

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
Citywide Neighborhood Committee  
Meeting Summary

June 20, 2018, Conference Room A, City Hall

Present: Rick Becksted, Kathy Bergeron, Kathleen Boduch, Larry Cataldo, Chase Hagaman, Cliff Lazenby, Kelly Weinstein. Absent: Paul Mannle (e)  
Kathy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as presented.

Paul Mannle, prior to the meeting, requested that the vote on the final draft of the bylaws be postponed until the next meeting when he could be present. That being a reasonable request, the committee agreed. It will have that discussion at the next meeting.

Kathy noted that the next Neighborhood Forum will take place on September 26 in Ward 1. The site is not yet confirmed.

Kathy suggested that we address speakers to neighborhood issues from the floor before the formal meeting so that the audience wanting to speak just to those issues could leave before the committee business meeting. The committee agreed.

**NOISE ABATEMENT:** Laura Pantelakos and Peter Somssich

The floor was opened to Laura Pantelakos and Peter Somssich who have been working on the issue of sound barriers along I-95, particularly as it affects Panaway Manor residents. Rep. Pantelakos has been working on this project for a long time. The state government continues to frustrate those trying to make improvements to the lives of those living with the road noise in that area, insisting that barriers cannot be put in until changes/improvements along that road route are made (as was the case with improvements on the I-95 bridge above Atlantic Heights—but that fight took 20 Years, said Ms. Pantelakos). If improvements are made near Panaway Manor, the city will have to contribute to the cost.

Ms. Pantelakos and Mr. Somssich invited a government aide Harold Parker to listen the noise. He discovered that there was a natural gas substation along the same route and that that in itself presented a major safety hazard. They will need to protect that area. If there were to be an accident involving that station, it would be a major danger. Bill Cass from the DOT was also there and discussed plans. They will have to discuss safety barriers for the substation with Unitil. Maybe that will help move the discussion of sound barriers along. DOT seems to be the blocker. It is always about money.

Ms. Pantelakos is fighting for noise abatement all along I-95, not just for Panaway Manor, noting that Bedford has homes along the way, and Portsmouth has an additional 200 homes affected. The cost estimate for just the Panaway Manor area is \$1.5 million. The cost for the entire region might be as much as \$3 million.

Zoning changes will have to be made in the area before barriers can be installed. On August 6 or 20<sup>th</sup> there will be readings for zoning changes. Rick Becksted noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings can be done at the same meeting to expedite the process. If zoning changes are approved those would have to go to the State and if approved would trigger motions for some funding from the Turnpike Authority. If the Toll Increase plan had been approved, that would have allotted funds to the project, however, it did not pass.

Ms. Pantelakos wants government to follow up on promises. The widening of the road over time in the past should have qualified the area for funding and barriers.

Rick Becksted mentioned that some of the wooden fences along the route are falling down. That might be a starting point as well.

Mr. Somssich said that Unitil will need a permit to put up a barrier to protect the area from the gas hazard, and wondered if Unitil could add some money to compensate or begin the barriers. Ms. Pantelakos said that the barriers erected recently in Dover are a slap in the face to this area, as is the possibility that DOT is considering spending \$39 million to rehab the General Sullivan Bridge.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING PERMIT DISCUSSION:** Larry Cataldo and Peter Whalen

The Islington Creek neighborhood is seeking relief of parking problems. Parking is on the city's radar. Peter Rice (Public Works) and Ben Fletcher (Parking) have already addressed the committee. Islington Creek took action, canvassing the neighborhood and businesses. Larry did an extensive survey of cities large and small to see how they address the situation. The 7 members of that neighborhood's committee will meet with both Mr. Rice and Fletcher to work out a pilot for their specific area.

Peter Whalen and Ruth Maron addressed the problem and possible parking solution in the South End. The night of this meeting there were 5,000 in attendance at Taste of the Nation and there was a concert at Prescott Park, so parking in the South End was very bad. That happens often during the summer. Additionally, the South End committee noted that a number of employers who have parking available downtown do not offer help to their employees to use those space instead of on-street parking. The South End committee would like to see the city ask the businesses to provide help so that employees would park where there is parking and not on streets such as Gates, Pleasant, Marcy, and Mechanic, where there is little to no room for those other than the residents. The committee there is going to suggest the tagging of up to 18 spaces for residential use only (rather than looking for a broad residents only parking in the entire area.) They would like it to be implemented during the summer, the worst parking time there. The city is supportive of these neighborhoods' request, but they had mentioned a trial program for the fall.

Both areas felt each neighborhood does not need a broad parking permit situation. Some blocks are affected more than others. Some might need no help at all. Contractors and medical providers might be offered special passes. Considerations would have to be made for visitors and/or short term renters. The Islington Creek neighborhood does not have problems on the retail street.

Cliff Lazenby asked if the process has been defined by the city after the survey was done. The South End participated in the survey but has not received results. He further suggested that the committees

canvass the neighborhoods very thoroughly, getting as many signatures as possible to make it easier for the City Council to consider the area requests.

**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (NNO):** Kathy Bergeron

The event is on Tuesday, August 7 from 5 to dusk.

July 18, City Hall, 7 p.m. will be the full meeting for the NNO event. All organizers are invited. We will contact the police to put a notice on Nextdoor. Peter would like to start a NNO event in Maple Haven.

**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS:**

Sherburne Road is having its annual yard sale this weekend, involving 10 homes. There was a sewer backup on Colonial Drive. If Greenland is added to the sewer, residents feel it will be problematic for the area if the sewer treatment facility is not upgraded.

The Creek-John Wyckoff—there will be a regatta on North Mill Pond on 8/11 or 12. The neighborhood is attending meetings to determine what they would like to do for the City's 400 anniversary celebration.

Elwyn Park—Cliff--sidewalk paving is being done near the Dondero School.

Spinnaker Point—Chase--new sidewalks have been helpful on the Market Street extension.

Wibird—Kathy--they are sponsoring a food drive to benefit Gather, the food pantry. It was suggested that donors check food expiration dates for safety.

South End—Kathleen--there have been some car contents stolen from unlocked cars. Aaron suggested that the police talk about that issue on Nextdoor, so that all city residents are aware of the problem. It has also happened in the Islington St. neighborhood recently. The members of the Friends of the South End have begun an active search of the history of their homes to celebrate the City's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the hope of publishing a walking guide book and recognition of the building dates on the homes. They are being helped in their efforts by local historians, the Athenaeum and Portsmouth Library staffs.

Atlantic Heights—Cristy Carduso—There will be a pocket garden tour on July 7 from 9-1.

Kathy called for topics for future meetings. Suggestions: budget workshop, 400<sup>th</sup> celebration, recycling/composting (new rules/changes), Twitter town hall to invite younger residents to join the conversation, how a bill becomes a law.

There being no further business, Larry moved, Chase seconded and the committee voted to close the meeting. It was adjourned at 8:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Boduch