**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**

**May 27, 2025 Minutes**

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

Carla-Lisa Caliga, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Purple Reign, Leah Simmons Dzintars, and

Danielle Sommer Kieta.

**Other attendees:** Janet Galloway, Celeste Walker, Sue Cibilsky, Alcurtis Clark, Holly DeMelo, Willie Gomez, Mark Freudenberger, Marie Turley, Joy Silverstein, Heather Mick-Carito, Anshi Moreno, Sally Zimmerman,

Cecily Graham, Tali Robbins, Juliet Davison, Ruth Birnberg, Alan Benenfeld, Alexandra Rollins, Keihly Moore,

Kiara Mark, Todd Kerr, Kane Scott, Julie, Kim, CoReS, State Representative Sam Montaño, Mayor Michelle Wu, Mohammed Missouri (City of Boston), Brianna Millor (City of Boston), Devin Quirk (City of Boston), Lindsey Santana (City of Boston), City Councillor Ben Weber, Bonnie Delaune (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), Jordan Frias (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), 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 7:03pm by Bernie Doherty.

**1. Introductions:** The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. State Representative Sam Montaño, City Councillor Ben Weber, the liaison from the Office of Neighborhood Services, and the reporter from The

Boston Bulletin introduced themselves.

**2. Approval of April 2025 minutes:** There were three suggested edits - for typos of the spelling of Danielle Sommer Kieta and Holly DeMelo. Motion by Willie Mitchell to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2025 meeting, as amended.

Seconded by Peter DeCotis. Passed 11-0-0 (1 came late).

**3.** **Community Announcements:**.

- Caroline Peters, JP Liaison at the Office of Neighborhood Services, said that she will be hosting office hours from 10:30am to 11:30am on Friday, May 30 at Brassica Kitchen + Café, 3710 Washington Street.

- Councillor Ben Weber invited folks to discuss the proposed City budget on Wednesday, May 28 at 6:00pm in the Iannella Chamber on the 5th floor at Boston City Hall.

- Alcurtis Clark asked about the JPNC Election scheduled for June 21. How many candidates will be on the ballot? Only ten candidates have turned in nominations papers for the JPNC Election.

- Rogerson House is asking for permission to demolish a house at 31 Beaufort Road. They are in the Article 85 Demolition Delay process. Alexandra Rollins from Goodrich Road said neighbors are asking for a postponement.

- Rockland Brewing will be having a pop-up beer garden in the vacant gas station site at 561 Centre Street on Fridays,

Saturdays, and Sundays until September 27.

Renée Stacey Welch took over as chair of the meeting.

**4. Committee reports/recommendations:**

**4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met three times - on Wednesday, May 7 and May 21, as well as a joint meeting with the Housing & Development Committee on May 20. There are six issues that need votes tonight. Mr. Baron said he would be presenting the issues in a different order than the agenda. **1) 10 Westerly Street**, a petition by Nicholas Best, for a structural third-floor apartment change to a flat-top roof, new third-floor window, conversion of third-floor apartment to three bedrooms; units to be sprinklered. There was a problem with leafletting at a previous meeting. This is a change from a gable-roofed building to a flat roof building. There were no neighbors attending which is an indication of few concerns. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 15 Conry Crescent**, a petition by William O’Dowd, to demolish an existing single-family house and construct a new single-family house. This is in the Jamaica Hills Association (JHA) district and the JHA voted not to oppose. The old house is structurally unsound. The new proposed building will have about the same footprint. There are lots of violations. The developer is open to working with the neighbors on regrading and water runoff. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the abutters on mitigation of construction issues. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **3) 12R Union Avenue**, a petition by 12 Union Avenue Realty Trust/Shane O'Brien, to construct a detached pool house at rear of lot. This is a long-term owner of the property. There is a pool and a pool house; it is really an in-law apartment. The Union Avenue neighbors have been kept fully informed. There was only one letter and it was in support. The ZC voted to recommend approval.

**4) 3458 Washington Street**, a petition by Adam Burns (acting as agent for Keegan Realty Trust), to construct a five-story mixed-use building with thirty-six (36) residential units, seven exterior parking spaces, and ground-floor retail. This has gone through a fairly long community process. Alcurtis Clark from the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association spoke in

favor. [The agenda was suspended for the introduction of the Mayor.]

**5. Introduction of Mayor Michelle Wu:** Bernie Doherty again took over as chair of the meeting. Mayor Michelle Wu was introduced and gave a brief presentation. She complimented the JP Neighborhood Council on its good work and bringing to City Hall all issues important to the community. She said her administration has been concentrating on housing and jobs, trying to make Boston the safest and greenest city in the country, improving the schools, and increasing family-friendly opportunities such as the Boston Family Days program. The Mayor also spoke about improving streets and sidewalks, including the speed humps, as well as the important issue of rodent control all over the city.

Questions from the attendees were mostly about Federal funding, housing, parks, and White Stadium. Kiara Mark asked what are the plans to make up for the loss of Federal funding? The reply was that some funding cannot be easily taken away, and some funds will be replenished by old ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds and local hospitals are contributing some of their their Community Benefits funds. There are still a lot of unanswered questions; the Boston Housing Authority is being told that “mixed status” families are being removed from lists of Federal funding. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that she was a supporter of Michelle Wu when she ran for City Council and for mayor, but she is unhappy with the changes at Copley Square. It has become a heat island. Caliga also said she is against the proposal for White Stadium. There will be a loss of trees and a loss of parkland space for the proposed beer garden. The reply was that Copley Square will become greener than it was before, but it is a multi-year project; the plan has to include protecting the tree roots and reducing the trampling of the grass. The new plantings were delayed until the warmer weather. There will be green space added in front of Trinity Church. The City is looking at an ordinance to protect trees on private property. Mayor Wu said that the White Stadium plan will actually open up more green space. Previously fenced-off space will be opened and called The Grove. More trees are being added; the soccer team is contributing 500 trees. The team is restricted to a maximum of 20 days a year and the City can use the Stadium before games on game days. Mayor Wu said she will always fight to have Boston kids have as many resources as suburban kids. Peter DeCotis said he lives on School Street right near White Stadium and is worried about losing parking; there are few driveways available on School Street and now he sometimes has to park three or four blocks away from his house. It is good to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, but remember the cars, too. Resident parking in the area would help. The reply was that the transportation plan for White Stadium, TAPA (Transportation Access Plan Agreement), is still being worked on. There will be more opportunity to give feedback on the initial plan. A White Stadium neighborhood council is being formed. The Mayor also added that to significantly reduce traffic congestion, only a 5% reduction in vehicles is needed; that is not a lot to make a big difference.

‘Kim’ said that White Stadium is not good environmentally. The less expensive plan developed by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy would be a better option. She also thought that the plan for White Stadium is too small for a professional women’s soccer team. She was also worried that the parking restrictions proposed are too broad and will badly affect businesses along Washington Street, such as The Midway Café. Danielle Sommer Kieta praised the Mayor for her strong commitment to affordability and anti-displacement. But absent is any support for rent control; we can’t build our way out of the housing crisis. We need the City to lead and express support for rent control. The reply was that Mayor Wu has strongly expressed her support for affordability and, for the first time ever, she got an ordinance passed at the City Council for rent stabilization (it passed 11-2). But the City did not get any support at the State House. Purple Reign said that she lives at 75 Amory Avenue and asked why both Amory Avenue and Amory Street had all parking removed on both sides of the street? A whole two blocks now have no parking allowed. Was it to allow the sidewalks to be widened? Mark Freudenberger said that the JP Neighborhood Council is working with the Jamaica Pond Association and the Friends of Jamaica Pond to urge the City to continue to invest in Jamaica Pond and the Emerald Necklace. However, the success of past investments has led to overuse and serious maintenance issues have developed. Invasive weeds, erosion and pruning should be addressed. We would like to meet with the Parks Department to formulate a plan to maintain Jamaica Pond Park. Bernie Doherty said that the safety of pedestrians around Jamaica Pond has become an issue. We need to have bicycles prevented from using the pedestrian-only path. He also said that he thinks that the White Stadium proposal is

ceding public land to a private venture. Is this a good precedent for future projects?

[The agenda was resumed and Dave Baron continued presenting on 3458 Washington Street.] There are 36 rental units proposed and 8 are affordable. There is a mix of studios, one-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units. Only seven parking spaces are being proposed. The development is consistent with Plan:JP/Rox. There will be a share car for residents only. A letter was received from the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association saying they do not oppose. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve. **5) 14 Varney Street**, a petition by Greg Andrus and Emma Simmons, to convert the attic into approximately 400 square feet of finished living space including a new bedroom and a new full bathroom.

There were two letters from neighbors opposing the variance. The recommendation of the ZC is to approve.

**6) 561-579 Centre Street**, a petition by JP Stamatos Pondside Realty, to construct a new four-story mixed-use building with twelve (12) residential units, one ground-floor commercial space, and eight (8) off-street parking spaces. Demolish existing structures. This request is a denial. This proposal went to the Jamaica Pond Association and to the Lakeville Condominiums along the back of the parcel. At those meetings, the issues were the two curb cuts along the side streets, parking problems, bad design, and too much density. At the Zoning Committee, concerns were raised about the height, the parking configuration along the alleyway at the rear, and a design that was too boxy. There were two meetings at the ZC - in February and May. Some neighbors brought up the long-time blight at 626 Centre Street, Mike’s Auto, which is also owned by the Stamatos family. The answer was that Mike’s will not sit undeveloped for too long. It was asked whether there were changes to the design between the February and May meetings. There were no changes and the developer is not willing to continue meeting. The Jamaica Pond Association voted to oppose and the recommendation of the ZC is for denial. It was decided to vote on all six items separately. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 10 Westerly Street. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 12-0-0. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 15 Conry Crescent. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 12-0-0. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 12R Union Avenue. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 12-0–0. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 3458 Washington Street. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 10-2–0. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 14 Varney Street. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 8-1–3. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation for denial of the ZC on 561-579 Centre Street. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 12-0–0.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, June 4. On the agenda will be 28 & 30 Carolina Avenue to

change the occupancy to 6 residential units, and 55 Boylston Street, add a third story and addition to a garage.

Sarah Freeman wanted to bring up 81 So. Huntington Avenue (Envision/Victory Programs) which was voted on at last month’s meeting. She asked if we could do something to bring Victory Programs and neighbors together. Bernie Doherty agreed that there is a problem here. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that Victory is very good. At the monthly Problem Properties meetings, Victory is very responsive. Victory is starting to meet directly with neighbors on a monthly timetable and really

trying to hear neighbors.

Renée Stacey Welch again took over as chair of the meeting.

**4.2. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, May 6 in-person. On the agenda were three licensing requests. The first was a proposal from Mr. Drinky at 606 Centre Street for an all-alcohol license. This is a new cocktail lounge in a small space. The owner has extensive experience and has tried pop-ups in Jamaica Plain. There was one neighbor concerned about the late closing hour. Mr. Wong said he would be closing at 11:00pm except for a few special holidays. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of MR Drinky LLC, doing business as “Mr. Drinky”, at 606 Centre Street for a Common Victualler 7-Day All-Alcoholic Beverages License, with the hours of 5:00pm to 1:00am, with Alan Wong as manager. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Bernie Doherty felt that there should not be a cocktail lounges in the area. Passed 11-1-0.

Also on the agenda was a request from Third Cliff Bakery at 3531 Washington Street (Vita) for a beer & wine license. This is an established bakery and coffee shop with a small outdoor patio that would like to increase its hours, expand its menu, and serve beer & wine. There was one neighbor from the upstairs apartments that worried about increased noise and exacerbating the rodent problem that exists at the dumpster corral. The Committee did not think that a beer and wine license would affect either problem. Ms. Crowley is increasing the garbage pickups to three times a week. The Committee is also asking to support a take-out use (zoning) in case the City requires a take-out permit in the future. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of Third Cliff Bakery LLC, doing business as “Third Cliff Bakery”, at 3531 Washington Street for a Common Victualler 7-Day Wines and Malt Beverages License, with the hours of 8:00am to 8:00pm, with Margaret Crowley as manager, and with an outdoor seasonal patio for 10 patrons for food only with a closing hour of 5:00pm; and to support the request of Third Cliff Bakery LLC, (acting as agent for 3531 Washington St LLC) to grant a #36A take-out use to 3531 Washington St LLC, owner of the commercial condominiums at 3531 Washington Street, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 3531 Washington Street, Third Cliff Bakery LLC. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 11-0-1.

Also on the agenda was a request from AAA Restaurant at 3141 Washington Street for an all-alcohol license. This is a long-time Dominican restaurant that is expanding into a second adjacent storefront. They also have two TVs that will need a separate entertainment license as well as a take-out use (zoning) in case the City requires a take-out permit in the future. So three votes are needed: Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of AAA Restaurant LLC, doing business as “AAA Restaurant”, at 3141 Washington Street for a Common Victualler 7-Day All-Alcoholic Beverages License with a closing hour of 11:00pm with Paula Martinez as manager; and to support the request of AAA Restaurant LLC, (acting as agent for Daniel Martinez) to grant a #36A take-out use to Daniel Martinez, owner of the commercial condominiums at 3141 Washington Street, with the proviso that the take-out use will stay only with the current business tenant at 3141 Washington Street, AAA Restaurant LLC; and to support an Entertainment License at AAA Restaurant, 3141 Washington Street in Jamaica Plain for two (2) TVs only with a closing hour of 11:00pm, with Paula Martinez as manager. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 11-0-1.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, June 10 at 7:00pm. On the agenda is a request from B.U. Bistro at 3840 Washington St. for a transfer of an existing beer and wine license to Oda Bar & Bites at the same location.

**4.3. Parks+ Committee:** Nick Chaves was not present and no report was presented during the meeting except for the update provided for the agenda: The Committee is continuing its campaign for long-term maintenance of Jamaica Pond by supporting letters to elected officials, estimating costs, and using Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook as successful models.

The Committee is still advocating for better bicycle/pedestrian signage around Jamaica Pond by adding typical bike path markings to the pavement (e.g., green paint and striping) and calling for larger, clearer signs.

Other community updates were shared about Kelly Rink Improvements, a Lawson Park clean-up, and a future Peace Garden event.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12 (the second Thursday) at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.4. Outreach Committee:** The Committee met on Tuesday, May 13 via Zoom. Katherine O’Shea is stepping down from chairing the Outreach Committee. There is little to report as an Election update. Only 10 people handed in nomination papers to be candidates in the JPNC Election. Their signatures have not yet been validated. Bernie Doherty doesn’t see a compelling reason to have an election; just declare the ten candidates as members of a new JP Neighborhood Council. There will be a discussion on the Election at a special Executive Committee meeting to be held soon.

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

**4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC):** The Housing & Development Committee met on Tuesday, May 20 in a joint meeting with the Zoning Committee. Present was Reuben Kantor from the Boston Planning Department. He presented an analysis of eight years of Plan:JP/Rox. The Planning Department feels that there was a decline in new project filings. Developers seem to be cherry-picking which of the Plan guidelines they adhere to and which they ignore. The City will enforce the legally-binding guidelines, but the Plan was never codified. Michael Reiskind said he was surprised by the analysis; his perception is that Washington Street has become an intense development district. Dave Baron said that the analysis did not look at permits filed, but projects started in the district during the time period.

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

**6. Old Business/New Business:** None

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:29pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.