

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
October 25, 2023 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Lorenzo Bartoloni, Esther Belliard, Nicholas Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Luke Mathew, Willie Mitchell, Katherine O'Shea, Peg Preble, Purple Reign, Leah Simmons, Danielle Sommer Kieta, and Gert Thorn.

Other attendees: Louise Johnson, Anne McHugh, Kane Dimasso-Scott, Andrea, Dr. Thiago Oliveira (Brigham & Women's Hospital), Kevin Higgins (Office of Sen. Liz Miranda), Carlos Rios (Office of Rep. Sam Montaña), Emily Polston (Office of City Councillor Ruthzee Louijeune), Melissa Beltran (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Renée Stacey Welch.

Introductions: The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. The reporter from The Bulletin introduced himself and aides from Sen. Liz Miranda's office, Rep. Sam Montaña's office, City Councillor Ruthzee Louijeune's office, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services introduced themselves.

2. Approval of September 2023 minutes: Motion by Willie Mitchell to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 16-0-1.

3. Community announcements:

- Dr. Thiago Oliveira, a Brigham & Women's Hospital doctor in emergency care and internal medicine, introduced himself and said he is part of the Office of IDEaS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice) within the Department of Emergency Medicine to make the future of health care inclusive, accessible and just for all. They are identifying and implementing programs for health equity for their patients at the Brigham and Women's and Faulkner Hospitals. Michael Reiskind said the Hospital should improve transportation access to the Faulkner Hospital, especially on Sunday. The Hospital is on only one bus route which does not run on Sunday. During their present expansion when they are adding 503 parking spaces, they should also think about subsidizing and improving the MBTA Route 38 that services the Hospital. Dr. Oliveira shared his email: tmdo.06@gmail.com

- The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) will conduct a virtual public meeting on the Mildred Hailey Buildings 2 & 3 Project on Wednesday, November 8 starting at 6:00pm.

- Dave Baron said that the BPDA had a public meeting about the planned reform of zoning called Squares + Streets on October 16. They reported on their analysis of development trends and land uses in small mixed-use areas and how that analysis will inform future zoning amendments to the Boston Zoning Code.

- There will be another public meeting on the analysis for Squares + Streets areas on Monday, October 30 at 6:00pm. The link to register for the meeting is:

www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2023/10/30/squares-streets-zoning-analysis-public-meeting

- There will be an in-person Squares + Streets Pop=Up event on Friday, October 27 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm on Centre Street near JP Licks.

4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met twice - on October 4 and 18. There are six votes being requested at tonight's meeting. 1) 31 Pond View Avenue, a petition by Tarek Hassan and Simon Rees, to build a new bathroom and extend existing bedroom to be 248 square feet, above existing first floor structure. No one spoke to oppose. The local Jamaica Pond Association (JPA) sent a letter saying they voted not to oppose. The Zoning Committee recommended approval. 2) 84 Prince Street, a petition by Robert Boxer and Snehal Shah, for a full gut renovation, new windows and stucco siding, all new systems. No one spoke in opposition. The local JPA sent a letter saying they voted not to oppose. The ZC recommended approval. 3) 8-10 Perkins Street, a petition by Mario's Pizzeria/ Mario Bailote (as agent for Perkins Street Realty LLC) for take-out use. This location was the former Pizza Oggi which had a take-out permit and the new owner would like to continue with take-out which requires zoning relief. The ZC recommended approval with provisos for the current business and business-owner only. 4) 3915 Washington Street, a petition by Owen Kiernan to construct a new six-unit multi-family residence. There is no off-street parking and a lot of variances requested on this proposal: Multi-Family Use in Three-Family District; Rear Yard Insufficient; Floor Area Ratio Excessive; Lot Width Insufficient; Lot Frontage Insufficient; Off-Street Parking Insufficient. The ZC recommended denial. 5) 9-11 Seaverns Ave./5-7 Brown Terrace, a petition by Chris Hajjar/Seaverns Brown Realty Trust, to combine four existing 6-unit apartment buildings at 5-7 Brown Terrace and 9-11 Seaverns Avenue (24 existing units in total) and renovate existing unfinished basement to add 8 additional units in basement, for a total of 32 units. Basement to be fully sprinklered. These are four buildings with presently six units each. The proposal is to add eight units in the basement. A previous proposal came to the JPNC in August 2019 and was recommended for approval, but was denied at the Zoning Board of Appeal for procedural reasons. This new proposal is reduced from nine basement units to eight, accessibility has been improved with a chair lift added, and one unit will be affordable even though it is not required by the City's present formula. There is no off-street parking. Bernie Doherty asked about the lack of off-street parking and also about where the mechanicals will be placed to accommodate the new units in the basement. Heat exchangers will be in the living units

saving basement space, and the basement floor will be lowered about one foot to gain space. Emily Polston from Councillor Louijeune's office said she lives in the building and there is some off-street parking now. The basement windows will have their boards removed, but the windows will not be enlarged. There are two means of egress on the plans, in addition to the new lift. The ZC recommended approval with proviso that one of the new basement units to be an affordable unit at 80% Area Median Income. 6) 6 Dellmore Road, a petition by Peter Champagne/DesChamp Group, LLC, to construct a new three-family residence per plans. This is a vacant triangular parcel which creates some of the variances requested. The original proposal had the building right up to the lot line, but after meeting with neighbors the architectural plans were changed. The building is pulled back and fencing and grass areas added. There are new curb cuts and five off-street parking spaces; two have been removed. The ZC recommended approval.

After some motions to approve these six issues did not receive any seconds, and some general discussion about why Committee votes are brought to the full Council for a second ratification vote, it was agreed to have a separate motion on each Zoning Committee issue. Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 31 Pond View Avenue. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 14-0-2 (1 left early). Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 84 Prince Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 14-0-2 (1 left early). Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation with proviso of the Zoning Committee on 8-10 Perkins Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 14-0-2 (1 left early). Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation of denial of the Zoning Committee on 3915 Washington Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-4 (1 left early). Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation with proviso of the Zoning Committee on 9-11 Seaverns Ave./ 5-7 Brown Terrace. Seconded by Peter DeCotis. Bernie Doherty was concerned about the safety issue of basement units and wanted to put this proposal on hold and call the developer in to a full Council meeting. Gert Thorn said basement apartments are being discouraged around the country. Dave Baron disagreed with that assertion. Gert Thorn again requested that drawings be presented during Zoning Committee reports. Bernie Doherty emphasized that Council members should keep themselves informed on all Committee issues. Motion passed 10-4-2 (1 left early). Motion by David Baron to approve the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 6 Dellmore Road. Seconded by Renée Stacey Welch. Passed 13-1-2 (1 left early).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, November 1 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be requests from 28 Evergreen Street (lots of changes and demolition of a barn), 17 and 21 Alveston Street (basement unit and new construction with roof deck and basement unit), and 6 Greenough Avenue (new curb cut and driveway).

4.2. Outreach Committee: Katherine O'Shea, Vice-Chair, reported that the Committee met on October 10 via Zoom. The Chair of the Committee, Paige Sparks has resigned from the Council and there was discussion on a new Chair. Katherine O'Shea is interested in taking over as Chair. Motion by Katherine O'Shea to elect Katherine O'Shea as the Chair of the Outreach Committee. Seconded by Renée Stacey Welch. Passed 14-0-2 (1 left early). Since there is not a full roster of Outreach Committee members (presently only three members), the Committee recommended to change the quorum for the Committee from five people to a majority of the roster. Motion by Katherine O'Shea to change the quorum of the Outreach Committee to a majority of the roster. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 15-0-1 (1 left early).

Gert Thorn urged the Committee to concentrate on extending communications and getting more people to come to Council meetings and to learn about it. Social media are good ways to reach out, but the Jamaica Plain Gazette and The Bulletin are great resources because they report extensively on the Council's work.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 8 at 7:00pm via Zoom. It will be a special session on the work of the Council, "JPNC 1.01".

4.3. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on Tuesday, October 3 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda was a licensing request from B.U. Bistro at 3840 Washington Street for a common victualler beer & wine license. There was a good discussion on the issue, but the applicant asked for a change in the manager of record and in the closing hour of the outdoor patios after the leafletting had been done, and the Committee felt that the applicant should leaflet again with the changes and return in November.

The Committee also recommended writing a letter to expedite work on Robinwood Avenue. They felt that this thoroughfare is a unique street in Jamaica Plain, with a confusing set of one-way signs and a hospital neighbor and this work is especially needed, The draft letter was sent to the Council ahead of this meeting. Motion by Michael Reiskind to send a letter to the Boston Transportation Department and the Boston Public Works Department asking for certain work to be done on Robinwood Avenue. Seconded by Gert Thorn. Passed 15-0-1(1 left early).

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, November 7 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be the return of B.U. Bistro at 3840 Washington Street requesting a beer & wine license.

4.4. Parks + Committee: Alexis Rickmers, the Chair of the Parks + Committee, has resigned from the Council and there was discussion on a new Chair. Nick Chaves and Leah Simmons are interested in helping. Motion by Purple Reign to elect Nick Chaves as the Chair of the Parks + Committee until May 2024 and Leah Simmons as Vice-Chair of the Parks + Committee. Seconded by Esther Belliard. Bernie Doherty offered to help both Mr. Chaves and Ms. Simmons and volunteered to join the Parks + Committee. Motion passed 14-0-2 (1 left early).

4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Danielle Sommer Kieta reported that the Housing & Development Committee met on October 17 via Zoom. The Committee met with the developers and discussed the recent Project Notification Form (PNF) on the Forbes Building that was filed with the BPDA in September. The proposal is to make the

Forbes Building 100% affordable, add a green roof and other environmental improvements, upgrade the kitchens and bathrooms in all the units, and improve the mechanicals in the whole building. The Housing & Development Committee has submitted a draft letter supporting the proposal, which was shared with the Council before this meeting. Danielle Sommer Kieta made a motion to approve sending the letter. Seconded by Willie Mitchell with a change in the date of the letter. Gert Thorn asked whether there would be any evictions or raising of rents. There was a promise of no displacements and all of the units will be affordable. Mr. Thorn asked Ms. Sommer Kieta to continue speaking to the Forbes Building residents. Bernie Doherty said that he had spoken to Michael Kane, Executive Director of the Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants, and he was happy with this new positive progress. He said that the JPNC helped with the process on this project. Purple Reign said there was a lot of fear among the residents, but they are almost all much happier now and very hopeful. Renée Stacey Welch said that the Council still needs to keep vigilant. There was then an extended discussion about the reduction of parking at the building. Michael Kane could not attend the Zoom meeting but reached Bernie Doherty by phone and relayed the concerns of the tenants about the removal of a significant number of parking spaces to add green space around the building. Gert Thorn thought we should support the tenants on the parking issue. Time is of the essence because the official comment period on the PNF ended on October 23. The motion was withdrawn.

The Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard: Gert Thorn reported on the MBTA public meeting on the Arborway Yard held yesterday, October 24. There were three issues discussed that are critical for the community: a) The use of the 8-acre Salt Yard/former Pole Yard; these 8 acres will now be MBTA use and become parking for the MBTA. b) the size of the proposed MBTA building; c) community involvement in the design of the facility; there was no increased community involvement promised. Katherine O'Shea attended the meeting and was impressed by the MBTA and City changes. The full 8 acres is now in the MBTA facility design, the buses are being stored outdoors and are using the space over the Stony Brook culvert, thus reducing the size of the building. The parking on the 8 acres can be shared, with day use by the MBTA and night use by the community. Also, access from Arborway has been reduced and moved to Washington Street. Bernie Doherty said the MBTA presentation showed a much smaller building, but it is still pretty large. He asked who is paying for the redesign. He was skeptical that the construction can be achieved by the MBTA's deadline. He thought that there was still a lack of clarity in the design presented. Will Washington Street be widened to create deceleration lanes for the buses? Are there new roads planned within the Arborway Yard?

5. Old Business/New Business:

- Vacancies on the JP Neighborhood Council: Because of the resignation of Paige Sparks and Alexis Rickmers, there are two vacancies on the Council, both in Area B. JPNC members should reach out for good new members. Nominations will be accepted to fill the vacancies for the next two months and a vote may be held at the December meeting.

- Candidate Forum: The candidates for District 6 City Council could not attend this October JPNC meeting because this month's meeting was moved to Wednesday. The Outreach Committee will sponsor a Candidate Forum for the two candidates this Friday, October 27 from 7:00pm to 8:00pm via Zoom. There will first be opening remarks of 5 minutes each, then a 30-minute question and answer session with written questions only, then a 20-minute open forum with questions and answers. There will be no support vote taken by the JPNC. The link for the Candidate Forum is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82165336467>

- Peter DeCotis said that the winning bidder for the White Stadium development, Boston Unity Soccer Partners, could not attend this October JPNC meeting because this month's meeting was moved to Wednesday. The City of Boston will be having their second Community Engagement Session on White Stadium, dealing with supplier diversity and community benefits, on Wednesday, November 29 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The link to register for the meeting is: us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcO6tqDwpHtAxxYkeL75e_v5POpASNB0n#/registration

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:28pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, November 28 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: November 16 at 7:00PM via Zoom.