



Portsmouth Citywide Neighborhood Committee Meeting, Thursday, January 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 at Conference Room A, City Hall.

Present: Larry Cataldo, Chair; Elaine Apatang; Kathleen Boduch; Lori Soloway; Peter Somssich; John Tabor, City Council Representative and Dave Beadling, Portsmouth resident.

Absent: William Gatchell (excused - exposure to COVID-19)

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

One resident of the Creek Neighborhood, Dave Beadling, came to observe the work of the committee. He expressed interest in the noise abatement issues, the Bartlett intersection, and delayed trash pickup when school is closed.

Discussion followed dealing first with the noise issues, beginning with the state/city responsibilities and responses over time for I-95 noise affecting the neighborhood and particularly the school. There is a plan for UNH Forestry Program to conduct some acoustics measuring to see how the noise travels in the area. Those readings may determine whether walls may be the best solution, or if something smaller or different might do the job just as well or better.

Regarding the Bartlett/Cate Street intersection, John Tabor reported that various solutions are being considered, including a rotary. The Parking and Traffic Safety committee is working on the problem.

Mr. Beadling mentioned that trash pickup being delayed for five days from Monday until Friday when school is closed on Monday is troublesome. The committee mentioned the staff shortage and encouraged him to attend the ward forums to address his concern in front of the panel as well.

PORTSMOUTH 400 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Larry expressed dismay that the scheduled speaker from the celebration committee failed to show up for this meeting due to a scheduling miscalculation. He will contact a member of the organization to communicate. We are eager to hear how we can contribute to the celebration.

NOMINATION OF A NEW CHAIRPERSON

Larry called for a nomination for a new committee chairperson. When no one chose to be nominated, he then called for the nomination of co-chairs. Both Peter Somssich and Elaine Apatang were nominated. There being no other nominations, the committee voted and accepted the slate unanimously.

The new Co-Chairs will formalize their interests. Elaine is hopeful the committee will be able to help set up more neighborhood associations.

SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS AND FORUMS

The next committee meeting will be held at City Hall at 6:30 on March 21st. The next Ward (4) Forum will be held on April 4th at the Dondero School at 6:30 p.m.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out will be held on Tuesday, August 1. The committee, in conjunction with the police department as sponsor, has decided to consolidate the National Night Out event to five sites to allow the reduced city staff to visit with all neighborhoods. With this format, the police chief hopes to get more time to speak with the residents. Those neighborhoods that choose to keep their existing events may do so. They may just not be able to have staff visitations.

Larry Cataldo is currently surveying neighborhood representatives and block party volunteers on their interest in the new proposal and on any suggestions. Results will be discussed at the next meeting.

HOLIDAY LIGHT CONTEST

There were 42 entries in this year's competition. The mayor presented prizes to the winners at a recent City Council meeting. The general consensus was that it was an exciting event.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM

Larry was disappointed that the Islington Street neighborhood parking permit program was discontinued. Only one or two residents commented favorably for continuation of the program. He felt that timing, COVID-19, changes to resident work schedules/habits, and the new parking garage may have compromised parking usage.

BRAINSTORMING

Elaine felt the March meeting might be a suitable time to brainstorm methods to reach more residents and neighborhoods. She suggested that we might offer a Legislative Forum, delving into how pending bills affect the neighborhoods as well as the entire city and the state.

Peter discussed a trend in some California communities to eliminate single family properties and to convert them to multi-family developments. The committee could sponsor a panel discussion on this subject and add to it possible transportation solutions. More discussion at a later meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Boduch, Secretary

The next Citywide Neighborhood Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21st at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.