

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
August 22, 2023 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Luke Mathew, Willie Mitchell, Katherine O’Shea, Peg Preble, Purple Reign, Leah Simmons, and Gert Thorn.

Elected at the meeting: Esther Belliard.

Other attendees: Marie Turley, Janet Galloway, Susan Cibulsky, Andrew Quintyne, John Harding, Stephen Quigley, , Alcurtis Clark, Mia-Jean Sicard, MJS, State Rep. Sam Montaña, Michael Giordano (Office of Rep. Sam Montaña), Melissa Beltran (Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

1. Introductions: The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. The reporter from The Bulletin introduced himself, State Rep. Sam Montaña and Michael Giordano introduced themselves, and Melissa Beltran, JP liaison from the Office of Neighborhood Services introduced herself.

2. Approval of July 2023 minutes: There were four corrections/clarifications to the July minutes: Dave Baron said that the August 9 Zoning Committee agenda should have a request from 6 Dellmore Road, not “9 Dellmore Road”. The Parks+ Committee report should be corrected to read “The Parks+ Committee’s roster presently has three Council members”. Paige Sparks is not a member of the Committee. Sarah Freeman asked that the Parks+ report clarify that expanding the bike lanes around Jamaica Pond “would have to involve some use of adjacent streets - except along the Jamaicaway edge”. Under the Housing & Development Committee. Sarah Freeman said that the next Shattuck meeting will be “hosted by Boston Medical Center/DCAMM” and ”will be on August 15”. Motion by Sarah Freeman to approve the minutes from the July 25, 2023 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 11-0-2.

3. Council Vacancies: There is only one vacancy on the Council - a vacancy in Area A. Purple Reign nominated Esther Belliard from 25 Amory Street, #305 for the JP Neighborhood Council in Area A. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. She has been a member of the Housing & Development Committee and ran as a candidate for the JPNC in the June 24 Election. There was a review of all the JPNC Committees she could join if elected. She was encouraged to check out all the Committees. Passed 12-0-1. Esther Belliard took her seat on the Neighborhood Council.

4. Community announcements:

- Willie Mitchell said that the backpack giveaway days were very successful this year. Almost 300 backpacks were distributed in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

5. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

5.1. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on Tuesday, August 1 at 7:00pm via Zoom. There was initial discussion of Committee initiatives for 2023-2025. Potential additions discussed under ‘transportation issues’ were advocating for additional licensing and education on bike safety, adding speed humps/bumps on certain streets, making New Minton Street one-way, and exploring additional resident parking around White Stadium. Potential additions discussed under ‘public works issues’ were improving street cleanliness by working with JP Shines and exploring adding deposits on all beverage bottles.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 5 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be licensing requests from Brassica Kitchen + Café at 3710A Washington Street to amend the description of its premises, and from Forest Hills Liquor Mart at 3694 Washington Street for a transfer of its retail package store all-alcoholic beverages license.

5.2. Outreach Committee: Paige Sparks could not attend today but sent a written report saying that the Committee met on Tuesday, August 8 at 7:00pm via Zoom. The Outreach Committee is putting forward a roster of three Council members (Paige Sparks, 96 Brookley Road; Katherine O’Shea, 27 Robinwood Avenue, Apt. 1; Peg Preble, 79 Eastland Road) and one community member (Doug Rand, 67 Orchardhill Road) as well as ex-officio members. Motion by Katherine O’Shea to approve this roster of the Outreach Committee. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 12-0-2.

A priority that the Committee has been concentrating on is the perception of the JPNC and its awareness among folks in the community. The Committee is also exploring the idea of the JPNC becoming a 501(c)(3) or other non-profit and its potential for conflicts of interest. Bernie Doherty said that if the JPNC accepted funding it might put the Neighborhood Council in a box regarding zoning issues, licensing issues and for other Committees. He would be very much opposed to becoming a 501(c)(3). Katherine O’Shea said that becoming a non-profit allows us better communications through Mail Chimp and Google Suite. Dave Baron said that there are ways to accept money without becoming captive to the donors; for instance elected officials have mechanisms to do that. Renée Stacey Welch said that the Council needs money to pay for translations and interpretation services.

The Committee again reminded Council Members to attend community meetings and events outside of JPNC meetings. The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 12 at 7:00pm via Zoom. It will be a "JPNC 1.01" for new Council members and any interested community members (subsequently canceled).

5.3. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Renée Stacey Welch said that the Housing & Development Committee met on August 15 via Zoom. The Committee put forth Danielle Sommer Kieta as Chair and Purple Reign as Vice-Chair. No vote is being requested at this meeting.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 19 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

The Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard: The main issue at the August 15 meeting was the Arborway Yard; attending were Jascha Franklin-Hodge, Chief of Streets, Transportation, and Sanitation, Chris Osgood, Mayor Wu's Senior Advisor for Infrastructure, Diane Fernandez, Deputy Chief of Urban Design at the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), Sheila Dillon, the City of Boston's Chief of Housing, and other members of BPDA and Boston Transportation Department staff. The City's presentation was on three topics: the decision of the City to withhold the DPW parcel (Pole Yard/Salt Yard) from the Arborway Yard site, City and MBTA discussions about the design of the new bus facility, and the BPDA's analysis of mitigation and uses of the land for future residential and commercial development. The major changes that have happened since previous agreements are that the bus facility will be for electric buses, the MBTA needs more buses for more reliability, and the Casey Overpass is gone. The City said that other land at American Legion Highway is not available for DPW use and so they have to reduce land available for future development from 8 acres to 6.8 acres. They hope to use plans developed during the Plan:JP/Rox process to guide development and think they can achieve the same number of affordable units on the smaller site. They are working on reducing the massing of the MBTA bus garage building and are focusing on improving the four edges of the Arborway Yard. They are revising and improving the DPW site. The Arborway Yard will be used for recycling (DPW), affordable housing, and small businesses.

The community response was strongly opposed to the City's use of the DPW parcel. They thought that the American Legion Highway site was a better alternative for a recycling center. They also wanted to see a widening of Washington Street, an extension of the Southwest Corridor Park on the other side of Washington Street, a reduction in the size of the bus garage with no blank facades, designs for noise abatement, and the results of area traffic studies. Bernie Doherty emphasized that the proposal is too large and there is a massive increase in what the community is being asked to accept; 908 units of housing is too many for 6.8 acres. Gert Thorn said there was significant pushback from the community at the meeting. The addition of a Salt Yard at this site is wrong. The MBTA and the City should reduce the number of swing buses and eliminate the CHaRM (Center for Hard to Recycle Materials) waste site. Sarah Freeman asked Rep. Montaño to change the political will and get the Salt Yard moved. The MBTA and the City are meeting on August 25 for discussions. In summary, Katherine O'Shea said that the JPNC should think strategically and see what community benefits can be gained. Sue Cibulsky said there are multiple opinions and neighbors should listen and accept diverse views.

The next Subcommittee meeting will be on Monday, September 25 at 7:00pm via Zoom (subsequently moved to Monday, September 18).

5.4. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron said that the Zoning Committee's meeting, scheduled for August 9, had to be canceled at the request of the only applicant on the agenda.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, August 23 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a request from 6 Dellmore Road to build a six-family residence and 175-175B School Street to construct a new three-story, three-unit residential townhouse.

5.5. Parks+ Committee (Environment, Parks & Energy Committee): No report

6. Old Business/New Business: None

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

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

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