

Citywide Neighborhood Committee  
Zoom Meeting July 22, 2020, 5:30 pm

Committee Attendees:

Larry Cataldo, Lori Soloway, Mark Syracuse, Dave Cosgrove and Beth Margeson

City Staff:

Peter Stith, Planning Department coordinated Zoom to ensure integrity of the Zoom meeting by preventing hackers

Members of the public present:

Laurie McCray, Kathleen Boduch and Diane Stradling

Discussion Items:

1. Roll Call and Introduction of Members:

Lori Soloway - Professional background: formerly Human Resources Director for Big Dig, now retired. Portsmouth resident for 4 years.

Mark Syracuse - Professional background: painting and real estate and fireman in New Castle. Currently involved in Clipper Strong Fund. Ward 4 representative. Resident since 1973 and has family in the area. PHS Class of 1979.

Dave Cosgrove - Professional background: software developer. Involved with youth sports as a coach.

Beth Margeson - Professional background: attorney for Division for Children, Youth and Families. Community Involvement: Officer and board member of Portsmouth Women's City Club, Little Harbor School's Coordinator for PEP After School Programs, board member of Little League, officer and board member of Friends of Prescott Park.

Larry Cataldo - Professional background: telecommunications manager in Middle East, lived in Portsmouth since 2005. Community involvement: Taxi Commission, joined CNC in 2015.

Larry Cataldo is the transitional Chair, Lori Soloway volunteered to be Vice Chair and handle the Forum management. Beth Margeson volunteered to be Secretary and assist on National Night Out. The CNC plans to formally vote on these positions whenever the committee can meet live.

Meeting are meant to be very informal and primary focus is so that neighborhoods can get their concerns heard. The second objective is to coordinate the forums and National Night Out.

Neighborhood Reports:

Lori Soloway - missing Market Street lights.

Mark Syracuse (Ward 4) - Elwyn Park, Elwyn Road, Lafayette Road. Install more safety features - sidewalks, bike lanes to make Route 1 more friendly as a walker and biker to access shops. Concerns about traffic and speeding and Dondero School

Dave Cosgrove (Ward 3) - Frank Jones neighborhood within the ward. Reached out to 30 folks for inputs. Concerns for speeding and weighing business interests with neighborhood concerns. Also concerns for mosquito spraying or lack thereof.

Beth Margeson (Ward 5) - 5<sup>th</sup> Ward is quiet with city shutdown.

Attendees:

Kathleen Boduch - Kathleen was thanked for service to CNC. Also resident of South End, which had a fundraiser and gathered 880 lbs of food and over \$2,000 for Gather while observing social distancing. She is a Friends of South End representative attending meeting to get information on National Night Out.

Diane Stradling - Lives in Ward 2 at Union Street, works at polls and 40 year resident. Volunteer at senior center and Black Heritage Trail. Participated in Ward 2 forum - there were concerns for no sidewalks on Chevrolet Avenue to Cass Street going to Hannaford's - those sidewalks are not in per the Chinburg Agreement. There is increased vehicular traffic in area of Middle and Cass Streets. Those have not been addressed. Need to get this on the Agenda on Parking and Traffic Safety.

Laurie McCray - Lives in Little Harbor neighborhood. Resident since 1994 and longtime advocate for individuals with disabilities. Grateful for city not allowing parking in the neighborhoods during the Farmer's Market which was moved from City Hall to Little Harbor School in 2020. Concerned that DPW workers were not wearing masks at the city dump but that, after raising the issue to Peter Rice, all workers were wearing masks.

Robin Husslage from Ward 2 is reporting that parking problems are beginning to mount in the Islington Creek neighborhood as the Pop Up NH begins operations at the Bridge Street lot. Tourist and others shopping in town continue to not use the Foundry Parking Garage and instead search for free parking in the neighborhood. Robin and Nicole LaPierre have been negotiating with City Manager Karen Conard on the final details of the pilot parking program. She is following up with Karen and staff. They'll keep the CNC posted and if they hear nothing back, they'll ask if CNC can reach out and get some action on the matter.

Larry said that he spoke with Paul Mannle of Ward 3, who was excused from the meeting due to work commitments, and he had nothing to report. Nicole LaPierre from that ward also spoke with Larry and said that fumes from diesel engines were still an issue. Islington Creek had concerns with PopUp Portsmouth on Foundry Garage and that was resolved by moving that to Bridge Street parking lot.

Zoom Ward Forums:

Lori suggested having the ward forums on Zoom. Ward 3 will begin. All of the committee members were in favor of holding the ward forums by Zoom giving priority to wards that are facing issues. However, if there is a serious pressing issue in a ward, a special meeting can be called. Mark, Lori and Larry will be working on setting these up including promotion through the public information officer at the city and in the Portsmouth Herald. Familiar with forums-panel of city officials, mayor, fire chief, police chief, Peter Rice DPW director. Officials like it as way to convey and receive information.

#### National Night Out:

It is an annual event starting in 1984, designed to bring police department and neighborhoods together, later expanded to fire department, EMS, and public works. It's outdoor barbeques and all of these personnel visit the neighborhoods. CNC assists with putting it together with the various neighborhoods - there were 25 neighborhoods in 2019. All of the CNC members expressed reservations about holding the event during the pandemic. There was support for some sort of neighborhood parade. However, Larry will reach out to Chief Merner to tell him of CNC feedback. Chief Merner will be making the final decision about holding it in October.

The discussion on the proposed changes to the bylaws was postponed.

The following is a recap of the action items that Larry has as a result of the meeting: 1. Reaching out to Chief Merner for speeding on Echo Avenue, Hillcrest Drive, Harding Road and McKinley Avenue and National Night Out; 2. To Kim McNamara on mosquito problem in Ward 3; 3. To Peter Rice on storm drainage problems in Ward 4, and; to 4. To Diane Stradling, a request for a sidewalk along Chevrolet Avenue in Ward 2.

#### Special Thanks to Previous Committee Members

Larry concluded by thanking Kathy Bergeron, the former chair of CNC, for her many years of hard work and service. He also thanked Chase Hagaman and Kathy Boduch for all of their work on the CNC.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Beth S. Margeson

Beth S. Margeson  
Acting Secretary