

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
November 28, 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, Gert Thorn, and Ben Weber.

Other attendees: Louise Johnson, Carolyn Royce, Dottie Farrell, Allan Ihrer, Dana Gonsalves, Susan Cibulsky, Kane Dimasso-Scott, Dunya Alwan, Sam Naylor, and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by Renée Stacey Welch.

Introductions: The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. The reporter from The Bulletin introduced himself.

2. Approval of October 2023 minutes: Motion by Peg Preble to approve the minutes from the October 25, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Nicholas Chaves. Passed 16-0-1 (1 came late).

3. Community announcements:

- Bernie Doherty had three JPNC-related announcements: He said he received a request that discussion of the Green Line Extension to Hyde Square/Canary Square be placed on the JPNC agenda for December. He hopes that can be done.

- Bernie Doherty said the Outreach Committee's slide presentation called "JPNC 1.01" is very good and he hopes it will be made available to all JPNC members.

- Bernie Doherty said the JPNC Executive Committee's primary task is to set the agenda for full Council meetings and he urged Chairs of all Committees to attend regularly or transmit their Committee business in a timely manner.

- Peter DeCotis said that there will be a virtual community meeting on the supplier diversity and community benefits portion of the White Stadium project on Wednesday, November 29 starting at 6:00pm. The link to register for the meeting is: [us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcO6tqDwpHtAxxYkeL75e_v5POpASNB0n#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join?zmt=us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcO6tqDwpHtAxxYkeL75e_v5POpASNB0n#/registration)

- Dave Baron said that the Boston Planning & Development Agency's (BPDA) planned reform of zoning called Squares + Streets is moving forward. The draft amendment to the Zoning Code (Article 26) will be released on December 5 and there will be a virtual public meeting about it that day at 6:00pm. To register, contact Abdul-Razak Zachariah at: abdul-razak.zachariah@boston.gov

4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met twice - on November 1 and 15. There are six votes being requested at tonight's meeting. 1) 28 Evergreen Street, a petition by Jesse and Rose Wilson, to change occupancy from a three-family to a four-family residence; construct new three-story rear addition and add basement living space, add new roof dormer, add roof deck and ground deck, update systems. Existing barn to be demolished. This is an owner-occupied residence and the owners will stay after renovations, but need a larger space. Neighbors were in support. The Zoning Committee recommended approval. 2) 17 Alveston Street, a petition by Daniel Adelson (Alveston Development LLC/ADCO Development), for a renovation and expansion of an existing two-unit residential dwelling; extend living space into basement for both units, adding 998 and 777 square feet of living space to each unit. 3) 21 Alveston Street, a petition by Daniel Adelson (Alveston Development LLC/ADCO Development), for new construction of a single-family house "as of right"; amend building permit to extend living space into basement, adding 1327 square feet of living space, and adding roof deck above second story. Items 2) and 3) were considered together. After building 21 Alveston as of right, which was liked by the community, the older building at 21 Alveston Street was looking seedy and the developer has proposed to renovate 21 Alveston Street and add additional living space to both buildings, including in the basements. The neighbors were in support. The ZC recommended approval. 4) 6 Greenough Avenue, a petition by Kathryn Eno to create a new driveway with curb cut for one off-street parking space. The owner initially requested one off-street parking space, but the City did not like removing one public on-street space to add one private off-street space. The architect has changed the plans to ask for two off-street spaces. All letters received were in support. The ZC recommended approval for two spaces. 5) 44 Bournedale Road, a petition by Shiba Nemat-Nasser, to construct an L-shaped addition and deck bump-out on rear of existing single family dwelling, add bathroom. This is an owner-occupied corner lot which muddies the delineation of front, side and rear yards on this parcel. The side neighbor, who is most affected, came and supported the proposal. The addition will be a mudroom. The ZC recommended approval. 6) 3927 Washington Street, a petition by Michael Cassidy, to add a fourth floor and fourth unit to existing three story, 3-unit building, change legal occupancy, extend fire protection sprinklers to new fourth floor. This building was rebuilt after a fire. While it is four stories, it looks like a three-decker and the surrounding neighborhood has other 'four-deckers'. The ZC recommended approval.

Motion by Bernie Doherty to approve the recommendations of the Zoning Committee on 28 Evergreen Street, 17 and 21 Alveston Street, 6 Greenough Avenue, 44 Bournedale Road, and 3927 Washington Street. Seconded by Lorenzo Bartoloni. Passed 18-0-0.

The next Zoning Committee meetings will be on Wednesday, December 6 and December 20 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be requests from 11 Edge Hill Street, 617-619 Centre Street (take-out), and 75 McBride Street (remove and rebuild porch).

4.2. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on Tuesday, November 7 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. This applicant appeared at the Public Service Committee in October and there was good discussion on the issue at that time. The re-discussion in November was mainly regarding a different manager and a later closing time of 11:00pm for the outdoor patios. The Committee felt the new hours were appropriate and felt comfortable with outdoor music on the rear patio. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of B.U. LLC, doing business as "B.U. Bistro", at 3840 Washington Street for a Common Victualler 7-Day Wines and Malt Beverages License with the hours of 6:00am to 11:00pm with Bryan Lopez as manager, and with an outdoor seasonal patio (in the front) for 10 patrons and an outdoor seasonal patio (in the rear) for 30 patrons from April to October (hours 12noon-11:00pm), and with an entertainment license for recorded music on the rear patio. Seconded by David Baron. Passed 18-0-0.

The Committee also recommended writing a letter asking for better community process on the Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor project. This is a new project led by the City's Transportation Department to improve the MBTA's Route 39 Corridor from Forest Hills to Back Bay Station. The draft letter was sent to the Council ahead of this meeting. It asks for a community advisory committee, better coordination of the project, a better City webpage for the project, and funding clarification. Motion by Michael Reiskind to send the letter to the Boston Transportation Department on the Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor project asking for more community participation and more information on funding. Seconded by Renée Stacey Welch. Passed 18-0-0.

Mr. Reiskind also reported on an update given at the Public Service Committee on the proposal to extend the Green Line from Heath Street to Hyde/Canary Square. This long-standing grassroots request has recently been pushed along strongly by a united request by the two State Representatives and two State Senators in whose districts the extension would run. They have sent a joint letter, also signed by Mayor Michelle Wu, to the state's Secretary of Administration & Finance to begin a feasibility study on the project. The funding for the study was previously authorized in both 2020 and 2022, but never given the go-ahead by the Administration.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, December 5 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a discussion on red light-running cameras.

4.3. Parks+ Committee: Nick Chaves, the Chair of the Parks+ Committee, reported that the Committee is encouraging folks to respond to a survey asking what should be the goals of the Parks+ Committee. Answers should be submitted by December 5. The Committee is interested in working on planning the green space around the Arborway Yard (MBTA) and extending the Southwest Corridor Park (Dept. of Conservation & Recreation). He reminded folks about the community meeting on the White Stadium project tomorrow, November 29 at 6:00pm. There were questions about the community process on White Stadium. There was a first public meeting about transportation in July, and now tomorrow's meeting on vendors and benefits. It a complex issue involving parks advocates, Boston Public Schools, other groups and three or four neighborhoods. The Jamaica Plain liaison at the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Melissa Beltran, holds weekly coffee hours every Friday. This week it will be at the Mildred Hailey Apartments, 30 Bickford Street on December 1 from 11:30am to 12:30pm. Nick Chaves informed folks about the union of maintenance workers at the Arnold Arboretum, SEIU 32BJ. The workers have been negotiating for a better contract with their employer, Harvard University. They are asking for community support at a rally on Saturday, December 2 starting at 12:30pm at the Hunnewell Building, 125 Arborway. Mr. Chaves said the union is also asking for a letter of support for the union position.

Gert Thorn asked about silting of drains at Jamaica Pond Park. The backup of the clogged drains creates puddles along the Park path which freeze in the winter.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be on Thursday, December 14 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

4.4. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Danielle Sommer Kieta reported that the Housing & Development Committee met on November 21 via Zoom. There was robust conversation on the Arborway Yard, especially about the 150 parking spaces that the MBTA wants to move into the community land, along with accompanying traffic lanes. Does this eat into the community use of the promised 8 acres?

There was also discussion about the "minor" amendment (change to Article 80B-2.5) proposed by the City to waive review on certain projects to preserve or create affordable housing.

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

4.5. Outreach Committee: Katherine O'Shea, Chair, reported that the Committee met on November 8 via Zoom. It was a special session explaining the work of the Council, "JPNC 1.01". Ms. O'Shea said there has been a short Power Point presentation prepared, mainly aimed at new community folks, but it can also be used for orientation of new JPNC members. Five or six people attended. Ms. O'Shea will send the slides to all JPNC members. There was a request to post the Power Point on the JPNC website after a presentation to and a vote by the JPNC. Purple Reign suggested that the slides might be customized for each Working Committee.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

4.6. The Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard: Sue Cibulsky further reported on the Arborway Yard discussion at the H&DC meeting on November 19. In addition to the issues reported by Danielle Sommer Kieta - parking of 150 cars for

MBTA use and new internal roads - there are issues about curb cuts and access into the Arborway Yard. This revised plan was presented to the community at the October 24 meeting. It calls for a full 8 acres for "community use". The Public Works Department's old Pole Yard stays as a Salt Yard and recycling facility, but is reduced to 1/2 acre. The size of the proposed MBTA building has been reduced to a one-level building with a canopy to protect outdoor storage of buses using the space over the Stony Brook culvert. The maintenance facility is also much smaller. The edge along Arborway is all green space. They promised a community process for the 8 acres to be led by the BPDA. There are still more buses than previously agreed to; 200 versus 118. There will be a new design team chosen after 15% design is complete. Gert Thorn said that the building is lower but still a large one-story building. He asked whether the Subcommittee supports the new design or not? There will be further discussion at the December Subcommittee meeting. Bernie Doherty reminded folks that the project completion date is scheduled for 2029 and there is still a lack of clarity on how it will affect the community. The entrance and exits of the buses go through the 8 acre community land.

The Better Bus Project (MBTA) came to a Subcommittee meeting on November 19. They have re-designed their high-density bus corridors to provide more service and have added more corridor routes. This has resulted in a 25% increase in service. Jamaica Plain had four high-density corridors and now has seven. There will be an increase in the number of longer 60' buses,, but the Cabot Bus Yard and Northampton Bus Yard cannot expand to accommodate electrified buses; that is why the Better Bus Committees coming to talk the Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard.

5. Old Business/New Business:

- Vacancies on the JP Neighborhood Council: There are two vacancies on the Council, both in Area B. Nominations were accepted from those in attendance and one resident nominated himself: Sam Naylor of 58 Glen Road. Willie Mitchell said he thought that nominees should give a brief presentation about themselves. David Baron confirmed that it was usual practice to encourage nominees to attend Working Committees and then make a presentation to the full Council. Since further nominations will be accepted to fill the vacancies for at least the next month and a vote can't be held until the December meeting, Mr. Naylor can prepare and return at a future meeting.

- Gert Thorn asked whether the rosters and Chairs of all Committees have been voted on by the full Council, and whether they are on the JPNC website. All Committee rosters (except the Parks+ Committee's) have been voted on and are posted on the website, although they do need some updating.

- Since he is a new Chair of the Parks+ Committee, Nick Chaves asked when is the regular meeting of the Executive Committee? It is usually on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm via Zoom. So it is scheduled for December 21. Mr. Chaves' question alerted folks that next month's regular JPNC meeting would be falling on December 26, and may be difficult to attract a quorum. There was a motion by Renée Stacey Welch to move the meeting earlier in the month to Thursday, December 21 at 7:00pm. Seconded by Peg Preble. Passed 17-0-1. The December Executive Committee was moved to the Friday before the full JPNC meeting to December 15 at 7:00pm.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:39pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Thursday, December 21 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: December 15 at 7:00PM via Zoom.