

Jamaica Plain



You could WIN a **\$25,000** grant to refresh your school

REGISTER NOW

No purchase necessary. See official rules for details.



- home
- news
- events
- discussions
- search

[< Back to front page](#)

Text size - +

JAMAICA PLAIN

JP neighborhood group forms team to negotiate with Whole Foods

Posted by Matt Rocheleau July 27, 2011 11:26 AM

[E-mail](#) | [Print](#) | [Comments \(\)](#)

Recommend
 Tweet
0
 Share

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council will establish a five-member committee to spearhead the group's attempt to negotiate a community-benefits agreement with Whole Foods, which expects to open a Hyde Square store this fall.

The council also announced Tuesday night that it has scheduled a meeting with officials from the supermarket company for early September. Whole Foods officials were not immediately available today to comment.

At a [special council meeting](#) two weeks ago, members voted to meet with fellow community groups and area elected officials to discuss and hear feedback on an ad-hoc committee's recently-completed, [69-page report](#) concerning Whole Foods' arrival to the neighborhood.

The council reported back at Tuesday evening's meeting.

According to council members, some groups had specific concerns or conditions they would want to see addressed before agreeing wholeheartedly to collaborate with the council on a community-benefits agreement.

The groups that were largely supportive of the idea of such an agreement were the Whose Foods group, Jobs with Justice, and the Hyde Square Task Force. Five other community groups have taken no official stance.

While there were some encouraging comments from elected officials the council reached out to, the group said there was no definitive support for an agreement.

District 6 City Councilor Matt O'Malley said in a statement that the council's report had "unreasonable" requests some of which were "unenforceable" and that demanding a community-benefits agreement could set a "precarious precedent." O'Malley, who primarily oversees JP and West Roxbury, said Whole Foods has been a good community partner so far and believes the company will continue, if not improve on, its generosity moving forward.

"This debate has been on for far too long," he added. "Let's work with Whole Foods to build a stronger neighborhood."

Connect to Jamaica Plain



Connect to Your Town Jamaica Plain on Facebook



You like **Your Town Jamaica Plain**. . Admin



Follow @JPUpdate on Twitter



Click here to follow Your Town Jamaica Plain on Twitter.

ADVERTISEMENT

JAMAICA PLAIN REAL ESTATE »

142
Homes for sale

40
Rentals available

27
Open houses this week

1
New listings this week

SPECIAL ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

CAMP GUIDE »



A camp for every kid!

Adventure, sports, theater, music, arts or technology—find the perfect camp for your child at boston.com/campguide.

ADVERTISEMENT

Representative Jeffrey Sanchez thanked the council for its service and urged the group to continue its dialogue with Whole Foods and the community.

At-large City Councilor Felix Arroyo told the council he was pleased that some of the themes from [a community letter he wrote previously](#) on the issue had been incorporated into the ad hoc report.

State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, who also [issued a letter to the community in late April](#) that listed strong demands of Whole Foods, said she does not want to speak to the council on the issue, the group reported back.

At-large City Councilor Ayanna Pressley, whose [mother passed away](#) earlier this month, is scheduled to meet with council members at a later time.

The JP for All group took no official stance on a community-benefits agreement, but said it welcomes Whole Foods; the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Council hopes to provide its thoughts on the issue soon; the Hyde / Jackson Square Main Streets said it has not decided whether it wants to align with the council, or meet with Whole Foods on its own; a majority of Stonybrook Neighborhood Association members seemed opposed to the idea; the Jamaica Hills Association had no official stance, but plans to put the topic on an upcoming agenda.

Eleven council members voted for the motion to form a committee to lead negotiating efforts; two voted against the motion.

Several council members dismissed the notion of a benefits agreement potentially being unenforceable, because other such pacts have been negotiated and enforced between communities, including Jamaica Plain, and private companies.

If Whole Foods were to sign on to an agreement, the company would be held accountable by its own best interests of not wanting to break its promises to the community, council members said.

Council members also wondered whether elected officials may be being influenced by how other elected officials are responding to Whole Foods' plans for a Jamaica Plain store.

Members, including Orion Kriegman and Pamela Bender, each said they were "very impressed" by both the ad-hoc committee's work and the general process by which the council has moved on the issue. Member Red Burrows said he hopes a CBA might be something the neighborhood can finally unite over, instead of continuing to fight about the [issue](#) of Whole Foods' arrival that began dividing residents when the grocer's plans became public [a half year ago](#).

Earlier this spring, the council [passed by a one-vote margin a measure](#) to voice publicly that "Based on what we know now, we are concerned that Whole Foods is not a good fit for Hyde Square."

Member David Baron, who also served on the now-dissolved [15-member ad-hoc group](#), said he feels the stance the neighborhood council took in March is hurting the credibility of the council's report, which he called, "actually pretty neutral."

While expressing sympathy because of the documents length as well as the report's extensive list of recommendations, he said he feels there's an "optics problem" about how the report is being perceived, that some have dismissed the report and jumped to conclusions about the report's contents without

Jamaica Plain Headlines »

- On tap at the Samuel Adams brewery: a marriage proposal (2 days ago)
- Former Boston firefighter testifies he wanted to return to work (3 days ago)
- Scene & Heard: Music festival has new name (3 days ago)
- Summertime, and the living is noisy (3 days ago)

Also From Jamaica Plain

HI-LO TO WHOLE FOODS



Recent changes in JP

AFTERMATH



Pizzeria sees continued support

JAMAICA PLAIN HISTORY



Inn, founded by brewers, quenched local thirst

NIGHTLIFE



A night out in Jamaica Plain

Flyerboard

POST FLYER
VIEW ALL

Local advertising by PaperG

reading through it.

Five members of the 20-member neighborhood council volunteered to form the negotiating team: Area C member Karley Ausiello, At-large members Pam Bender and Francesca Fordiani, chair and Area C member Andrea Howley, and Area B member Jesse White.

Another reminder from the council meeting, the group will hold its biennial membership election on Sept. 24. Candidates application packets are due back Aug. 5 at 5 p.m. For more information visit www.jpnc.org.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.


 0
  4
 

[◀ Previous entry](#)
[Next entry ▶](#)

MORE FROM BOSTON.COM

You might like:

- [Seeing red over Green Line delay](#) (Your Town)
- [Verizon union members say strike worth hardship](#) (Business)
- [Precious little insight on defense](#) (Your Town)
- [Near salty havens, fresh alternatives](#) (Local News)
- [A sober lesson that seems to stick](#) (Local News)

MORE FROM THE WEB

Selected for you by our sponsor:

- [4 Liberal Myths that Distort the Deficit Debate](#) (The Fiscal Times)
 - [The 7 Girls Who Looked the Cutest For the Nerds at Comic-Con](#) (StyleCaster)
 - [Do you support Obama's re-election?](#) (Newsmax.com)
 - [Rick Perry and the Myth of the 'Texas Miracle'](#) (The Fiscal Times)
 - [Facebook to Close U.S. Prison Inmate Accounts](#) (FoxNews.com)
- [Sponsored links]



READER COMMENTS »

[View reader comments \(\)](#) » [Comment on this story](#) »

On tap at the Sam Adams brewery: a marriage proposal - <http://t.co/VOHzOZq> 1 day ago

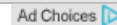
On tap at the Samuel Adams brewery: a marriage proposal <http://t.co/A8KFQ4u> 1 day ago

Historic New England puts period photos on the map <http://bo.st/pKF8d3> 2 days ago

Promoter testifies bodybuilding ex-firefighter appeared fit <http://bo.st/ns1PoL> 2 days ago

Hi-Lo Foods closes, Whole Foods moving in @WholeFoods

[Follow other Boston.com Tweets](#) | [What is Twitter?](#)



Close



YourTown

boston.com

Recommended For You [Your Town - Boston.com](#)
Powered by [Sailthru](#)