

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
December 18, 2025 Minutes

JPNC Attendance: Renée Stacey Welch, Bernard Doherty, Michael Reiskind, Eryn-Ashlei Bailey, David Baron, David Brewster, Carla-Lisa Caliga, Peter DeCotis, Sarah Freeman, Aiko Miller, Willie Mitchell, Purple Reign, Alessia Shelley, and Danielle Sommer Kieta.

Elected at the meeting: Alcurtis Clark.

Other attendees: Peg Preble, Lisa Thompson, Benji Mauer, Helen Mathews, Frank Schillace, Kane Scott, Louise R., 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.

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

2. November 2025 minutes: Approval of the minutes from the November 25, 2025 meeting was tabled to January 2026.

3. Council Membership Vote:

Renée Stacey Welch invited community members who submitted JPNC interest and biographical forms to introduce themselves and be considered to fill a Council vacancy. There are presently two vacancies that may be filled by vote today. Alcurtis Clark, 36 Gartland Street, was nominated at the November meeting. She gave a brief speech on her background and qualifications at that meeting. (She was born and lived on Gartland Street for 40 years; been on the Steering Committee of the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) for four years and a member for six years; she is also presently on the Zoning Committee as a community member.) A vote to seat her can now be made. Motion by Carla-Lisa Caliga to elect Alcurtis Clark as a Council Member in Area B. Seconded by Peter DeCotis. Passed 11-0-0 (3 came late). Alcurtis Clark took her seat on the Council.

4. Committee reports/recommendations:

4.1. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee met on December 2. On the agenda was a request from The Jeanie Johnston Pub at 144 South Street for later hours for their all-alcohol license and entertainment license. The Jeanie Johnston has had a 2:00am closing hour on Fridays and Saturdays for 23 years and has had no problems. They would like to extend that closing hour to all seven days a week. They offered to hire an additional cook and extend their kitchen hours to a 1:30am closing. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of HE Pub, Inc., doing business as The Jeanie Johnston, located at 144 South Street, to extend the closing hour of its existing 7-day common victualler all-alcoholic beverages license FROM a 2:00am closing on Fridays, Saturdays, and days before holidays TO a 2:00am closing all seven days. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-0 (3 came late). They would like to extend the closing hour of their entertainment licenses as well, both their recorded music license and their live entertainment license. Motion by Michael Reiskind to support the request of HE Pub, Inc., doing business as The Jeanie Johnston, located at 144 South Street, to amend its existing entertainment licenses as follows: extend the closing hour for recorded background music to 2:00am all seven days AND to extend the current 12:30 AM closing hour for live entertainment (instrumental vocalist, DJ, and karaoke) on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays TO 1:30am on Fridays, Saturdays, and days before holidays. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-0 (3 came late).

The Committee has vacancies, both in Council Members and community members. They nominated two Council members for Council seats on the Committee. Motion by Michael Reiskind to elect Purple Reign and Bianca Terry as Council Members of the Public Service Committee. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 12-0-0 (3 came late). The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, January 6. On the agenda might be a request from the Ethiopian Café at 377 Centre Street in Hyde Square for a beer and wine license - if the applicant can complete some initial steps in the community process.

4.2. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC)/Arborway Yard Committee: Danielle Sommer Kieta said that the Housing & Development Committee met on December 16. The Committee reviewed the proposed development at **3326 Washington Street**, including design revisions and changes to the affordability plan. Developers presented modifications intended to improve financial viability, including reducing on-site affordable units with a shift toward voucher-based housing, as well as a loosening of the Area Median Income (AMI) thresholds for renters. Committee members and residents raised strong concerns that the proposal conflicts with long-standing JPNC policy requiring all affordable units to be provided on-site. Following extensive discussion, the Committee voted to reject the proposal as presented. Carla-Lisa Caliga said that this site is just down Washington Street from the Doyle's project which is also asking to reduce the number of affordable units in a similar manner. Both projects are moving in the wrong direction and we should oppose both of them. David Brewster asked what votes are needed at the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)? It is a "request for project change". Bernie Doherty was worried that the height of new buildings along Washington Street are creating a canyon affect. He was also concerned about the conversion of industrial uses to housing resulting in the loss of jobs in the neighborhood. Helen Mathews said we must focus on the displacement of low-income renters and the lack of choices for affordable housing applicants. This proposal does not keep affordable units in the neighborhood. Benji Mauer urged support of the H&DC's recommendation because the developer's proposal is not consistent with Plan:JP/Rox, the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP), and the project's original 2019 promises. Lisa Thompson said that there was strong community opposition at the Committee meeting and this new developer did not have to buy this parcel (at auction) at such a high price. Motion by Danielle Sommer Kieta to have the H&DC Chair write a letter to the (BPDA) and the Mayor's Office of Housing expressing opposition, requesting the project not advance to a

January vote, and calling for a full community process before further consideration. Seconded by Bernie Doherty. Passed 13-0-0 (2 left early). The Council will need to see the final letter and vote on it.

The next Housing & Development Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, January 20.

4.3. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Committee met only once on Wednesday, December 17. (The December 3 meeting was cancelled.) There was one issue considered which needs a vote tonight. **255 and 257 Allandale Street**, a petition by Allandale Farm Realty Trust, to construct a new 5,535 square foot retail farm stand ("Market Barn") and new 5,170 square foot greenhouse, to replace five greenhouses and a one-story brick building that were removed, and relocate stable and chicken coop. This is Allandale Farm and involves no residential development. The proposal is to demolish six greenhouses and build one large greenhouse and a metal Market Barn. They will also improve the parking lot. They may have to close temporarily in order to do some extensive drainage construction. The site is in both Jamaica Plain and Brookline. All the non-development parcels are under an agricultural restriction, and they will need a special permit to allow a farm use in a GPOD (Greenbelt Protection Overlay District). No one at the meeting was against the proposal. The Jamaica Hills Association voted not to oppose. The ZC voted to recommend approval with the proviso: current owner only. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendation of the ZC on 255 and 257 Allandale Street. Seconded by Carla-Lisa Caliga. Passed 12-0-1 (2 left early).

The Zoning Committee has had two community members elected to the JPNC and the ZC has nominated the two Members for Council seats on the Committee. This brings the Council-level representation to full capacity. Motion by David Baron to elect Alcurtis Clark and Alessia Shelley as Council Members of the Zoning Committee. Seconded by Willie Mitchell. Passed 13-0-0 (2 left early).

The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, January 7 with two matters on the agenda: 101, 103, and 107 School Street - expand three first-floor units into the basement level with new bedrooms, family room, and bathroom; and 282-294 Hyde Park Avenue - new construction of an affordable multifamily residential building with 48 units. The next meeting after that will be on January 21 with five matters on the agenda: 95 Bynner Street, 268 Chestnut Avenue, 41 Slocum Road, 62 Dunster Road, and 16 Chilcott Place.

4.4. Parks+ Committee: The Parks+ Committee is on hiatus due to the lack of a Chair. Sarah Freeman encouraged Council Members to get involved and the Council is seeking Members interested in serving as Chair of the Committee. Support and orientation will be provided to anyone interested in stepping into this role.

4.5. Outreach Committee: Renée Stacey Welch reported that the Outreach Committee is currently seeking a Committee Chair. The Council has a new slate of members and is actively seeking individuals interested in chairing the Committee. Caliga offered support while noting her busy schedule. In the interim, the Committee is being supported by the Council Chair, Renée Stacey Welch, and will report through the Executive Committee meeting (scheduled for the Thursday prior to the full Council meeting).

5. Old Business: The Council discussed the timing of the next Election, with Michael Reiskind aiming for April and Bernie Doherty suggesting May to avoid winter weather issues.

6. New Business:

- David Brewster gave a short presentation on modern surveillance technology and his concerns on the loss of personal privacy. He discussed mesh networks, which can be used to protect privacy if installed properly, but can be used to collect data if not encrypted. There are many systems used to collect information for a database - fingerprints, traffic cameras, and automatic license plate readers (ALPR). A popular home system is 'Ring' doorbells, which protects residents' packages, but it also collects data on anyone passing by the house. 'Ring' and 'Flock' (ALPR) both require the user to opt in to keep the data private. 'Flock' is not in Jamaica Plain yet. Mr. Brewster highlighted the increasing use of facial recognition for services like unemployment benefits. In general, there is a lack of regulation and potential misuse of data by law enforcement. Michael Reiskind said that the Public Service Committee has had a lot of discussion on using cameras for traffic enforcement. Sarah Freeman acknowledged concerns about consent and privacy, but emphasized the potential for cameras to reduce bias in law enforcement and noted that public surveillance has a growing role in solving crimes. Eryn-Ashlei Bailey asked whether Massachusetts requires consent for recording people? Caliga proposed inviting a legal expert to clarify the laws around recording in public spaces with a focus on educating the public about surveillance capabilities and empowering them to make informed choices.

7. Community Announcements:

- Sarah Freeman said that the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has posted the comments from the Arborway Parkway Improvements Project on their website: www.mass.gov/doc/arborway-parkway-improvements-project-winterspring-2025-comment-summary-and-responses

- Bernie Doherty reported that the construction project at the State Laboratories Buildings on South Street is coming to an end and they are taking down the barriers around the construction site. There will still be lots of vehicle traffic in the area.

- Eryn-Ashlei Bailey said that there will be a Jefferson Playground Planning meeting on Monday, January 15, 2026 starting at 6:00pm. It will be a virtual meeting: bit.ly/JeffersonCM2.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

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