**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**

**April 22, 2025 Minutes**

**JPNC Attendance:** Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, David Baron, Lorenzo Bartoloni,

Esther Belliard, Carla-Lisa Caliga, Nicholas Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Purple Reign,

Danielle Sommer Kieta, and Gert Thorn.

**Other attendees:** Janet Galloway, Celeste Walker, Louise Johnson, Alcurtis Clark, Holly DeMelo, Juwan Skeens, Kane Scott, Scott Yates, Kevin Higgins (Office of State Senator Liz Miranda), Melissa Beltran (Office of City Councillor

Ben Weber), Caroline Peters (Office of Neighborhood Services), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm by Renée Stacey Welch.

**1. Introductions:** The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. The liaison from the Office of

Neighborhood Services introduced herself and the reporter from The Boston Bulletin introduced himself.

**2. Approval of March 2025 minutes:** There was one suggested edit: In the “Community announcements” second item, add “JPNC Parks+ Committee” to the list of groups working to improve the maintenance at Jamaica Pond and along the Emerald Necklace. Motion by Willie Mitchell to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2025 meeting, as amended.

Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-1 (1 came late).

**3.** **Community announcements:**

- The Emerald Necklace Conservancy will be hosting the 17th Annual Muddy River Cleanup this Saturday, April 26 from 10:00am to 12noon at various locations along the Emerald Necklace. Sign up at

https://www.emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer/muddy-river-cleanup.

- There will be a Budget Town Hall hosted by Councillor Ben Weber to discuss the proposed City budget on Thursday, May 1 at 6:00pm in the Community Room at 125 Amory Street.

- The JP Regan Little League Opening Day celebration will be on Saturday, April 26.

- JP Centre/South Main Streets’ Spring Beer & Trolley Tour will take place on Saturday, April 26 from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Get on the trolly at any of four locations. More information at explore.jpcentresouth.com/events/spring-beer-trolley-tour.

- There will be a free compost giveaway at 9am on Sunday, April 27. Pickup at 327 Forest Hills Street while supplies last. Bring a bin or anything to transport the compost to bring home.

- The 47th annual Wake Up the Earth parades and festival will be on Saturday, May 3. Hosted by Spontaneous Celebrations.

- The Mayor’s Coffee Hour in Jamaica Plain will be on Thursday, May 8 at Mozart Street Playground starting at 10:00am.

- Holly DeMelo, from the Jamaica Plain Recovery Center at 120 South Street, said that the Center is open and invites

folks from the neighborhood to come by.

**4. Committee Reports:**

**4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met twice - on Wednesday, April 2 and April 16. There are five issues that need votes tonight. **1) 19 Cheshire Street**, a petition by Jason Vassey and Scott Hadland, to extend living space into attic of existing two-family residence. This is an owner-occupied condominium that wants to expand into the attic for a child’s bedroom. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 8 Greenley Place**, a petition by Bailey and Susan Chang, to demolish a deck and construct a new enclosed deck with a roof and screens, construct a new carport with rubber roof deck, replace window on the second floor with a door. This issue is a bit odd. The request is to take down an existing deck a build a bigger one which will also act as a carport. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. **3) 90 Allandale Street**, a petition by Eleonora Efstratoudakis, to construct four new 2.5-story townhouse buildings. This request is a denial. The proposal is for four townhouses with two units each - for a total of eight units.. It is a very large property on the West Roxbury (south) side of Allandale Street. Presently there is a single-family house on the parcel. The developer is proposing that half the property would have a permanent conservation restriction. The architectural design is nice and the buildings would not be seen from the street. The opposition centered on keeping the single-family zoning on this parcel. The local Jamaica Hills Association opposed the variance. The ZC voted to recommend denial. **4) 3390-3390R Washington Street (BMS Paper)**, a petition by BMS Realty Trust LLC, to combine parcels, partially-demolish existing building and construct new six-story building; new combined structure to have 82 new residential rental units with 87 garage parking spaces, 2 retail spaces, 1 bakery space, 1 restaurant space, with roof deck, solar roof, amenity spaces, and bike storage space. This is a massive project with two buildings and, as stated, 82 units,

87 parking spaces, 2 retail spaces, a bakery and a restaurant. The Article 80 process was completed two years ago. There was a lot of support for such a large project; the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association was in support, as were the neighbors on Union Avenue. Peter DeCotis asked about the large number of parking spaces. It was thought that that large number would probably not have City approval at an Article 80 process today. Dave Baron thought that the Planning Department will probably push back. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **5) 81 South Huntington Avenue**, a petition by Victory Programs, Inc., to convert from hotel to homeless shelter. [Lorenzo Bartoloni recused himself on this issue; he works for Victory Programs.] This is a conversion to formalize the existing use at 81 So. Huntington. There was a lot of opposition from nearby neighbors complaining about car breaks, a rise in crime, lots of abandoned needles and smoking. Smoking is allowed outside in the back only. The CEO from Victory Programs was in attendance and answered questions. Bernie Doherty emphasized the concerns of the community and said the vote at the Zoning Committee was 7-5 in support. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that there was no confirmation that a pattern of crime was related to Victory Programs. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 19 Cheshire Street, 8 Greenley Place, 90 Allandale Street, and 3390-3390R Washington Street. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 13-0-0 (1 came late). Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 81 So. Huntington Avenue. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 9-3–0 (1recusal) (1 came late).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, May 7. On the agenda will be 10 Westerly Street, a returning request for adding a third floor; 561-579 Centre Street, a returning request for a new 12-unit building; and 15 Conry Crescent, build a new single-family house. The next ZC meeting after that will be on Wednesday, May 21.

**4.2. Outreach Committee:** Katherine O’Shea was not present, so her written report was read to the meeting. The Committee met on Tuesday, April 8 via Zoom. Election packets are available on the JPNC website. and printed copies are available at the three JP libraries and at Curtis Hall. The Committee is looking for volunteers for the date of the election (June 21) to work the polls and/or count ballots. Also up to five ombudspeople are needed. Ideally they would be folks who have done it before or a JP Neighborhood Council member who is not running for reelection.

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

**4.3. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, April 1. On the agenda was a request from A & G Liquor Store at 170 South Street for a new all-alcohol package store license. This is a small new package store on South Street near Forest Hills. While the applicants do not have a lot of hospitality experience, they do have managerial experience and gave a good presentation on what they plan for the store: delivery services, online services, and a coalition with other small package stores. They have a parking lot in the back available for delivery vehicles. They originally asked for an 11:00pm closing hour, but after a good amount of discussion A&G agreed to a 9:00pm closing. They also agreed not to sell mini-bottles or single beers. Most of the concern was whether there was a public need for another package store so close to Happy Market & Spirits (128 South Street) and the Forest Hills area. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of A & G Liquor Store LLC, doing business as “A & G Liquor Store”, at 170 South Street for an all-alcoholic beverages package store license with a closing hour of 9:00pm, with Alexander Jean-Michel as manager. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Several member felt that there were enough package store in the area. Passed 12-2-0.

The Committee also discussed transportation problems on certain streets. Members Bernie Doherty from Asticou Road and Gert Thorn from Robinwood Avenue made their cases for much more attention to those streets. Caroline Peters gave a summary of past and present City policy on locating and engineering speed humps. Motion by Michael Reiskind to write a letter to ask planners from the Boston Transportation Department to meet with residents of Asticou Road and Robinwood Avenue to discuss adding speed humps and other transportation issues. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 14-0-0.

The Committee has also developed a list of streets, sidewalks and striping that need maintenance.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, May 6 at 7:00pm in-person. On the agenda will be requests from Mr. Drinky at 606 Centre Street for an all-alcohol license, from Third Cliff Bakery at 3531 Washington Street for a beer & wine license, and from AAA Restaurant at 3141 Washington Street for an all-alcohol license.

**4.4. Parks+ Committee:** Nick Chaves reported that the Parks+ Committee met on April 10. He announced that there will be a Muddy River Cleanup this Saturday, April 26 from 10:00am to 12noon along the Emerald Necklace. It might be a rainy day. The opening for Parks Commissioner has been posted and will remain open until August 24. Also, on Monday, April 28, there will be a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission to review the design of the White Stadium proposal. It will start at 10:00am and is on Zoom.

Discussion centered on the longstanding problem of bicycles on the Jamaica Pond pedestrian path because the signage and markings are inadequate. While the signs are subject to Landmarks Commission review, the signs are too small and this has become a safety issue, especially for seniors with canes and nannies with children. Gert Thorn recommended adding bollards and a barrier maze to prevent bicycles from entering The Perkins Street entrance should be the priority. Mr. Thorn was not convinced that the Parks Department signage is restricted by the Landmarks Commission. There was also discussion about improving the other side of Jamaica Pond Park along Francis Parkman Drive. Gert Thorn asked for a meeting with Parks Department planners.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting will be on Thursday, May 8 (the second Thursday) at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** Purple Reign reported on the Housing & Development Committee meeting of April 15. She said that the Keegan’s project (3458 Washington Street) was discussed. This plan is for a new five-story mixed-use brick building with 36 residential apartment units and a ground-floor commercial unit. The apartments will have outdoor balconies. There are outdoor spaces. In addition, there are 7 parking spaces with permeable paving, 36 bicycle spaces and EV parking. Questions at the H&DC were about the bike cages and the shared EV cars. There were concerns about the high density. Neighbors Kathy Brown liked the 30% AMI and Jan Wampler also spoke. Lorenzo Bartoloni asked whether the developers plan to accept housing vouchers - yes. Support was received from the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association. The Boston Planning and Development Agency have already approved the Article 80 Small Project Review.

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is planning a renovation of the Doris Bunte Apartments (the Roundhouse at 1990 Columbus Avenue). Concerns were raised about displacement of the present tenants. The H&DC will invite the BHA to an upcoming meeting.

Danielle Sommer Kieta said that Reuben Kantor from the Boston Planning Department has approached the Zoning Committee and the Housing & Development Committee to talk about Plan:JP/Rox. They are perhaps thinking about major changes to the Plan. They want to present an analysis of the eight years since the Plan was written (but never codified). Has it encouraged or discouraged housing? This is planned to be a joint meeting of the two committees on the scheduled H&DC date on May 20. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that Plan:JP/Rox and Squares & Streets take away the community’s voice; they both add too much density to the neighborhood. Richard Heath thought that there was a lack of institutional memory about Plan:JP/Rox at the Planning Department. It was started on July 25, 2015. There could be a big pushback from the community about changes. Gert Thorn thought that the planned joint H&DC/ZC meeting was not an adequate forum for the whole community. A larger meeting, or series of meetings, is needed to include more of the community.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20.

**5. Old Business/New Business:** Juwan Skeens introduced himself. He is a candidate for Boston City Council in

District 4, which includes one Jamaica Plain precinct (Ward 19, Precinct 12). More information at SkeensforBoston.com.

**6. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, May 22, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.