

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**  
**May 23, 2023 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Will Cohen, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Lorenzo Bartoloni, Nicholas Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Jeffrey Paquette, Peg Preble, Alexis Rickmers, Paige Sparks, Gert Thorn, Ben Weber, Renée Stacey Welch, and Trevor Wissink-Adams.

**Other attendees:** Dana Gonsalves, Janet Galloway, Doug Rand, Purple Reign (Joanne Paul), Jen Leser, Michael Epp, Kane Dimasso-Scott, Esther's iPad, Dominique, Willie, and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

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

**1. Introductions:** Council members introduced themselves. The reporter from The Bulletin introduced himself.

**2. Approval of April 2023 minutes:** The minutes from the April 25, 2023 meeting were not completed and the item was tabled to the June meeting.

**3. Announcements:**

**3.1. Community announcements:**

- The Boston Transportation Department will be having a McBride and Eliot Streets Community Walk on May 25 to discuss the proposal for bicycle lanes. Meet at the corner of McBride Street and Call Street at 5:30pm.
- The annual Coffee Hour with the Mayor will take place on Friday, June 16 starting at 9:30am at Mozart Playground.
- Tiffani Caballero, the Jamaica Plain liaison from the Office of Neighborhood Services has moved to a different job in City Hall. A replacement will be named soon.
- The City of Boston Open Streets program will be coming to Jamaica Plain again this year. Centre Street will be open to walking and biking on Sunday, June 25 from Lamartine Street to Eliot Street from 10:00am to 3:30pm. The area will be closed to cars starting at 9:00am; there will be no parking and towing will begin at 6:00am.

**4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:**

**4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met on May 3 (the May 17 meeting was cancelled), and heard four proposals, two of which need votes tonight: 1) 10-10A Walk Hill Street, a petition by Round Two Pizza & Subs (Emiliano Amoroso) to remove the proviso for "this applicant only" for take-out permit; no work to be done. This request is always needed when a take-out restaurant changes ownership. Folks at the meeting spoke in favor. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve with the proviso that the take-out is for this applicant and this business only. 2) 176-176R School Street, a petition by 176 School Street LLC (Joseph Federico) to construct a new 7-unit residential townhouse building with covered parking. David Baron recused himself on this request ; he had represented the applicant in the past on a different issue. Renée Stacey Welch gave the presentation from the Zoning Committee. This proposal had a long community process. The local Egleston Square Neighborhood Association (ESNA) wrote a letter in favor, with provisos about improved landscaping, fencing, and pavers. The JPNC discussion was mostly about replacement trees and parking. Bernie Doherty talked about the front-and-back layout of the houses and about saving trees. There was a violation on parking and the developer agreed to move the front parking. There is still ample parking. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. Motion by Peg Preble to approve the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 10-10A Walk Hill Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 16-0-0. Motion by Bernie Doherty to approve the recommendation of the Zoning Committee on 176-176R School Street. Seconded by Renée Stacey Welch. Passed 11-0-4 (1 recusal).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, May 31 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a request from 31 Rodman Street to expand to add two condominium units, 25 Burr Street for a curb cut, 166 South Street for a change of use to flower shop, and 35 Rockwood Street for a renovation.

**4.2. Outreach Committee:** Paige Sparks said that the Committee met on Tuesday, May 9 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

Acting as the JPNC Ad Hoc Elections Committee, the Outreach Committee is working hard on the JPNC Election. Voting is in-person on Saturday, June 24 at three locations from 10am to 4:00pm (JP Licks, Stop & Shop, and Forest Hills T Station). Candidates for Area seats need to have at least 25 signature by 5:00pm on May 24. Candidates for At-large need at least 50 signatures. Write-in votes on June 24 are allowed - with both name and address - but write-in candidates need at least 25 or 50 votes to be elected. If there are vacancies after the Election, they can be filled by the new Council after a two-month period. The Election needs volunteers; at least forty people are needed to run the Election. Clarification questions were: Peg Preble said that she collected signatures via iPetition without addresses. What should she do? The Ombuds Board will check the addresses individually. Nick Chaves wanted to make sure that anyone can hand in the nomination packet, not just the candidate.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, June 13 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.3. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Renée Stacey Welch said that the Housing & Development Committee met on May 16 via Zoom. The Committee has nominated Purple Reign as a community member. Motion by Renée Stacey Welch to add Purple Reign as a community member on the Housing & Development Committee. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 15-0-0 (1 left early).

The Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard met yesterday on May 22 and there was a strong consensus that the MBTA design needs major improvements to mitigate its impact, and there needs to be pushback on the reduction from 8 acres of the land for community use down to 6.5 acres. The community is asking for more meetings on design and land use. Gert Thorn made a motion to send a letter asking for these meetings. The Council did write a letter last month requesting the

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provide in-depth information on the Arborway Yard project and build an ongoing relationship throughout the development of the location. Mr. Thorn did not want to wait another month for any answer.

The motion failed for lack of a second. There will be a public meeting sponsored by the MBTA on the 15% design for the Arborway Yard. It will be on Thursday, June 22 by Zoom (switched to in-person at the request of the Subcommittee). Bernie Doherty wanted to see better design for the edges of the development. The CPCAY (Community Planning Committee for the Arborway Yard) had worked hard on improving the edges. Michael Epp said that the MBTA's own written community process guidelines are not being followed on this project. Ben Weber asked what is the timeline for completion? Michael Epp asked to comment further but was not allowed.

**4.4. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Public Service Committee met on Tuesday, May 2 at 7:00pm via Zoom. The Committee continued its work on trying to change the rules at the Boston Police Department and allow for civilian flaggers at construction sites. The Committee has started to get some traction on this issue with other neighborhoods and had a segment on WBZ-TV on May 3. The Committee sponsored a Love your Block (Spring Cleanup) on Saturday, April 29 and swept and picked up debris along both the Southwest Corridor Park and Chestnut Avenue from Boylston Street to Centre Street. The Committee has also made their annual list of streets and sidewalks needing repairs and striping needed for crosswalks and bicycle lanes.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, June 6 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be licensing requests from Green Basket Market at 186 Green Street for a Beer & Wine Package Store License, SEED at 401A Centre Street for the delivery of recreational cannabis, Casa Verde at 711 Centre Street to add an outdoor seasonal patio in the rear, and B.U. Bistro at 3840 Washington Street to add outdoor seasonal patios in the front and rear.

**4.5. Parks+ Committee (Environment, Parks & Energy Committee):** Alexis Rickmers said that the Parks+ Committee participated in the Muddy River Cleanup on April 22. The community really wants more cleanups. There was also discussion about the proposal for a dog park in the cemetery at the First Church in Jamaica Plain (Unitarian). Dana Gonsalves brought up the issue of unleashed dogs on the Southwest Corridor Park at the tennis courts.

Nicholas Chaves requested better signage at Jamaica Pond Park so that bicyclists don't ride on the pedestrian-only path around the Pond. The present signs are inadequate and newer, rectangular ones are needed. Clear signs are needed where the paths diverge. Some thought that the signs are adequate, but enforcement is insufficient. This is an issue for both the Parks+ and Public Service Committees.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, May 30 (this month only) at 7:30pm via Zoom.

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

- This is the last meeting of the JP Neighborhood Council before the Election. The Chair, Will Cohen, was thanked for his firm hand and abundant good will. Mr. Cohen said he will not be standing for re-election, but offered to help with the transition.

**6. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:22pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

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

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: June 22 (then moved to June 23) at 7:00PM via Zoom.