

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**  
**April 26, 2022 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Will Cohen, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Omer Hecht, Daniel Perez Lacera, Peg Preble, Kevin Rainsford, Micah Sachs, Paige Sparks, Gert Thorn, and Trevor Wissink-Adams.  
**Other attendees:** Sarah Freeman, Louise Johnson, Janet Galloway, Dana Gonsalves, Celeste Walker, Louise Robbins, Renée Stacey, Alan Benenfeld, Kyle Miller, Kathy Kottaridis, Jaya Aiyer, Ariana Herlinger, Janell, Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Lena Shapiro (Office of State Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz), Carlos Rios (Office of Rep. Nika Elugardo), Tiffani Caballero (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Will Cohen.

**0. Update from Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz:** Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz quickly ran through a list of initiatives that she has been advocating for at the State House. Education Financing Reform and Climate Change bills are better than they have been but are not adequate. She is pushing to improve transit. Housing Assistance and Affordable Housing are important, especially to reduce the wealth divide. Also important for equity is a Cannabis Social Equity bill which passed the Senate and was sent to the House. Massachusetts was the first in the nation (2012) in considering social equity as part of the cannabis licensing process. The issue of sports betting must also be looked at through a social equity lens. Sen. Chang-Diaz said that Massachusetts was rated on a national scorecard for state's use of pandemic funds and Massachusetts did not get an A. She mentioned an important bill on Green Energy Job Opportunity. Questions from members were: Bernie Doherty asked about the status of the Forbes Building - a pressing immediate issue. Sen. Chang-Diaz supports the "Tobler Bill", in which tenants have a right of first refusal when a building converts. Dave Baron said that he thinks sports betting legislation should move ahead.

**1. Introductions:** Council members introduced themselves. Aides to elected representatives and the press introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of March 20s22 minutes:** Michael Reiskind said he had been requested to correct three items: Under "Council Vacancies", it should read "one vacancy in Area A, two vacancies in Area B, and one vacancy At-large." Under Paige Sparks' talking points, Ms. Sparks does not sit on the Parks Committee, but "is interested in the Parks Committee." Under "New Chair", it should read "Micah Sachs nominated Will Cohen". Motion by Paige Sparks to approve the minutes from the March 22, 2022 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 11-0-1.

**3. Announcements:**

- The celebration of the 200th anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth has been moved to Wednesday, April 27, starting at 6:30pm at the Jamaica Pond Boathouse.
- A free overdose prevention training session will be given by the Boston Public Health Commission on Wednesday, April 27 at the First Church in Jamaica Plain, 6 Eliot Street, starting at 7:00pm.
- Mayor Wu's Coffee Hour for Jamaica Plain will be on Friday, May 13 at Mozart Street Playground, 9:30am-10:30am.

**4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**4.1. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on April 5 via Zoom. The Committee considered a request by Vee Vee for a license change and a change in occupancy for a rear patio addition to their restaurant at 763 Centre Street. This is a 37-seat restaurant that has been operating since 2008. A rear patio had been operating during 2020 under the temporary emergency regulations, but was closed in 2021. Vee Vee needs this patio to remain a viable restaurant. Patrons can only enter the patio from the side/rear from Eliot Street and Vee Vee will have additional staff at the front and back. All folks attending were strongly in favor of the additional 46 seats in a rear patio. The Public Service Committee voted to recommend support. The legal hearing for this request was held at the Licensing Board in late March and was deferred for community process. The deferral was time sensitive and this request had to be sent directly to the JPNC Executive Committee which voted to support, so no vote is needed today for the license change. However, the patio also requires a change in occupancy at the Zoning Board of Appeal, so that request is placed for a vote tonight. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of 769 Centre Street LLC to amend the Certificate of Occupancy at 763 Centre Street to add an outdoor seasonal patio (in the rear) for 46 patrons from March to November (closing hour 10:00pm). Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 11-0-1. The request for the zoning change may take some time to schedule, so the City will allow Vee Vee to reopen the patio under the temporary emergency regulations. Also on the Committee agenda was a discussion of a community process about space savers. The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, May 3. On the agenda will be a request by Blue Nile Restaurant at 389 Centre Street for an all-alcohol license. Also on the agenda will be a discussion about bicycle issues at Jamaica Pond along Perkins Street.

**4.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Because Marvin Mathelier is out of town, Micah Sachs reported that the H&DC met on April 19 via Zoom. There was a proposal to have co-chairs of JPNC committees be seated on the Executive Committee.

There was a presentation by the Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston which is advocating for changes in the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) to lower the threshold of units that trigger IDP below 10, increase the percentage of affordable units from 13% to 33%, lower the affordability standard for tenants from 70% Area Median Income (AMI) to 40%, and lengthen deed restrictions on affordable units from 50 years to permanently affordable.

A main issue of discussion was the proposal to demolish the Monastery of St. Clare and sell the land to Holland Development to build 26 townhouses. Michael Reiskind spoke about the difference in demolition delay and landmark status at the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC). Kathy Kottaridis, from Historic Boston, spoke about the historic nature of the building and the site. It was designed by a prominent architect, Edward T. P. Graham, and it may also be the oldest woman monastery in New England. The BLC found some historic significance and sent the application back to the proponents. The 90-day timeline for the BLC to review the application has not yet started. Micah Sachs thought that fighting for demolition delay will slow down the process, which would delay the availability of affordable housing at the site. Jaya Aiyer thought that more community process was better.

The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, May 17 at 7:00pm.

**4.3. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met on April 6 and April 20. Seven matters were discussed and five need votes tonight. 26 Union Avenue (install curb cut) and 79 Perkins Street (add a basement unit) are not up for votes tonight. [Omer Hecht recused himself on these zoning issues.] 1) 71 Peter Parley Road, a petition by Chris Antonowich, for demolition of rear deck and construction of new rear deck in its place. This replacement deck will encroach less than its predecessor. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. 2) 3514 Washington Street, a petition by Hyde Park 416 Realty LLC (CatLABS Inc./Omer Hecht), to change occupancy from daycare center to two residential units with ground-floor retail; construct roof deck for use of residential units; two (2) off-street parking spaces. This is Omer Hecht's property and he wants to put CatLABS on the first floor and have two residential units above. This was the second ZC meeting on this issue. At the first meeting, the Committee wanted improvements in the facade design; the plans were not sufficiently fleshed out. This second meeting had better plans submitted. The Stonybrook Neighborhood Association did not oppose. The developer was urged to coordinate with his adjoining party wall neighbors, as all the storefronts in this strip are separately owned. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. 3) 72 Hyde Park Avenue, a petition by MIR Realty/72 Hyde Park LLC (Vladimir Sirotin), to demolish an existing structure and construct a six-unit residential building with six parking spaces. This matter was a second ZC meeting on this issue. At the first meeting, there was no opposition from the neighbors, but the Committee did not like the car-centric design and wanted a more transit-oriented development. At this second meeting, the developer removed the six off-street parking spaces. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. 4) 51-53 Walk Hill Street, a petition by Blerina Idrizi, to change from a single-family residence with administrative office to a three-family residence. The proposal involves adding a dormer on one side of the building and a symmetric dormer on the other side. This will be an owner-occupied building. There was no opposition from the neighbors. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. 5) 11 Parkside Drive, a petition by Richard DeVito and Roya Khosravi-Far, for a second floor addition, extension of existing living space. The owners want to add a story over the garage. There was no neighbor opposition and the Jamaica Hills Association did not oppose. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. Motion by Dave Baron to support the recommendations of the Zoning Committee on 71 Peter Parley Road, 3514 Washington Street, 72 Hyde Park Avenue, 51-53 Walk Hill Street, and 11 Parkside Drive. Seconded by Paige Sparks. Passed 10-0-1 (1 recusal).

Dave Baron also submitted an updated roster of ZC members. Under JPNC members, Brandon Iizuka Rivas is being removed for lack of attendance, and Paige Sparks and Omer Hecht are being added. Under Community members, Renée Stacey Welch is being confirmed, and under ex-officio JPNC members, Will Cohen replaces Samantha Montaña. There is still a JPNC seat open on the Committee. Motion by Dave Baron to approve the updated Zoning Committee roster. Seconded by Bernie Doherty.

Kevin Rainsford commented about the lack of Area A voting participation on the Zoning Committee. Renée Stacey seems to be the sole participant. Dana Gonsalves volunteered to join the ZC, but there is no community seat available. He is willing to rejoin the JPNC and serve as a JPNC member on the Committee. Micah Sachs thought the Council should explore term limits for Council committees, with a recruitment drive when seats open up.

Motion Passed 9-1-2

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, May 4 and May 18 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be 57 Brookside Avenue #14, 12 Cataumet Street, 15 Meehan Street, and 26 Union Avenue.

**4.4. Parks Committee (Environment, Parks & Energy Committee):** Kevin Rainsford gave a brief report. Committee members participated in the Muddy River Cleanup on Earth Day, April 23. The Committee is welcoming new members and new issues that the community wants discussed. Sarah Freeman announced that the City of Boston Parks Department is updating their Seven Year Open Space and Recreation Plan. Folks can participate at: [www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/updating-seven-year-open-space-plan](http://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/updating-seven-year-open-space-plan).

The next Parks Committee Zoom meeting will be on Monday, May 9 at 7:30pm (subsequently moved to Mon., May 16).

## **5. Old Business/New Business:**

**Current status of Outreach Committee:** Paige Sparks is reviving the ad-hoc Outreach Committee. Issues to consider are term limits for Council committee members, what neighbors can expect from JPNC meetings, job descriptions for JPNC members, improved communications, and active recruitment in under-represented areas of the neighborhood. Volunteering were Paige Sparks, Omer Hecht, Bernie Doherty, Micah Sachs, Peg Preble, Kevin Rainsford, Daniel Perez Lacera, and

maybe Will Cohen. Term limits would require a bylaw change. The Council may create an ad-hoc bylaws committee or may send bylaw requests to the Executive Committee.

- Omer Hecht requested a broader discussion at the full Council level of the process for implementing changes in the neighborhood.

- There are still three vacancies on the Council. Nominations will be considered at the May JPNC meeting. Renée Stacey is a nominee from Area A.

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, May 24 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: May 19 at 7:00PM at JP Licks (not held).