

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
January 28, 2025 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Lorenzo Bartoloni, Carla-Lisa Caliga, Nicholas Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Katherine O’Shea, Leah Simmons Dzintars, Gert Thorn, and Danielle Sommer Kieta.

Other attendees: Louise Johnson, Alexandra Rollins, Janet Galloway, Alan Benenfeld, Mark Freudenberger, Todd Kerr, Lisa Johnson, Alcurtis Clark, Peter Rosenbaum, Stanley Kramer, Julie Davison, TriciaMuse, Ruth Schechter, Heidi Stucker, Michael Givertz, Julia, Syniyeh W., (401) 965-1452, State Representative Sam Montaña, City Councillor Ben Weber, Bonnie Delaune (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), Caroline Peters (Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Vice-Chair Bernard Doherty.

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 November 2024 minutes: There is one correction needed for the November minutes: Under **New Business**, the last two sentences should read “There will be no December meeting because it falls on December 24, Christmas Eve. The next JPNC meeting will be in January.” Motion by Michael Reiskind to approve the minutes from the November 26, 2024 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Bernard Doherty. Passed 11-0-1 (1 came late).

3. Community announcements:

- “Through the Archives”, a journey through Egleston Square's past archival materials will take place on Saturday, February 1, from 10:00am to 11:30am at the Egleston Square Branch Library, 2044 Columbus Avenue.
- The Galentine’s Wine and Chocolate Tour will be on Thursday, February 6 starting at 5:00pm. Tickets available at jpcntresouth.com.
- The Rogerson-Beaufort Article 80 Public Meeting will be on Thursday, February 6 starting at 6:00pm. You can register at www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/kwEPDMOTRbidQAx2eYAi4A#/registration.
- The 259 Allandale Street (Allandale Farm) Article 80 Public Meeting will be on Monday, February 24 starting at 6:00pm Register at www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/Re6ITcH0RpmkR-RCYx7V4g#.
- Councillor Julia Mejia has presented a resolution for the timely release and review of final transportation, parking, environmental, and alternative public plans for White Stadium prior to further demolition work. It will be heard at the City Council meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, January 29. The meeting starts at 12noon in the City Council Chamber, City Hall.
- There will be a community stand-out about White Stadium sponsored by the Franklin Park Defenders. It will be on Thursday, January 30 at 11am at White Stadium in Franklin Park.
- The Emerald Necklace Conservancy is holding a public meeting to receive feedback from the community on its alternative design proposal on Thursday, February 6 at 6:00pm at the Lena Park Community Center, 150 American Legion Highway in Dorchester.
- The Jamaica Pond Nature Center, run by the Boston Park Rangers, will be open for a limited schedule. It will be open four days in February including Sunday, February 9 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm.
- There will be a Community Valentine’s Concert and Light Show, “Lit with Love”, on Friday, February 14 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at the Loring Greenough House, 12 South Street.

4. Committee Reports:

4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met three times on Wednesday, December 4, January 8, and January 22. Four matters were considered and three need votes tonight. **1) 450-454 Amory Street**, a petition by Amory Green LLC (Chris DeSisto), to construct 14 residential units (reduced from 22) above two ground-level commercial spaces and 10 off-street parking spaces on a currently-vacant lot. This project, at the currently-vacant lot at the corner of Amory and Green Streets, is known as Bartlett Square II. It has had a long, multi-year community process. It started larger and has been reduced; it is now proposed as a 14-residential-unit building with 10 off-street parking spaces and two commercial units on the ground floor. It is consistent in design with Bartlett Square I which is across Green Street. There were questions about parking and traffic flow; why isn’t there a curb cut on Amory Street? The City said it doesn’t fit City policy and they disallowed one in this location. The project includes two affordable units and there was recent support for the project. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 71A Williams Street**, a petition by 71 Williams Street Nominee Realty Trust (Paul Iantosca), for a proposed new 3-story, 4 family residence, with front & rear decks and parking at the rear of property: as per plans. Parking accessed through proposed easement with 69 Williams Street. This project remained in the local Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) for several months and the SNA had not yet taken a vote by the time it came before the Zoning Committee. The SNA is getting better and is starting to meet once-a-month. There was general agreement that the developer was responsive. Alcurtis Clark, a Steering Committee member of the SNA, said that the Association never received final plans from the developer of 71A Williams Street, so they could not take a vote. The SNA is reviewing their process and will change to monthly meetings. Voting will be made based on the size of the project. Carla-Lisa Caliga, who is also on the SNA

Steering Committee, said that the developer kept changing plans and so SNA could not vote. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. (The Zoning Board of Appeal voted this morning, January 28, to approve these variances, so the matter is moot.) **3) 11 Clive Street**, a petition by Femma Rosenbaum, to construct a new dormer/addition on third floor for new bathroom, insulate roof and install new HVAC, interior renovations, confirm single-family use. This is for an owner-occupant. One neighbor was worried that the expansion of the existing dormer would create shadow on his property; there were pictures exchanged and discussed. It was generally felt that this was not a large change. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **4) 19 Kenton Road**, a petition by Marc and Paul Federico, to construct an 8-unit (reduced to 6 units 11/04/24) multifamily building with 8 parking spaces. Demolition of existing structure. This is on today's agenda for information only. There were questions about the age of this residence; Kenton Road is at least 120 years old. The project has to be considered at the Landmarks Commission before any demolition is allowed. The recommendation of the ZC is to defer until "Landmark Status" is determined. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on all three items (1 - 3). Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 13-0-0.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, February 5. On the agenda will be 268-274 Centre Street, a take-out request for Viva Mi Arepa, 36-38 Wyvern Street for a dormer, 62 Patten Street for a basement renovation, and 561-579 Centre Street for a new 4-story building with 12 residential units.

4.2. Outreach Committee: Katherine O'Shea reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, January 14 via Zoom. The Committee had a new attendee. The Committee continued planning for the next JPNC election in 2025. They are proposing Saturday, May 17 as the date for the election. The JPNC Executive Committee discussed the date and thought that a later date in June might be better and easier to organize.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, February 11 at 7:00am. On the agenda will be developing the training for election day volunteers. Committee members were again urged to go out and attend neighborhood meetings to pass the word about JPNC

4.3. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met twice - on Tuesday, December 3 and Tuesday, January 7. On the December agenda was a proposal from bb.q chicken at 654 Centre Street for a Beer & Wine License with the hours of 11:00am to 10:00pm with Purita Jongchalemchai as manager. This is a small restaurant at the former Café Beirut location. It is a locally-owned franchise of a very large international chain. The local franchise owner is very involved in operations and promised to be involved with the community. The Public Service Committee recommended approval. This request appeared before the Licensing Board on January 8, so the Committee's recommendation had to go to the Executive Committee. No vote is needed here on the alcohol license, but the additional request for a take-out permit is being presented for a vote tonight. Much of the discussion at the Public Service Committee was about the issue of take-out and third-party deliveries. This restaurant is right in the center of a heavily-used business district. It was agreed that double parking cannot be tolerated in this block. However, there is a 15-minute zone across the street in front of the Post Office, which is usually available and the Committee thought a take-out use can be accommodated here. Before the vote on the take-out was taken, Mr. Reiskind reminded folks that the take-out permit goes to the building owner: Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of JP BBQ Inc. (acting as agent for Peacock Realty Corp.) to grant a #36A take-out use to Peacock Realty Corp., owner of 650-654 Centre Street, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 654 Centre Street, JP BBQ Inc., doing business as "bb.q chicken".. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 13-0-0.

On the January agenda was a request from Miami Restaurant at 381 Centre Street for an all-alcohol license, with take-out. This is a long-existing Cuban restaurant with a beer and wine license which changed ownership about one year ago. The new owners would now like to apply for an all-alcohol license. There will be no change in hours or menu. No attendees opposed the transfer of the license. The Tejada Brothers and security firm were urged to be vigilant of loitering on the sidewalk and illegal parking at the intersection with Sheridan Street. Two votes are needed tonight; one on the alcohol license and one on the take-out permit: Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of Tejada Brothers Investments LLC, doing business as "Miami Restaurant", at 381 Centre Street for a Common Victualer 7-Day All-Alcoholic Beverages License with a closing hour of 11:00pm, and an extended closing hour of 1:00am (Thursday-Sunday), with Leandro Tejada as manager; and also to support the request of Tejada Brothers Investments LLC, (acting as agent for CLR Realty LLC) to grant a #36A take-out use to CLR Realty LLC, owner of 379-381 Centre Street, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 381 Centre Street, Tejada Brothers Investments LLC, doing business as "Miami Restaurant". Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 13-0-0.

Also on the December agenda was a proposal from Momo Masala at 2 Perkins Street for an All-Alcohol License with the hours of 11:00am to 11:00pm, with Dao Thach as manager. This request appeared before the Licensing Board on December 11, so the Committee's recommendation had to go to the Executive Committee. No vote is needed here tonight. There was a question about the new neighborhood-restricted licenses and when they might be issued, especially the request from La Parada at 3094 Washington Street. The Licensing Board has decided to hold all new license requests from 2024 until January 2025 and decide on them together. Their decisions are expected shortly.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, February 4 at 7:00pm and it will be in-person. On the agenda will be a request from Ula Café at 284 Amory Street in The Brewery for a beer and wine license.

4.4. Parks+ Committee: Nick Chaves reported that the Parks+ Committee met on January 9. The Committee is continuing to work with the Jamaica Pond Association's Parks/Parkways/Open Space Committee and its chair, Tony

Dreyfus, on ways to collaborate. The four issues the Committees are concentrating on are the City's allocation of \$150,000 to plant new trees along the Emerald Necklace, collaborating with the Charles River Watershed Association on Muddy River maintenance, an honorary renaming of a portion of Perkins Street (from Jamaica Way to Chestnut Street) as Olmsted Way, and a strategy for a long-term maintenance plan for Jamaica Pond. Nick Chaves plans to attend a Jamaica Pond Association meeting in February to support the collaboration. Peter DeCotis said he is all for combining efforts. Partnerships make a lot of sense. Gert Thorn commented on the the long-term Jamaica Pond strategy; he said that the Parks Department needs to have one responsible person for each park. We need a Jamaica Pond manager. Mark Freudenberger asked what role does the Emerald Necklace Conservancy play in maintaining Jamaica Pond? Sarah Freeman said that the Parks and Recreation Department is currently going through a transition. Mr. Chaves gave an update on the Arborway Improvement Project. The Department of Conservation and Recreation had a Preferred Design Alternative Meeting on January 14. The comment period will end on February 4.

Motion by Nick Chaves to approve a Parks+ Committee roster of Nick Chaves, Leah Simmons Dzintars, Sarah Freeman (Council Members), and Alexandra Rollins (community member). Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 10-0-3. The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be one week earlier than normal on Thursday, February 6 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

City Councillor Ben Weber: City Councillor Ben Weber attended this January JPNC meeting along with his Chief of Staff, Bonnie Delaune. Regarding the comment about Jamaica Pond needing one accountable person in charge, the Councillor has been asking and the Parks and Recreation Department is not able to fill all the vacant positions. The City does not pay enough to keep their staff. Right now, there is a superintendent in charge of a whole area, not one single park. Councillor Weber is also pushing for a Jamaica Pond Boathouse study. He is working with folks to ban styrofoam in the City, which should help to reduce the floating styrofoam problem at Jamaica Pond. Sarah Freeman asked to check the bottom of the floating dock at the Boathouse to see if that is contributing to the problem.

The Councillor submitted a bill to offer access to counsel to people facing eviction proceedings. Right now the City pays for busing homeless children from shelters outside the City. Fewer than 5% of tenants have counsel at their proceeding, while 90% of landlords have attorneys. This week, the City started an Access to Counsel Pilot Program for families with school-age children.

Three pools in District 6 are closed. The Hennigan Pool needs repair of its filtration system. Curtis Hall should be ready in February, according to Caroline Peters. The Draper Pool is also closed.

The City Council is now considering two major issues: the Mayor's tax proposal and White Stadium. Regarding White Stadium, Gert Thorn said demolition is scheduled to begin next week and it needs a proper community process - with questions from residents allowed and answered. Councillor Weber said he is against pausing the project. He also said he did not like the last-minute proposal from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. He mentioned that there is a lot of support for the City's White Stadium project, as well as a lot of opposition. Carla-Lisa Caliga was worried about the reduction of public green space; this is not good public health policy. Gert Thorn said that it is hard to believe the Mayor's cost estimate after the original estimate doubled so quickly. Bernie Doherty emphasized that White Stadium is a public facility and should not be sold to a private group. This approach is filled with corruption. Councillor Weber answered that the City controls the land and the Stadium, and is only leasing it.

4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC): Danielle Sommer Kieta reported that the Housing & Development Committee did not meet in January.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18. The Rogerson Beaufort project will be on the agenda.

4.6. Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard: Danielle Sommer Kieta said that the Subcommittee on the Arborway Yard is starting to meet bimonthly, and so did not meet in January. Gert Thorn wondered what happened to the federal mandate to the MBTA to switch to electric buses? Didn't it have a sharp deadline that required facilities like the Arborway Yard to be built with deliberate speed? He also thought that this pause in the project design allows the Committee to lobby the City to change their bad decisions on the Arborway Yard.

The Subcommittee has invited Rep. Sam Montañó and other state elected officials to the February JPNC meeting to discuss MBTA funding and how it works.

5. Old Business/New Business:

- Peter DeCotis asked whether the JP Neighborhood Council needs to continue having elections. We should discuss this at a future meeting.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.