be filled at this meeting. Nominated were Kevin Rainsford of 70 Paul Gore Street for a seat in Area B, and Alexis Rickmers of 93 Moraine Street for a seat in Area C. Kevin Rainsford and Alexis Rickmers shared some information about themselves. Motion by Micah Sachs to accept Alexis Rickmers as a Council member in Area C. Seconded by Michael Reiskind. Passed 8-0-1. Motion by Bernard Doherty to accept Kevin Rainsford as a Council member in Area B. Seconded by Trevor Wissink-Adams. Passed 8-0-1. Alexis Rickmers and Kevin Rainsford took their seats on the JPNC.

There had been an agreement to consider permanent officers of the JPNC at this October meeting. Samantha Montaña (Chair), Bernie Doherty (Vice-Chair), and Michael Reiskind (Secretary/Treasurer) were named as interim officers at the August meeting. Ms. Montaña is willing to stay on as long as she gets some more technical assistance. Bernie Doherty offered to help as much as he could, especially with attendance issues. Micah Sachs and Paige Sparks volunteered to help as well. There was some brief discussion about tabling this issue until the November meeting, but a motion by Samantha Montaña failed for lack of a second. Motion by Micah Sachs to have Samantha Montaña and Bernie Doherty as permanent Chair and Vice-Chair of the JP Neighborhood Council respectively. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 7-1-3.

4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met on October 6 and October 20 as virtual meetings. Three matters were heard and need a vote tonight: 1) 34 Evergreen Street, a request by Paul Sellev to combine parcels to create a 6,234 square foot lot, change occupancy from a two-family to a three-family dwelling, legalizing existing three-family, create three off-street parking spaces, add dormer and perform renovations to interior. This is a legalization of a residential building from a two-family to a three-family which has been used as a three-family and taxed as a three-family for many years. There will be a driveway added, as well as a small dormer. The applicant and a neighbor worked out an issue, and the neighbor came to the ZC meeting to support. The ZC recommends approval. 2) 241A Chestnut Avenue, a petition by Dustin Lewis and Michael Dyer to extend rear deck, install new decking and railings; install new hot tub and associated equipment. The adjoining properties of all the rear neighbors has been pretty overgrown and wild, so there will not be privacy concerns. The ZC recommends approval. 3) 7-9 Wenham Street, a request by Eric Shinrock and Patrick Mulroy to convert the attic of an existing three-family dwelling to a fourth residential unit. This issue has come twice before the ZC. There was no opposition present at a previous meeting, but an email was received from a rear neighbor concerned about height, so the Committee deferred the request until October 20.

The redesign satisfied the neighbor's concerns, so the ZC recommends approval with the proviso that it is subject to an agreement with the rear neighbor as to porch screening, 6-foot white privacy fence installation, and retaining wall reconstruction. Bernie Doherty was uncomfortable with the legalization of 34 Evergreen Street to a 3-family. He did not agree with allowing owners to benefit from their illegal behavior. He also thought that there were too many variances requested at 7-9 Wenham Street. Gert Thorn asked again that applicants' drawings be shown at these JPNC meetings. Motion by Kevin Rainsford to support the recommendations of the Zoning Committee on 34 Evergreen Street, 241A Chestnut Avenue, and 7-9 Wenham Street. Seconded by Micah Sachs. Gert Thorn and Bernie Doherty wished that the three issues had been separated. Passed 9-0-2.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, November 3 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be 265-267 Amory Street, construction of a new 4-story residential building with nine units and a new 3-story building with office space, classroom, and a first-floor ski shop; 88 Rockview Street, construction of a new single-family residential building; 23 Iffley Road for a new driveway; and 26 Egleston Street for a new driveway.

4.2. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on October 5 via Zoom. On the agenda was a Public Works issue on trash barrels. Folks want to see more trash barrels and recycling receptacles in the business districts, especially at bus stops and at Forest Hills. They also would like the Boston Transportation Department to change its policy and put trash receptacles in the City-owned parking lots.

Also on the agenda was a petition/letter authored by Transit Matters/350 Mass about MBTA electrification (distributed by email to JPNC members). The Committee discussed it at length and felt comfortable signing the full letter, even though it mostly advocated on regional issues and doesn't directly relate to Jamaica Plain. The one paragraph that does mention our neighborhood is about the Arborway Yard: The paragraph asks that the original commitments to the community be adhered to. The Committee added two missing previous commitments of "greenspace, and youth recreation", and removed "recovery services" from the list of commitments. It did add a sentence that the MBTA should "Explore adding recovery services, if possible."

Motion by Michael Reiskind to sign on to the Transit Matters/350 Mass letter as amended by the Public Service Committee. There was no second. Kevin Rainsford thought that the addition of "recovery services" was directly related to the Shattuck Campus issue, which had always been discussed at the Housing & Development Committee. Jay Flynn spoke about Transit Matters' priorities and hoped that the bus facility would be built with community commitments wrapping around the bus buildings. Motion by Kevin Rainsford to table the signing of the letter, send the Transit Matters/350 Mass letter to the Housing & Development Committee and invite Transit Matters to the H&DC. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 8-1-2.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 9 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be two license requests: a new bubble tea shop at 3193 Washington Street, and a year-round patio for the Brendan Behan.

4.3. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Micah Sachs and Marvin Mathelier reported that the H&DC met on October 19 via Zoom. The Committee elected Marvin Mathelier Chair of the Committee and Micah Sachs as Vice-Chair. The H&DC considered an Article 80 proposal at 3409 Washington Street: a proposal to build a 29 residential-unit building at what is now a tow lot. The main concern of the Committee was the low level of affordability (5 out of 29 units, which is 17%). The Committee's goal is 25% and it was inclined to not support the project. It was agreed to defer a vote to the November H&DC meeting.

The Committee also considered changes to the proposal by The Community Builders at 127 Amory Street (on the campus of the Boston Housing Authority development at 125 Amory Street). [Samantha Montaño recused herself on this issue.] The previously approved proposal was for 140 units of housing with 25% being affordable. The request is to keep the total square footage the same, but to change it to 96 units with 100% being affordable (at 30%/50% and 80% AMI (Area Median Income)); the units will be larger, mostly 2- and 3-bedroom units. There will more subsidies from the City, State and Federal government. A draft letter from the H&DC recommending support was circulated by email to JPNC members. Motion by Bernard Doherty to sign on to the 127 Amory Street letter. Seconded by Peg Preble. Discussion about what the rent actually is of the affordable units. At the 30% AMI level, it will be \$774/month. Passed 9-0-1 (1 recusal).

The Committee also considered changes to the proposal at 10 Stonley Road (also known as 35 Brookley Road). [Samantha Montaño recused herself on this issue.] The previously approved proposal was for 45 rental units, of which 10 were affordable (22%). They were able to come back with a new proposal for 45 home-ownership units all of which are affordable (100%). The biggest concern is the length of term on the deed restriction (before it can be sold at market rate). A draft letter from the H&DC recommending support for the increase in affordability was circulated by email to JPNC members. Motion by Bernard Doherty to sign on to the 10 Stonley Road letter. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 10-0-0 (1 recusal).

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, November 16 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

5. Old Business/New Business:

- Kevin Rainsford asked that approved letters be posted on the JPNC website.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: November 18, 2021 at 7:00PM via Zoom (did not occur).