**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council**

**June 24, 2025 Minutes**

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

Carla-Lisa Caliga, Nick Chaves, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Willie Mitchell, Purple Reign, and

Danielle Sommer Kieta.

**Other attendees:** Janet Galloway, Celeste Walker, Alcurtis Clark, Holly DeMelo, Dottie Farrell, Juliet Davison,

Todd Kerr, Dan Moon, Cian Duffy, Brendan Hegarty, Kane Scott, Anna’s iPhone, Julie, MJ, iPhone, Josh Kraft,

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 7:06pm by Renée Stacey Welch.

**1. Introductions:** The members of the JP Neighborhood Council introduced themselves. The aide to City Councillor Ben Weber, the liaison from the Office of Neighborhood Services, and the reporter from The Boston Bulletin introduced

themselves.

**2. Approval of May 2025 minutes:** There were two suggested edits for typos: In the first item of Community Announcements, it should be “Friday, May 30”. And in the Zoning Committee report under 561-579 Centre Street, the second to last sentence should be “There were no changes and the developer is not willing to continue meeting.” Motion by Peter DeCotis to approve the minutes from the May 27, 2025 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Willie Mitchell.

Passed 10-0-1(1came 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, June 27 at Brassica Kitchen + Café, 3710 Washington Street; on Friday, July 11 at Evergreen Eatery, 154 Green Street; and on Friday, July 18 at Viva Mi Arepa, 268 Centre Street.

- Caroline Peters said that this webpage (<http://boston.gov/heat>) offers resources to deal with extreme heat, including a map of cooling centers, tips on staying cool, and other helpful information.

- The Arnold Arboretum and Boston Parks and Recreation Department will host a block party on July 19 from 11:00am to 2:00pm on Arboretum Road in Roslindale to celebrate the newly renovated Arboretum Road entrance.

- JP Centre/South Main Streets is hosting a free outdoor concert series at the South Street Development from 6pm to 9pm on Thursdays July 10, July 17, July 24 and July 31.

- Every Thursday through August 28, the Parks Department and Public Health Commission are hosting free Zumba

classes at Mozart Park starting at 6pm.

- Holly DeMelo, Program Director at the Jamaica Plain Recovery Center at 120 South Street, said that the Center is a free

peer-led recovery program. They are having a community meeting on Thursday, June 26 at 5:00pm.

**4. Committee reports/recommendations**

**4.1. Outreach Committee:** Renée Stacey Welch reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, June 10 via Zoom. Because of the small number of candidates who submitted nomination papers for the June 21 JPNC Election, the Outreach Committee is suggesting that the Election be postponed to September. Only 10 people have handed in nomination papers. Motion by Carla-Lisa Caliga to move the JPNC Election to September 20, 2025. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Peter DeCotis asked if September is a bad month; while September is a busy month, it is much better than August or October. Passed 12-0-0. Renée Stacey Welch said that we already have all the residents lists we need and have some ombudspeople willing to volunteer. Candidates who already submitted nomination papers do not have to resubmit. Caliga volunteered to do some trainings for the poll volunteers. Folks were reminded that voting is only in-person and absentee ballots are not allowed.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, July 8 at 7:00pm.

**4.2. Zoning Committee (ZC):** David Baron reported that the Zoning Committee met twice - on Wednesday, June 4 and June 18. There are four issues that need votes tonight. **1) 55 Boylston Street**, a petition by Adam and Chade Granger, for the addition of a third story to an existing 2 story home, with a 90sf +/- bump out and 270 sf open porch to be added, as well as a 480sf 2-story garage (replacing existing 1-story garage) with in-law apartment above. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 28 & 30 Carolina Avenue**, a petition by Michael Minkoff (acting as agent for Bridges Realty Trust), to change occupancy of two detached buildings (a commercial roofing building and a garage building) into two three-family residential buildings (six units in all) with six off-street parking spaces. Over time, the initial fears of too many units for the parcels were alleviated. (Some folks thought a few more units could go on the big lot.) The developer is keeping both buildings. There was support for the proposal and no strong opposition. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **3) 24 Edge Hill Street**, a petition by Christopher Pardo/Pardo Revocable Trust, to construct two dormers and create additional living space on third floor, including electrical and HVAC systems and new roof and siding to match existing. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **4) 14 Meehan Street**, a petition by Jose Harnett, to change occupancy from two-family to three-family residential, renovate first and second floors (third floor to remain), separate gas and water meters, modify sprinkler system as needed. This had gone through a community process a few years ago and is now changing. The old plans were for studio space and residential units. There is no change in plans for the first and second floors and outdoor space. The Stonybrook Neighborhood Association voted to not oppose the new plans, but with some provisos about the fencing, trees, and permeable surfaces. The recommendation of the ZC is for approval with provisos contained in a Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) letter dated June 17, 2025.Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 55 Boylston Street, 28 & 30 Carolina Avenue, 24 Edge Hill Street, and 14 Meehan Street. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0–0.

David Baron also asked for a vote on Alcurtis Clark to be a community member of the Zoning Committee. Motion by Carla-Lisa Caliga to add Alcurtis Clark of 36 Gartland Street in Jamaica Plain to the roster of the Zoning Committee as a community member. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-0.

Dave Baron wanted to bring up 561-579 Centre Street, the gas station property between Goodrich Road and Lakeville Road (where the Roundhead Brewing beer garden is located this summer). A proposal for a new 12-unit development on this parcel received a recommendations of denial from the JPNC and the Jamaica Pond Association, but the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) approved the project. Mr. Baron is very annoyed. He expects recommended denials to be taken seriously. Caliga was also upset about the ZBA vote which drowns out the community’s voice.

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, July 2. On the agenda will be 13 Marmion Street and 3815 Washington Street (Croft School).

**4.3. Public Service Committee:** Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, June 10 via Zoom. On the agenda was one licensing request from B.U. Bistro at 3840 Washington Street in Forest Hills for a transfer of its beer & wine license to a new owner doing business as Oda Bar & Bites. The new operation will have the same hours and same two outdoor patios. The Committee is also asking to support an entertainment license for music on the rear patio. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of B.U. LLC, doing business as “B.U. Bistro”, at 3840 Washington Street for a transfer of its common victualler 7-day wines and malt beverages license to Oda Bar & Bites, Inc., doing business as “Oda Bar & Bites” at the same location, with the hours of 6:00am to 11:00pm, with Ergys Struga as manager and with an outdoor seasonal patio (in the front) for 10 patrons, and an outdoor seasonal patio (in the rear) for 30 patrons from April to October; AND to support the request of Oda Bar & Bites, Inc., doing business as “Oda Bar & Bites” at 3840 Washington Street for an entertainment license for recorded music on the rear patio. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 12-0-0.

The extensive construction on Centre Street right in the heart of the main business district was raised. In addition to complaints about how much time it was taking, there were worries about the contractors and police officers working in the extreme heat; this seemed very unsafe and is probably contrary to union rules.

The Public Service Committee will not be meeting in July. The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, August 5 at 7:00pm.

**4.4. Parks+ Committee:** Nick Chaves said that there was a scheduling conflict and there was no Parks+ Committee meeting in June. There is an update about the Committee’s requests for better bicycle/pedestrian signage around Jamaica Pond. The Parks and Recreation Department has agreed to add “No Bikes Allowed” signs along the pedestrian path and also to make sure the pavement stencils are redone annually.

The Coalition of the Parks+ Committee, Jamaica Pond Association Parks Committee and Friends of Jamaica Pond met on June 17. Sarah Freeman reported about that meeting.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 10 (the second Thursday) at 7:00pm via Zoom.

**4.5. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC)/Arborway Yard Committee:** Danielle Sommer Kieta said that the Housing & Development Committee met on Tuesday, June 17. The meeting began with a brief review of the Plan:JP/Rox report received at last month meeting. Folks were concerned about changes to the Plan regarding enforcement of the housing plan, the need for yearly updates from city agencies, a reduction of community process, and a concern about affordability. The slides from last month’s Planning Department presentation were shared and can be found at:

[drive.google.com/file/d/1KDx5KMpZVBjiENFqwVZrhWV\_OPDfqewT/view](http://drive.google.com/file/d/1KDx5KMpZVBjiENFqwVZrhWV_OPDfqewT/view).

There was an information session led by Hillary Pizer from the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA). They offer help to first-time homeowners, home buyers and renters. There is going to be a workshop at the Reggie Lewis Center on July 15 at 6:00pm. The workshop will be followed by a community forum with the top mayoral candidates.

**Arborway Yard Committee:** There was a Boston Globe article on June 9 about the ability of the MBTA to meet the 2040 goal of bus electrification. It talked about budget concerns, soaring costs, and facilities delays. It can be seen at:

[bostonglobe.com/2025/05/28/metro/mbta-bus-electrification-garage-delays/?event=event12](http://bostonglobe.com/2025/05/28/metro/mbta-bus-electrification-garage-delays/?event=event12)

The Committee reaffirmed the need for community input and better safety planning. Other than that, the Arborway Yard project is on hold.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 15.

**5. Introduction of Josh Kraft:** Bernie Doherty took over as chair of the meeting. He asked Mr. Kraft to keep his remarks under 30 minutes. Mr. Kraft spoke about his past and his vision for the City. Thirty-five years ago, he made a decision not to work for the family business; for thirty of those years he has been at the Boys & Girls Club of Boston. It has supported kids by providing safe havens, relationships with caring adults, and life-enhancing programs that teach essential life skills. It extends from health and wellness, fitness and recreation to education, technology, the arts, and leadership. Josh Kraft was CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Boston for twelve years, during which time the organization doubled the number of youths it helped. He learned from the thousands of people he has worked with and knows the power of community. The City has big problems of unaffordable housing, schools not connecting with kids, and health care costs out of reach. His administration will concentrate on four areas: accessibility, transparency, accountability, and competence. Schools will be attractive to all students. And parents will be key to help their kids in schools. He has gained a lot of support across all neighborhoods of Boston. Mr. Kraft completed his presentation with a promise to end the problems at Mass and Cass.

Questions from the attendees were about parking and bike lanes, White Stadium, housing, zoning reform, and schools.

Purple Reign asked about planning policy for parking spaces. She lives at 75 Amory Avenue and Amory Avenue, Amory Street, and Brewery Lane have no parking on both sides. A whole two blocks now have no parking allowed. Mr. Kraft said that he has heard similar complaints everywhere. Lots of projects are being built with not enough parking. He promised that the community will have a voice early in all new projects, especially about the amount of parking.

Peter DeCotis asked about the candidate’s position on White Stadium. Mr. Kraft said that White Stadium needs an upgrade and it can be done at a fraction of the cost of this City/soccer team proposal and it would be 100% for school use. He has heard a cost of $172Million as one number. He promised to do whatever he can to halt the project and save money.

Alcurtis Clark, from Gartland Street and the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association, thanked Mr. Kraft for his position on White Stadium. She admired his promise that his administration would listen. She said that current planned reforms of Article 80 and other zoning reforms are taking away the community’s voice.

Sarah Freeman challenged Mr. Kraft on his position on bicycles. He answered that he will be releasing his transportation policy this week. He is not against bike lanes, but some were not well thought-out. He would remove a few bike lanes that have badly affected small businesses.

Danielle Sommer Kieta applauded his position for rent control and housing stabilization. Are there any other policies to provide enough housing? Mr. Kraft said that the City is in a housing emergency. Legislative-mandated rent control will not get a positive vote at the State House. He is proposing voluntary rent control in which landlords will get a 10-year tax rebate. Also he would create incentives to build ready-to-go housing proposals. He would make an effort to reach out to potential affordable housing tenants.

Renée Stacey Welch asked about the candidate’s position on Squares & Streets. Mr. Kraft said that the concept is good, but some neighborhoods have had businesses displaced by these new regulations.

Bernie Doherty said that there are 55,000 students in the schools, and 15,000 speak different languages. We have to concentrate on young people and give them a seat at the table. Mr. Kraft said that his school policy would concentrate on educating all students regardless of their academic, emotional, or social standing. He will increase literacy by 10% and create vocational hubs across the city. He prefers a hybrid School Committee - both elected and appointed. His administration would take full advantage of the wide range of non-profits across the city. He will demand competent managers in the schools and create a separate Operations Manager at the Boston School Committee. Renée Stacey Welch

applauded his addition of trade school education.

As the agenda was resumed, Renée Stacey Welch again took over as Chair.

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

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm.

*Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind*

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.