

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**  
**August 23, 2022 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Will Cohen, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Nicholas Chaves, Omer Hecht, Daniel Perez Lacera, Peg Preble, Kevin Rainsford, Alexis Rickmers, Micah Sachs, Paige Sparks, Renée Stacey Welch, and Gert Thorn.

**Elected at the meeting:** Sarah Freeman,

**Other attendees:** Celeste Walker, Louise Robbins, Dana Gonsalves, Jeffrey Ferris, Michael Epp, Elena Saporta, Shelley, Jeffrey, Lisa, (617) 938-4351, Carlos Rios (Office of Rep. Nika Elugardo), Thomas Mannion (Office of City Councillor Erin Murphy), Lauren Bennett (Jamaica Plain Gazette), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by Will Cohen.

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

**2. Approval of July 2022 minutes:** There was one correction to the July minutes: under the Parks Committee, the last sentence about the dog park at the Flaherty Playground should read “Flaherty Playground in the Brookside Neighborhood is in the process of a redesign with an off-leash dog run included.” Motion by Paige Sparks to approve the minutes from the July 26, 2022 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Omer Hecht. Passed 7-0-3 (3 came late). There were some follow-up questions asked: Was Dana Gonsalves nominated and elected to a vacancy on the JPNC. Mr. Gonsalves confirmed that he had considered running for a vacancy, but never did so. Was the letter to the Forbes Building landlord, discussed at the July meeting, written and sent? It has not been drafted or written and not been sent.

**3. Announcements:**

**3.1 Community Announcements:**

- The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPND) will be having a 45th anniversary celebration on Thursday, September 15 starting at 6:00pm. It will be at The Brewery’s Merriam Street parking lot.
- The third community meeting for a redesign of Flaherty Playground will be on Tuesday, September 13 starting at 6:00pm on Zoom ([www.bit.ly/Flaherty3](http://www.bit.ly/Flaherty3)). There will also be a pre-planning meeting on September 7 held by Friends of JP Dog Parks.
- Discussion of the proposed changes in the routing of the MBTA Bus Route 39 will be on the agenda for a future JPNC meeting. It will not be in September; that agenda will have the MBTA updating the community on the Arborway Yard.
- Sarah Freeman said that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will be hosting a stakeholders meeting to present a preferred alternative on the Arborway Parkways Improvement Project. Folks can pre-register to attend by going to [https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJcpdu2rrz4oG9L\\_QDQDCfg-iXz2JzXOa7aR](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJcpdu2rrz4oG9L_QDQDCfg-iXz2JzXOa7aR).
- Top Mix Bar & Kitchen JP (365 Centre Street) is now open for weekend brunch from 11:00am to 4:00pm.

**3.2 Council Vacancies:** Marvin Mathelier has resigned. The Chair announced that there are now four vacancies on the Council. There are presently two vacancies in Area A, one vacancy in Area B, and one vacancy At-large. There was one nomination for the At-large vacancy: Sarah Freeman of 22 Arborway said that she is a long-time resident of Jamaica Plain. She is very active on the JPNC Parks Committee, Arborway Yard, and Arborway redesign. Motion by David Baron to elect Sarah Freeman to the JP Neighborhood Council At-large. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 12-0-0 (1 came late). Ms. Freeman took a seat on the JP Neighborhood Council.

**4. Arborway Yard:** In response to unanswered questions by the MBTA on the Arborway Yard, there was a request in July for an ad hoc committee. The following motion was made (by Gert Thorn) and seconded and then tabled to this August meeting: “That the JP Neighborhood Council develop an ad hoc committee to work with the MBTA that reflects the MOU and develops a plan for the Arborway Yard.” During the intervening month, the motion was expanded to read “That regarding the MBTA Arborway Bus Maintenance Facility in JP, the JPNC shall establish an ad hoc Advisory Committee to participate in the mandated Community Review Process to ensure that the proposed MBTA Design integrates well into the JPNC Urban Design Character, the currently applicable MOUs are respected, the potential traffic issues are studied and resolved, we collaborate with other stakeholders such as The City of Boston, DCR, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and the Boston Society of Architects to help make the proposed facility a positive addition to JP and Boston, and we liaise with JP Community regarding MBTA Proposals.” There was discussion about the new motion and whether the Arborway Yard Committee should stay in the Housing & Development Committee. Sarah Freeman said she hoped that a broader number of JPNC committees can be involved, including the Parks Committee. Omer Hecht said that the JPNC is the best place for such a committee, but he was disappointed by the lack of community attendance at tonight’s meeting. Micah Sachs thought that the committee should be a subcommittee of the H&DC, but that the subcommittee should report directly to the JP Neighborhood Council - not be required to go to the Housing & Development Committee. Gert Thorn then amended the motion to adopt the comments and it read “That regarding the MBTA Arborway Bus Maintenance Facility in JP, the JPNC shall re-establish an Arborway Yard Subcommittee of the Housing & Development Committee to participate in the mandated Community Review Process and that would report to the full JPNC.” David Baron asked whether Kevin Rainsford, as interim Chair of the H&DC, supported the amended motion. Mr. Rainsford said he supports the “new Gert” motion. Michael Reiskind said that any Arborway Yard committee has to deal with three underlying issues: engage in extensive community organizing to counter the poor attitude of the MBTA toward a true community process and its refusal to answer reasonable basic questions; the perceived bad design of the proposed facility, especially its height and

size; the different potential uses of the whole 18 acres and whether some uses from the Shattuck Campus can be moved here. Michael Epp said the new MBTA proposal is very big, has serious design issues, and is adjacent to the Emerald Necklace which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The lack of community meetings violates the MBTA's standards of community process. Will Cohen thought later Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) might be better for the community than the 1999 MOU. The amended motion was passed 8-1-5.

In July, there had been a motion by Kevin Rainsford (seconded by Omer Hecht) to censure Gert Thorn for interrupting. Michael Reiskind said that while he understood the damage that interruptions make in meetings, and that the goal of the JPNC is to tackle contentious issues that other groups don't want to consider, he hoped that JPNC members work harder to be considerate. He thought that a more active hand on the mute button during Zoom meetings could reduce interruptions. He asked if Kevin Rainsford would consider withdrawing his motion. Paige Sparks asked what "censure" meant, since it is not described in the bylaws. Gert Thorn said that he would resign if the motion passes. Kevin Rainsford said he hoped the JPNC can find a way to be more decorous going forward. Mr. Rainsford withdrew his motion.

## **5. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**5.1. Ad Hoc Outreach Committee:** Paige Sparks said that the Committee is asking the Council to make Outreach a standing committee. Since this involves a bylaws change, the amending language was provided in writing before the meeting with adequate time to consider the change. Motion by Paige Sparks to amend Article 7, Committees, subsection - Working Committees of the bylaws to make the Outreach Committee a standing working committee, with the following language: "Outreach Committee: Responsibilities include promoting participation in the JPNC, increasing the diversity and representative cross section of the JP community on the Council, promoting JPNC activities online and in person, making the work the JPNC does as transparent and accessible to the community as possible, and actively engaging as much of the neighborhood as we can, specifically through: engaging neighbors at an interpersonal level by creating connections, ensuring that there is representation across the Council and its activities and that it reflects the demographics of the neighborhood on a variety of metrics, recruiting people to join the Council." Seconded by Omer Hecht. David Baron asked why an ad-hoc Outreach Committee is not adequate. Ms. Sparks said that the work of outreach should not be considered a band-aid but a basic value of the JP Neighborhood Council. It was decided to call the vote on this bylaw amendment. Passed 14-0-0.

The Committee had also discussed the issues of term limits for members of Committees and Chairs of Working Committees; Council discussion was tabled to this August meeting. Since this also involves a bylaws change, the amending language for both proposals was provided in writing before the meeting and votes will be entertained at the September meeting to allow time to consider the changes. Amendment to Article 7, Committees, sub section - Working Committee: "Community members who serve on a Working Committee may serve for no more than 2 full terms of the Council (~~4 years maximum~~). If community members wish to continue to serve on the same Committee, they must run for a Council seat and participate in the JPNC as any other member. "

Amendment to Article 14: "A person may not serve as Chair of a Working Committee for more than one consecutive term. A new Chair will be elected at the beginning of every term, as the Council and Committees are seated following the election."

**5.2. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met on August 3. The Committee heard a proposal for 561-579 Centre Street (former JP Gas Mini Mart) for a doggie day care. The Jamaica Pond Association voted not to oppose with certain provisos, but there were issues about process for the ZC meeting and the matter will be heard again tomorrow. No matters need a vote tonight. The Committee also discussed the ideas from the Outreach Committee about term limits for community members. There was a question (without resolution) about the roster of the Zoning Committee and the number of Council members on the Committee.

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, August 24 and September 7 (subsequently cancelled) at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the August 24 agenda will be the proposal at 561-579 Centre Street for a doggie day care and 55 Boylston Street for new second and third floor additions and enlarging a garage.

**5.3. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Since Marvin Mathelier has resigned from the H&DC, the Committee needed a new Chair. The Committee elected Kevin Rainsford as Chair and Micah Sachs staying as Vice-chair. Motion by Kevin Rainsford to confirm Kevin Rainsford as Chair of the H&DC and to add Renée Stacey Welch as a new Council member on the Committee. Seconded by Micah Sachs. Passed 14-0-0.

Kevin Rainsford said that the CPCAY/Arborway Yard subcommittee will be open to all and please email him at [kprainsford@gmail.com](mailto:kprainsford@gmail.com) to join.

The City of Boston's construction noise regulations limit daytime noise to 86 decibels, with an exemption for hydraulic equipment. The town of Lexington has changed their regulations saying that loud hydraulic use needs temporary sound barriers.

In June, the State's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Shattuck Hospital Campus and received only one submission - a joint venture of Boston Medical Center, JPNC, and The Community Builders (TCB). The State has to decide whether to accept the bid or release the RFP again. The next H&DC meeting will be on Tuesday, September 20 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be Denise Mathews-Turner from City Life/Vida Urbana and John Smith from the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) on deed restrictions and permanent affordability.

**5.4. Parks Committee (Environment, Parks & Energy Committee):** Alexis Rickmers reported that the Parks Committee was informed that repaving of problem spots along the pathways of Jamaica Pond was performed.

A clean-up may be scheduled for September.

A fourth community meeting on redesign of Flaherty Playground is scheduled for November.

**5.5. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind said that there was no August Public Service Committee meeting. The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 6. There are two licensing requests going through community process, but they will probably be heard in October: a new license for a brewery at 3204 Washington Street at the corner of Montebello Road, and an extension of hours for the rear patio of the Brendan Behan Pub at 378 Centre Street.

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

- Kevin Rainsford asked about timing of the next JPNC biennial election. If it is scheduled for two years from the last election, it would fall in August 2024, but that last election had been postponed from the spring of 2022. Should the election schedule follow the old (spring) timetable or the new (late summer) one? An ad-hoc committee of volunteers (Kevin Rainsford, Will Cohen, Omer Hecht, Micah Sachs) promised to work on the issue of the next election.

- There was a logistical question about how to successfully log-in to the JPNC account in order to host Committee meetings.

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:56pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

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

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: September 22 at 7:00PM via Zoom.