

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
June 28, 2022 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Will Cohen, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, Nicholas Chaves, Omer Hecht, Daniel Perez Lacera, Peg Preble, Kevin Rainsford, Paige Sparks, Renée Stacey Welch, Gert Thorn, and Trevor Wissink-Adams.

Other attendees: Sarah Freeman, Dottie Farrell, Celeste Walker, Louise Robbins, Alan Benenfeld, Louise Johnson, Michael Epp, Janet Galloway, Michael Kane, Clay Harper, Jay Flynn, David Bean, John Harding, Jennifer, Diedemann, Joann, Louis, esla, IPad, Scott Hamwey (MBTA), Richard Henderson (MBTA), Alexandra Markiewicz (MBTA), Lydia Rivera (MBTA), Jacob Wessel (Boston Transportation Department), Liana Poston (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Michael Giordano (Office of Rep. Liz Malia), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

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

1. Update from MBTA on Arborway Bus Yard: Scott Hamwey, Director for Bus Modernization for the MBTA, said that they had presented to the JPNC in the fall of 2021 and were here again to update the community on the further plans to build a new bus facility in the Arborway Yard. The plan is to electrify the entire MBTA bus fleet by 2040, and new bus garages and maintenance shops have to be built before any buses arrive. The first bus facility is being planned for Quincy and the Arborway Yard will be the second. Mr. Hamwey showed a presentation on the current plans (which was resent by email to all JPNC members immediately after the meeting). The proposal is to store about 200 buses, more than the 118 buses agreed to in the old Arborway Yard agreements. The Route 39 and Route 16 buses will now be included. The facility will be divided so as to not cross over the Stony Brook culvert and the City will maintain use of the Public Works Pole Yard. They have changed plans and now will move a fire lane off the Lotus Lane right of way. An MBTA communications center has been added to the proposal. In answer to questions, no exterior pictures/elevations were shown because the MBTA will be hiring a new designer for the final design. Mr. Hamwey did not have an estimated budget for the cost of the total facility. He could not say how many staff would be based at the Arborway Yard and said they have not done a traffic study - that will be done when required by the MEPA environmental review (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act).

2. Presentation from City of Boston on Open Streets Day: Jacob Wessel, Public Realm Director at the Boston Transportation Department (BTD), said that on Sunday, July 10, there will be an Open Streets Day for the community to come together. It will connect two Main Street districts and run along Centre Street from Jackson Square to the Soldiers Monument. All automobiles and buses will be banned and pedestrians and bicycles will be encouraged. The hours are 9:00am to 3:00pm. There will be activity hubs at the Curley Lot, parking lot across from Blessed Sacrament, and the Hyde Square rotary. Free pedicabs will be available. The Route 39 and Route 41 buses will have truncated routes and not run in the area. There will be no parking allowed and any cars left will be towed starting at 1:00am on July 10. One-way streets and dead-end streets along the route will be locked in with no car use allowed during Open Streets. There are two crossover streets which will be actively patrolled to allow vehicles to cross Centre Street: Boylston Street/Moraine Street and Green Street/Myrtle Street. There will be spots along the street where community groups and non-profits can set up information tables. In response to questions, Mr. Wessel said there will be portable toilets at three locations and one-third of them will be accessible. BTD will set up an information table. The Ride will be able to use side streets to pick up passengers and use Jamaicaway. Pedicabs will be allowed to go off route and take passengers to the Orange Line MBTA stations. Jacob Wessel said that he could use more community volunteers for the July 10 Open Streets Day.

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

4. Approval of May 2022 minutes: Motion by Omer Hecht to approve the minutes from the May 24, 2022 meeting. Seconded by Nicholas Chaves. Passed 9-0-3.

5. Announcements:

- A mural is being planned for the English High School field to animate the outdoor space around their track and bleachers. Managed by the Eliot School of Fine and Applied Arts, there is also a survey to provide feedback on the theme of 'Spaces of Belonging'. It can be filled out at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NY83X26>

6. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

6.1. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on June 7 via Zoom. The Committee had a follow-up meeting (six months after opening) with Top Mix Bar & Kitchen at 365 Centre Street. They had been awarded an all alcohol license with an outdoor patio and an entertainment license. The followup meeting had been intended to mainly discuss the first months of the live entertainment license, but Top Mix has not exercised their entertainment license yet and most of the comments were about illegal parking on the side street, Creighton Street. The manager promised to post notices on his website, add table signs and use his staff to better enforce and reduce illegal parking. There were also a lot of concerns about trash trucks creating noise and vibration by using the narrow driveway to pick up in the rear lot.

The Committee also discusses bicycle issues at Jamaica Pond - new striping has been added along Perkins Street. Also an extensive inventory has been made of the trash barrels and recycling containers in the business districts. Paige Sparks also reported on the monthly meetings of the Subcommittee on Police Procedures which meets on the second Thursday of every month.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, July 12. On the agenda will be two permit requests: a request for a beer & wine license at Mangú Dominican Bistro at 264 Hyde Park Avenue and a request for a change of ownership interests and name at Little Dipper at 669A Centre Street.

6.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): In the absence of Marvin Mathelier, there was an abbreviated Housing & Development Committee report. The H&DC met on June 21 via Zoom. The Forbes Building's (545 Centre Street) month-to-month 13A tenants were informed of an average \$42/month rent hike. There are also reports of deferred maintenance in the building. The JPNC was implored to send an email to the landlord to present his plans as soon as possible. Michael Kane thanked the JPNC for its recent letter. He also said there are illegal provisions in some new leases for 2023.

The JP Neighborhood Development Corporation presented an update on the Mildred Hailey & Jackson Square redevelopments.

There is a new City of Boston report available: an audit of all City-owned properties. It identifies properties for suitability for development, with focus on affordable housing. It can be viewed at:

[www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2022/06/2022-CityLandAuditReport_Final%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2022/06/2022-CityLandAuditReport_Final%20(3).pdf)

There is nothing new to report on the proposal to demolish the Monastery of St. Clare.

6.3. Zoning Committee (ZC): In the absence of David Baron, there was a shortened Zoning Committee report. The Committee met on June 8 and June 22. Three matters need votes tonight. 1) 7 Boylston Street, a petition by Jin Chung and Chris Read, to replace rear deck; replace front porch; replace roof and construct two new roof dormers; finish attic space; install vinyl siding; and create two new off-street parking spaces. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. Council members had a lot of discussion about the narrow width of the driveway and distance to the fence line. This request seems very similar to last month's request from 26 Union Avenue, but the Zoning Committee has come up with a different recommendation. Bernie Doherty was distressed about the narrow 9-foot driveway which does not meet City guidelines, is unsafe and should not be allowed by the City or supported by the JPNC. Gert Thorn agreed. 2) 19 Spalding Street, #3, a petition by Hudson Klebs, for a gut renovation of third-floor existing kitchen, bedroom, dining room; convert attic space to living space for Unit 3 with one bedroom and one bathroom added; create storage for three units in basement. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. 3) 18 Malcolm Road, a petition by Simona & Tim Leveroni, to renovate a single-family house, create a second-floor addition above existing rear sunroom for master bedroom, add living space (bath, rec. room, and "man cave") in basement; no change to building footprint. The recommendation of the ZC was to approve. Motion by Will Cohen to support the recommendations (with no provisos) of the Zoning Committee on 7 Boylston Street, 19 Spalding Street, #3, and 18 Malcolm Road. Seconded by Omer Hecht. There was discussion about the Article 55 (Jamaica Plain) Zoning Code that was approved in the 1990s as causing many of the problems the Neighborhood Council deals with currently. Peg Preble said that we need to change this underlying zoning instead of working on each proposal with a long list of variances. Gert Thorn agreed that Boston allows too many variances on some developments. Passed 7-2-2 (1 left early).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, July 6 (subsequently cancelled) and July 20 at 7:00pm.

6.4. Parks Committee (Environment, Parks & Energy Committee): In the absence of Alexis Rickmers, there were no major updates. Over the last month, the Parks Committee worked on setting up a listserv, additional signage to prevent bicyclists from Perkins Street using the pedestrian-only path at Jamaica Pond, obtaining clean-up materials, and reaching out to other local groups interested in parks. There is nothing new on a site for a dog park. A new 25-mile trail through Boston neighborhoods, called the Walking City Trail, has been created. There is more information at BostonTrails.org. Sarah Freeman reported that there is a new Commissioner at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Doug Rice.

6.5. Ad-hoc Outreach Committee: Paige Sparks reported that the Committee discussed the issue of term limits for members of committees. They want to make sure that all committee rosters are up-to-date in order to open up seats for new folks. Attendance records should be kept for all committees. The Outreach Committee will be meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm. Ms. Sparks emphasized that the Executive Committee needs to meet. Will Cohen said that he is planning an Executive Committee meeting for Thursday, July 21 in the evening.

Sarah Freeman said that the Outreach Committee should be an important part of sending out timely notices to the whole community on important issues such as the Arborway Yard. The JPNC website is out of date as to committee memberships and member biographies. Paige Sparks and Will Cohen will be riding herd on committee chairs to update their committee information.

7. Old Business/New Business:

- Because of lack of time, the issues of state receivership of Boston Public Schools and term limits for community members on committees were tabled. A Council-wide discussion of term limits was requested.

- Gert Thorn was disappointed with the MBTA's answers on the Arborway Yard. He said they must have a budget they refused to share with us, and they have to be working on a traffic study for the project. We need to create a community advisory committee to meet with the MBTA on the Arborway Yard.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, July 26 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: July 21 at 7:00PM via Zoom.