

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**  
**November 26, 2024 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, Esther Belliard, Carla-Lisa Caliga, Nicholas Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Katherine O’Shea, Purple Reign, and Danielle Sommer Kieta.

**Other attendees:** Sue Cibulsky, Carolyn Royce, Peg Preble, Louise Johnson, Paige Roosa, Anne McHugh, Mark Freudenberger, Lissah Johnson, Taylor Morley, Alcurtis Clark, Sarah Porter, Holly DeMelo, Todd Washburn (Arnold Arboretum), State Representative Sam Montaña, City Councillor Ben Weber, Melissa Beltran (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:09pm 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 October 2024 minutes:** Motion by Purple Reign to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Peter DeCotis. Passed 10-0-2.

**Question on format of the agenda:** Bernie Doherty asked why the agenda for this November meeting was so long. Because several Committees had not submitted their agenda items in time, it was decided to use ai.read (Zoom’s artificial intelligence) full summary notes as the agenda items. The Council Chair reminded Committee Chairs to submit their agenda items by the Thursday before the monthly Tuesday meeting.

**3. Community announcements:**

- The Mayor's Trolley Tour will be coming to JP on Saturday, December 7; the tree lighting will be in Hyde Square at 2pm and the tree lighting will be at The Monument at 3pm.
- The tree lighting at Mildred C. Hailey Apartments will be on Wednesday, December 4 at 6pm.
- The tree lighting at Egleston Square will be on Saturday, December 14 starting at 4pm.
- Spontaneous celebrations will be having a Holiday Market from Friday, December 13 to Sunday, December 15 from 11am-4pm at 54 Danforth Street, JP.
- The annual Turkey Trot at Franklin Park will be on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28 starting at 9:00am at the Franklin Park Golf Clubhouse.
- City Councillor Ben Weber attended this November JPNC meeting along with his JP Liaison, Melissa Beltran. The Councillor has regular office hours every week on Fridays, sometimes in Jamaica Plain and sometimes in West Roxbury.

**4. Committee Reports:**

**4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC):** The Zoning Committee met on Wednesday, October 23 and November 6. Three matters were considered and need votes tonight. **1) 44 Creighton Street**, a petition by Xavier Sepulveda, to change occupancy from single-family to three residential units; construct second and third floor additions, extending structure toward the rear, renovate and extend living space. Michael Reiskind reported on the October 23 meeting that considered 44 Creighton Street. This was a second meeting at the Zoning Committee; the first meeting had ended with most ZC members in support of the proposal, but it was decided to defer just to allow the applicant to contact his immediate neighbor to the right (at 46 Creighton Street). The applicant, Xavier Sepulveda, related his efforts to contact the owner of 46 Creighton Street both in person at the building and by telephone and email to the property owner’s management company. The company kept relaying messages, but Mr. Sepulveda never received a direct response from the owner. Most Committee members felt this fulfilled the responsibilities of the applicant as performing his best effort. Others on the Committee felt it was inadequate and used their cellphones to search for and directly call the owner of 46 Creighton Street, Elijah Arnold of 46 Creighton Realty Trust. Mr. Arnold told the ZC members that he was not opposed to the proposal at 44 Creighton Street. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 105 Green Street**, a petition by Michael and Rebecca Robertson, to enclose an existing porch with new front steps. Bernie Doherty reported that this request was not controversial. There were no complaints from neighbors. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. **3) 9 Hillcroft Road**, a petition by Audie Schoolcraft and Matthew Ory, to convert attic into living space with full bathroom and dormer. Bernie Doherty reported that the local Jamaica Hills Association voted not to oppose. The ZC voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Motion by Purple Reign to accept the recommendations of the ZC on all three items. Peter DeCotis had a question on parking at 44 Creighton Street and asked for separate votes. Purple Reign withdrew her motion. After further discussion, there was a motion by Purple Reign to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 44 Creighton Street. Seconded by Peter DeCotis. Passed 7-2-3. Motion by Bernie Doherty to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 105 Green Street. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 12-0-0. Motion by Bernard Doherty to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 9 Hillcroft Road. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 12-0-0.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, December 4.

**4.2. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, November 5. On the agenda was a proposal from La Parada Dominican Kitchen at 3094 Washington Street for a Beer & Wine with Liqueurs

License. Yonatan Peña, owner and manager of La Parada Dominican Kitchen, presented the proposal for a new alcohol license at this location in the heart of Egleston Square. This Dominican restaurant has been open many years at this location with a common victualler license only and is a major gathering spot for local residents. Mr. Peña is one of the most active business owners in Egleston Square and has recently purchased another restaurant on Washington Street. The Public Service Committee is also supporting a take-out use at this restaurant, so two related votes are needed. Motion by Willie Mitchell to support the request of Dominican Kitchen, Inc., doing business as “La Parada Dominican Kitchen”, at 3094 Washington Street for a Common Victualler 7-Day Wines and Malt Beverages with Liqueurs License with a closing hour of 11:00pm, with Yonatan Peña as manager; and also to support the request of Dominican Kitchen, Inc., (acting as agent for V&S Trust) to grant a #36A take-out use to V&S Trust, owner of 3092-3094 Washington Street, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 3094 Washington Street, Dominican Kitchen, Inc., doing business as “La Parada Dominican Kitchen”. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 12-0-0.

Also on the agenda was a request from The Galway House at 710 Centre Street for a change of ownership and manager. This 114-seat restaurant has been operating for decades at this location and with this license. The owner/manager would like to retire and transfer ownership to a long-time employee, Albi Gjura. There will be no change in hours, menu or decorations. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of Galway House, Inc., doing business as “The Galway House”, at 710-712 Centre Street for a change of officers/directors and a change of stock interest for its Common Victualler 7-Day All-Alcohol Beverages License, and a change of manager from Edward Lanzillo to Albi Gjura. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 12-0-0.

There was a question about Stoked Pizza, planning to go into the new construction at 3484 Washington Street (former address of Doyle’s). Stoked Pizza went through a community process in December 2023 and was recommended for approval for an all-alcohol license with a 2:00am closing hour at the Public Service Committee on January 2, 2024 and at the JPNC on January 23, 2024.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, December 3 at 7:00pm via Zoom. On the agenda will be proposals from bb.q chicken at 654 Centre Street for a Beer & Wine License, and also from Momo Masala at 2 Perkins Street for an All-Alcohol License. Also on the agenda will be a discussion on having in-person Public Service Committee meetings.

**4.3. Outreach Committee:** Katherine O’Shea reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, November 12 via Zoom. The Committee welcomed an interested Jamaica Plain resident and gave him an extensive overview of the Outreach Committee’s work and the work of all the other Council Committees.

Committee members were again urged to go out and attend neighborhood meetings to pass the word about JPNC activities and increase awareness and participation in the Council.

The Committee started planning for the next JPNC election in 2025. They are leaning toward a Saturday, May 10 or Saturday, May 17 date for the Election.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, December 10 at 7:00am.

**4.4. Parks+ Committee:** Nick Chaves reported that the Parks+ Committee met on November 14. The Committee is working with the Jamaica Pond Association’s Parks/Parkways/Open Space Committee and its chair, Tony Dreyfus, on ways to collaborate. The Committees are especially working on Jamaica Pond maintenance issues. The City has allocated \$150,000 to plant new trees along the Emerald Necklace.

Sarah Freeman said that the boulders placed at the Arnold Arboretum’s South Street gate area were put there by the City to dissuade noisy revelers. It has reduced the number of parking spaces by two.

White Stadium (Renée Stacey Welch recused herself and handed the Chair to Vice-Chair Bernard Doherty.) There were many questions about the White Stadium proposal in Franklin Park and issues relating to White Stadium. Were there options other than Boston Unity Soccer Partners to rehabilitate White Stadium? There was an RFP (Request for Proposals) and Boston Unity Soccer Partners won the bid. There is a covenant in the RFP to hold Boston Unity Soccer Partners to a maintenance agreement. (This is mentioned in the Parks+ November newsletter.) Why was maintenance deferred so long? The City said that that it was because of limited school budgets. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that the Stadium was built by the George Robert White fund for school use, and there has not been a transparent process about this proposal. The City never came to the community with alternatives and did not share the RFP with the neighborhoods. Nick Chaves said that he has a good relationship with the White Stadium team and would be happy to enable better communications. Richard Heath asked if a lease has been signed yet, who has the contract for demolition, and has the new (April 2024) Franklin Park administrator position been filled? Nick Chaves said the lease is still being negotiated. He has no answers on the demolition contract or administrator. He said that there will be a White Stadium Neighborhood Council as part of the lease. Also, there will be three City departments involved: Parks and Recreation, Public Schools, and the Office of Neighborhood Services, as well at the golf course and the zoo. All groups’ issues are supposed to be integrated within the Franklin Park Action Plan. Bernie Doherty thought that up to now the process has not been inclusive, and is setting a bad precedent of privatizing public land. Sarah Freeman said that the City spent \$35M for a pool in Charlestown; why not use that model and have the City stand alone? She also said that there has been a lot more concern about traffic coming through Charlestown to the planned Everett soccer stadium than about traffic in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain for the planned White Stadium. (Renée Stacey Welch returned as the Chair of the Council.)

The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be on Thursday, December 12 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Danielle Sommer Kieta reported that the Housing & Development Committee met on November 19. John Holland, from Holland Companies, came and gave a presentation about the project at 920 Centre Street (former Poor Clare Convent). It is now proposed at 120 residential units with 40 affordable senior housing units in the existing monastery building and 80 condominium units in a new addition, with 10 of these affordable. There will be 110 parking spaces included below the new building. The 40 senior rental units are at 90% AMI (Area Median Income). He was asked to do better and go to 60% AMI. Ned Friedman, from the Arnold Arboretum, asked that the new building stay below the tree line at four stories. He had concerns about impact on historic viewsheds from the Arnold Arboretum. Some trees may have to come down, but the developer is very receptive to community concerns. They have set up three meetings for the public to attend and ask questions. Todd Washburn, from the Arnold Arboretum, said that the Arboretum still has serious concerns about the public viewsheds from the Arboretum and would like the development to move more toward Centre Street. Carla-Lisa Caliga said she believes the housing crisis is manufactured, because too many housing units in Boston are still vacant and more commercial space can be converted into residential. Danielle Sommer Kieta said the other major discussion item was an overview of the Article 80 modernization. They have a subcommittee working on recommendations. The draft is 90 pages long. The main points are to have community engagement earlier in the process, have a Community Advisory Team (CAT) with a two-year term advise on all projects in a community, create a better connection between a project and its mitigation, coordinate the review by having it earlier, with a definite timeline for review, and have a City interdepartmental review team. A draft response will be coming back to the H&DC at its next meeting. Councillor Weber offered a Zoom meeting with the City of Boston Planning Department in the first or second week of December. They will accept comments after the legal comment period ends. There was no major discussion on the Rogerson Beaufort project; there will be additional assisted living units - all affordable. Some revisions are coming in response to community concerns from previous meetings.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17.

**4.6. Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard:** Sue Cibulsky and Carolyn Royce reported that the Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard met on November 18. Since there is no funding authorized in the Capital Investment Plan (CIP), the MBTA has paused the Arborway Yard design at the 15% stage; meetings of the Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard could be paused, too. The MBTA's total budget and funding is a major critical issue and a report is due to be released in December. The Subcommittee is planning to invite some of our state elected officials to discuss MBTA funding and how it works. Michael Reiskind thought that the pause in the work of the Subcommittee could allow the team to work to change the City's decision on keeping the Pole Yard/Salt Yard and not having it be part of the Arborway Yard, as they originally promised.

The next Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 20 (no December meeting).

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

- Renée Stacey Welch reminded everybody that there are three vacancies on the JP Neighborhood Council, two in Area B and one in Area C.
- Richard Heath asked if Rogerson House community meetings are open to more than the immediate neighbors?
- There will be no December meeting because it falls on December 24, Christmas Eve. The next JPNC meeting will be in January.

**6. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 7:00PM via Zoom.