

**Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
September 23, 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, Danielle Sommer Kieta, and Gert Thorn.

Other attendees: Louise Johnson, Celeste Walker, Dottie Farrell, Alcurtis Clark, Holly DeMelo, Bryan Frankel, Scott Yates, Dorothy's iPad, (631) 639-8647, Melissa Beltran (Office of City Councillor Ben Weber), and Richard Heath (Boston Bulletin).

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm 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. August 2025 minutes: Motion by Willie Mitchell to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2025 meeting. Seconded by Michael Reiskind. Passed 8-0-2 (3 came late).

3. Community Announcements: None.

4. Committee reports/recommendations:

4.1. Zoning Committee (ZC): David Baron reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, September 3 and Wednesday, September 17. There are three issues from the Zoning Committee that need votes tonight.

1) 921–925 Parker Street, a petition by T-Mobile Northeast LLC, to install a telecommunications facility (including three sets of 3-panel antennas with faux chimneys; with equipment platform and equipment to be installed in an enclosure on roof. This is a cell phone tower installation on a building in the Mildred Hailey Apartments really called 40 Bickford Street. The installation had to move because of the ongoing construction in the complex and it is relocating to a building already renovated. There were questions on the construction disruptions at the development. The new antenna installation will match the color of the surrounding area. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **2) 29 Aldworth Street**, a petition by Jonathan Paul and Genna Weinstein, to extend the living space of the top unit into the attic adding a new bedroom & bathroom; add dormers to roof; redo back porches on both units; add a second means of egress via the back porches. This is by an owner-occupant in the condominium building wanting to expand into the attic. The local Jamaica Pond Association voted not to oppose. The ZC voted to recommend approval. **3) 61 Lila Road**, a petition by Amy and Douglas McClennen, trustees of 61 Lila Road Nominee Trust of 2024, to add a double-level rear sunroom addition, reconfigure kitchen, add new stairs. This proposal adds insulation and new stairs and opens up the floor plan on all levels. A neighbor was worried that he would be able to see the addition, but there will be no impact from across the street. The ZC voted to recommend approval. In addition, the Committee considered the proposal at **18 & 18R Robeson Street**. The lot is very close to Rocky Nook Terrace and has a significant slope. Various different proposals have come before the ZC for this parcel. First was a three-family, then a single-family (considered too big and had poor grading - needed a retaining wall for the foundation and parking area). The current proposal - to build a new building in the rear of the existing 18 Robeson Street - did not show the topography on the submitted plans. There are no dimensional variance needed; the main variance is for two dwellings on the same lot. The developer is trying again because an adjacent proposal at 16 Robeson Street had received some mixed support. The present tenants in the front building at 18 Robeson Street were opposed because they were worried about their leases. The other residents in the area were mostly concerned about the underlying ledge, and did not want additional units in the area. There was a split vote (5-5) in the Zoning Committee, so no vote is needed here at the JPNC. Motion by David Baron to accept the recommendations of the ZC on 921–925 Parker Street, 29 Aldworth Street, and 61 Lila Road. Seconded by Sarah Freeman. Passed 13-0-0. There were additional comments about 18 and 18R Robeson Street. Bernie Doherty said that the additional proposed building would have been a four-bedroom single-family condominium with parking. He said that there were a considerable amount of people in the community who were opposed. Caliga spoke with the neighbors and all direct abutters are opposed. The present tenants in the front building complained about the landlord's (City Realty) poor maintenance record. The neighbors are worried about water runoff from the considerable slope. Sarah Freeman asked whether the developers can go to the Zoning Board of Appeal without a JPNC recommendation? Nick Chaves asked for some clarification on where the planned building would go on the lot. The next Zoning Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, October 15 (no Committee meeting on October 1). On the agenda will be 7 Brewer Street, 79 Sheridan Street, 2A Rossmore Road, and the large project at 3430-3436 Washington Street/3440-3446 Washington Street. This last proposal has already gone through an Article 80 process.

4.2. Public Service Committee: Michael Reiskind reported that the Committee did not meet in September.

The next Public Service Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, October 7. On the agenda will be a request by Michel Soltani, owner of the Brendan Behan Pub (at 378 Centre Street), for a new French bistro next door at 380 Centre Street with a 7-day common victualler all-alcoholic beverages license; a request by JP Convenience for a beer & wine package store license at 546 Centre Street; and a request by Tropical Market for a beer & wine package store license at 371 Centre Street.

4.3. Housing & Development Committee (H&DC)/Arborway Yard Committee: Danielle Sommer Kieta said that the Housing & Development Committee met on September 16. Attendees discussed the rent control ballot initiative being

proposed for 2026. They also talked about the Mayor's proposed Transfer Fee; this would be a tax of up to 2% that would apply to sales of all real property (both home sales and commercial property) on the sales price above \$2,000,000. Dave Baron asked whether the H&DC took any positions on the issues. These discussions were for information only.

4.4. Parks+ Committee: Nick Chaves said that the Parks+ Committee did not meet in September. The Committee has not received any response to the letter sent by the Campaign for Jamaica Pond and Olmsted Park (the collaboration of the Parks+ Committee, Jamaica Pond Association Parks Committee and Friends of Jamaica Pond). This letter asked for money and resources to support the Parks' long-term needs. In response for more information about the requests, Mr. Chaves said that the letter asked for funding to be moved along to the design stage for two line items: \$500,000 for a study for the Boathouse and Bandstand, and \$50,000 for an assessment to study the long-term needs of Jamaica Pond. It seems to be unduly difficult to get these authorized funds into the programming stage. Gert Thorn asked whether the \$500,000 is for design or construction? It can be for both. Mr. Thorn said that the two uses are usually put in separate line items. Nick Chaves added that Councillor Weber's office and the Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS) have been strongly advocating for the line items to be moved forward. Bernie Doherty also asked about the ongoing issue of bicycle/pedestrian conflicts around Jamaica Pond. Gert Thorn asked for a meeting with the Parks Department on this issue. Mr. Chaves said that there was a meeting in July with Nate Hinchliffe at which he reported that new signs and repainted pavement stencils have been added. They are brighter and much more effective. Sarah Freeman brought up three points. a) The Campaign has to deal with three different agencies - Boston Parks, Brookline Parks and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. It has to be made clear the area of responsibility for each agency. b) Tony Dreyfus, from the Campaign, is looking for volunteers to help with the issue of invasive plant control. c) Caroline Peters, our liaison at ONS cannot help at this time because she is on bereavement leave. Who do we deal with in the meantime? Caliga said that the head of ONS usually fills in for a neighborhood liaison.

The next Parks+ Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 9 (the second Thursday) at 7:00pm via Zoom.

4.5. Outreach Committee: Renée Stacey Welch reported that the Outreach Committee met on Tuesday, September 9 via Zoom. She said she has been overwhelmed dealing with all the issues of the JPNC Election. There has been no support to count the ballots or get poll workers. At the original June date, there were not enough candidates submitting nomination papers, and on the secondary September/October dates, there were not enough volunteers to oversee the Election. She is asking for a vote to move the Election to the spring of 2026. Discussion on the request: Bernie Doherty agreed with the proposed move and said that the Council needs time to reach out to community groups. Willie Mitchell agreed that the extra time will be a good opportunity to do major outreach on what the Council is. Purple Reign said that Council Members need to reach out and get three volunteers each for Election Day. Caliga added that the Outreach Committee also need more people. Gert Thorn recommended writing some articles for the papers and social media; maybe we need a special committee in addition to the Outreach Committee. Motion by David Baron to move the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council Election to spring 2026. Seconded by Purple Reign. Passed 13-0-0.

There was discussion on next steps and JPNC vacancies: Gert Thorn repeated his comment that the Council needs a public affairs committee to develop an active campaign expressing the work and successes of the JPNC. Willie Mitchell thinks that the JPNC website is key and asked if the October meeting could have the website as a major agenda item. We could also invite folks to an in-person meeting at the Mozart Playground. Renée Stacey Welch said that she will bring it up first at the Outreach Committee. Richard Heath said that social media is most important; newspapers are passé. The Universal Hub blog is also very helpful. Nick Chaves said that he is planning to move out of JP (to West Roxbury) in November. He will try to help with the transition at the Parks+ Committee until then. Renée Stacey Welch said that current Council members are urged to remain in their roles for the extended term. There are five folks who submitted nomination papers who are potential new JPNC Members.

The next Outreach Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, October 14 at 7:00pm.

5. Old Business/New Business: Michael Reiskind encouraged all candidates who submitted their nomination forms up to now to run for a vacancy on the JPNC before the spring 2026 Election. They may be voted onto the Council right away. There may be five vacancies available soon.

6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:54pm.

Minutes submitted by Michael Reiskind

Next scheduled JPNC meeting: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Next scheduled JPNC Executive Committee meeting: Thursday, October 23 at 7:00PM via Zoom.