

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
June 25, 2024 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Lorenzo Bartoloni, Esther Belliard, Carla-Lisa Caliga, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Katherine O’Shea, Purple Reign, Danielle Sommer Kieta, and Gert Thorn.

Other attendees: Carolyn Royce, Sue Cibulsky, Janet Galloway, Evelyn Tate, Jennifer McKinnon, Soren White, Stanley Kramer, Mia Jean-Sicard, Kane Dimasso-Scott, Jz, Jordan Frias (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), Caroline Peters (Office of Neighborhood Services), 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. Elected officials and aides to elected officials introduced themselves and the reporter from The Boston Bulletin introduced himself.

2. Approval of May 2024 minutes: The Secretary has not completed the minutes from the May 28, 2024 meeting.

3. Community announcements:

- Jamaica Plain Farmers Market, Bank of America parking lot, 677 Centre Street on Saturday, June 29 from 12NOON to 3PM. <https://stillmansfarm.com/event/jamaica-plain-farmers-market-year-round-saturday/2024-06-29/>
- Walking Tour of Monument Square on Saturday, June 29, from 11AM to 12PM: Loring Greenough House, 12 South Street JP <https://calendar.artsboston.org/event/walking-tour-of-monument-sq-jp-2/>
- Jamaica Pond parkrun on Saturday, June 29, 9AM: Pinebank Promontory (top of the Sugarbowl). <https://www.parkrun.us/jamaicapond/>
- BAMS Festival on Saturday, June 29 and Sunday, June 30, 12PM to 8PM: Franklin Park Playstead, Pierpont Road. <https://www.bamsfest.org/festivalinfo>
- The third annual Open Streets Jamaica Plain will take place on Sunday, July 21 from 10:30AM to 5:00PM.
- The City has opened up some grants for block parties. Neighborhood groups can apply for up to \$750 for expenses.

4. Committee Reports/Recommendations:

4.1. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee met on Tuesday, June 4 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda was a request from Latino Restaurant at 302 Centre Street to add cordials to its beer & wine license and also to extend the closing hour from 12midnight to 1:00am. The owner/manager, Mr. Rafael Veras, has been operating the Latino Restaurant successfully since 1997 and would like to upgrade by adding cordials/liqueurs to the beer & wine offerings. There have been more restaurants opening in the Hyde Square/Jackson Square area with later hours and he would like to be able to compete. The menu, layout and operations will not change and he promised to serve alcohol with food only. He did say that the kitchen will be closing at 12:00midnight, the same as presently, but he would like a little leeway to be able to serve late-arriving customers. Latino Restaurant does not use any solid security grates and Mr. Veras said he will continue to be vigilant about litter in the area around his restaurant. All attendees supported the proposed changes to the license, saying late night restaurants add vibrancy to the neighborhood. The Public Service Committee voted to support both parts of the proposal at the June meeting. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of Rafael E. Veras., doing business as “Latino Restaurant” at 302 Centre Street, to amend his 7-Day Common Victualler Beer & Wine Beverage License to a Beer and Wine with Liqueurs License with Rafael E. Veras as manager, and for a change in the closing hour from 12midnight to 1:00am. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 12-0-0 (2 came late). Also on the June agenda was an update on the status of the Centre South Streetscape project. This is a transportation improvement project that stretches along Centre and South Streets from Jackson Square to Forest Hills. It was started with much fanfare in 2014, was partially constructed from Jackson Square up to Hyde Square and has languished for many years. The community has been advocating for its revival and the City is now restarting the project. It has just hired staff and will soon advertise for consultants. Work on design is expected to start in the fall of this year.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, July 2 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be a proposal from Jadu (Espresso Yourself) at 767 Centre Street for a beer and wine with liqueurs license.

4.2. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron said that the Zoning Committee met only once in June - on Wednesday, June 5. Three matters were considered; only the first two require votes tonight. **1) 6 Slocum Road**, a petition by Karyn Stewart, to remove, replace and extend current additions to building; interior renovations. This will be a shed addition in the rear. The local Jamaica Pond Association did not oppose and the Zoning Committee recommends approval. **2) 378A Centre Street**, a petition by Viva Taco Corp - Nolber Salguero (acting as agent for 314 Centre LLC - Michel Soltani), for a new restaurant with take-out. This had been the location of Across the Border. The owner/manager of Viva Taco, Nolber Salguero, has previously managed another taco shop. The landlord of 378 Centre Street, Michel Soltani, who also owns the adjacent Brendan Behan Pub, was very supportive. The issue of double parking at this corner was discussed. There are multiple restaurants here as well as a liquor store that contributes to the double parking. Mr. Salguero said he will be extra vigilant for double parkers and self-police the area. He is also asking for several short-term parking spaces on this side of Hyde Square. The Zoning Committee recommends approval with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 378-380 Centre Street, Viva Taco Corp, doing business as “Viva Taco”.

3) **3336 -3338 Washington Street**, a petition by ColeMontana LLC, for a change of occupancy to include bakery/café and eight (8) residential units (multifamily with three townhouses). Existing façade and foundation of existing one-story building to remain, with new foundation for additions and upgrades to life safety systems. This also has the address 3346 Washington Street and had been the location of Exodus Bagels and Canto 6 Bakery. This proposal is for 8 residential units and a corner entry to a ground-floor commercial space. They are hoping for a bakery. The commercial space can use the full basement. Of the 8 units, 5 are above the commercial space and 3 are townhouse going up the hill along Glen Road. All three townhouses have a garage with a separate curb cut. Only the three townhouse units get off-street parking. No vote is being requested tonight. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 6 Slocum Road and 378A Centre Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 13-0-0 (1 came late).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, July 10. On the agenda will be a request by 34 Olmstead Street to extend living space into the attic.

4.3. Outreach Committee: Katherine O'Shea reported that the Committee met on June 11 via Zoom. The City is offering grants for block parties. There is an easy application process for neighborhood groups. The Outreach Committee is posting the information and is getting some responses on Instagram. Applications must be in by July 31 at the latest; the City may take up to thirty days for review.

On behalf of the JP Neighborhood Council, the Outreach Committee has applied for a table at the Open Streets Jamaica Plain event on Sunday, July 21; Ms. O'Shea asked for volunteers. The Committee should hear back soon on the location of the table.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, July 9 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

4.4. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Danielle Sommer Kieta reported that the Housing & Development Committee met on June 18 via Zoom. The Committee discussed the Forbes Building (545 Centre Street). The project was approved by the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) on June 13. All 147 units will be affordable apartments and there will be 4,500 square feet of commercial space. The building will be rehabilitated with a new façade and mechanical systems, with minimal disruption to existing tenants. Reduction in parking is now the major concern of tenants. The proposal is to go from 36 spaces (9 in front and 27 in the back of the building) to 15 spaces, plus 3 for handicapped parking. There are 6 HP spaces now. At present, 78 tenants in the building have cars. Gert Thorn said the final BPDA approval came without a community process. There was a request to write a letter asking for an explanation on process and reduction of parking. The draft will come from the H&DC and then go to the full JPNC in July.

Renée Stacey Welch said that the City is changing the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) and putting it within zoning. It is now called Inclusionary Zoning (IZ). The 13% affordability requirement is now 17% plus an additional 3%. The next Housing & Development Committee meeting will be on July 16 at 7:00pm via Zoom. 140 Wachusett Street will be returning; updating the Healthy Housing Checklist will also be on the agenda.

4.5. Parks+ Committee: Neither Leah Simmons Dzintars nor Nick Chaves were available to report on the June 10 meeting. (Sarah Freeman is on the Committee but did not attend the June meeting.) Soren White was in attendance and said that the issue of the South Street Mall tennis courts/pickleball courts/basketball courts was raised and how to have people share better. Sue Cibulsky said that Rep. Sam Montañó and Councillor Ben Weber are arranging a meeting about the courts. No date has been announced yet.

Gert Thorn reminded the Committee to keep working on better sharing at Jamaica Pond also; the Park still does not have adequate signage informing bicyclists that they are not allowed on the pedestrian path.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be on the second Thursday of the month, July 11 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

4.6. The Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard: Sue Cibulsky reported that the Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard met on June 17. The latest Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for the MBTA was released and it covers future building projects for 2025-2029. The Arborway Yard Bus Facility construction costs were not included for funding; costs for design of the Facility were included. The Subcommittee reached out to Rep. Montañó and she was told that the MBTA will fund the construction with a bond bill in the future.

The Subcommittee is working on changing the way they communicate among themselves and have set up a Google Group. The Subcommittee has also applied for a table at Open Streets on July 21.

The Subcommittee is asking for any design updates, specifically on any land transfers within the Arborway Yard and changes in the location of the MBTA employee parking. They are also asking for cost estimates of any parking structure for the employee parking. They have not received any answers yet. Allan Ihrer has some new ideas on how to incorporate parking within the Yard; he says that they can build underground parking. Gert Thorn thought that underground parking would be too expensive for the MBTA. Mr. Thorn was also worried about the bus battery technology and whether it had an explosion hazard.

The next Subcommittee meeting will be on Monday, July 15 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

5. Old Business/New Business:

- Caroline Peters said the City's Inspectional Services Department (ISD) released a Boston Rat Action Plan on June 17. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that they had done neighborhood walk-throughs and surveys in preparation. There is a rodent problem in Boston, in both the commercial and residential districts. Some ideas for solving the problem were raised by members: Some cities use trained hawks for rodent control, but the use of rat poison does kill the hawks, too. Bernie Doherty said that his neighborhood has several feral cats that have been adopted by residents; they are spayed and become

very effective in controlling the rat population. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that basically it is a human behavior issue; improper disposal of garbage is the biggest problem. Maybe having rodent-resistant trash barrels available to residents would be a big help.

- Renée Stacey Welch reminded everybody that there are three vacancies on the JP Neighborhood Council, two in Area B and one in Area C.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:33pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 7:00PM via Zoom.