

CITY COUNCIL E-MAILS

ADDENDUM

Received: June 17, 2021 (after 9:00 a.m.) – June 21 2021 (before 5:00 p.m.)

June 21, 2021 Council Meeting

New content:

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Peter Somssich (peter.somssich@gmail.com) on Friday, June 18, 2021 at 16:14:29

address: 34 Swett Ave.

comments: Dear Councilors,

I am writing to you to encourage you to decide that in Portsmouth we should officially celebrate both Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day on the same day of October (this year Oct. 11).

Until there is a proclaimed Indigenous People's Day (IPD) either officially in New Hampshire or on the Federal level, it seems to me this would be the best option in our city for a number of reasons:

- Creating a different day to celebrate IPD would bring many complications regarding the closing of offices, time off from work and other issues.
- We all understand that the narratives around both the Columbus explorations and the sometimes-romanticized versions of Indigenous People in North and South America were not realistically communicated in earlier historical documents and certainly not in school books. We all need to work on those issues.
- As we now know from more extensive recent narratives from historians, Columbus did not discover America, in fact he did not even set foot in North America (however, he was an explorer of his time, and behaved no differently than other explorers). Viewed with 20th century eyes there was much behavior to condemn during that era in the 15th century. In fact, most people's lives in European countries at the time were miserable and dangerous unless you were powerful and wealthy.
- It is no surprise based on their own history of discrimination in America, that Italian-Americans view Columbus Day as a sign of respect towards their ethnic group; and abolishing it or replacing it is seen by them as a sign of disrespect. At the same time, we must recall that Columbus was not from Italy (that country did not exist at that time) but from Verona, and he was exploring not on behalf of Verona but on behalf of the Spanish Court.
- The history of Indigenous Peoples' in North and South America is also a mixed history, of both tribal warfare including much cruelty against other tribes as well as some collaboration with the explorers to make use of more powerful weapons and techniques that they used to defend and support their own tribes (see "1491" by Charles C. Mann).
- By creating a Columbus/ Indigenous People's Day in Portsmouth, we acknowledge both Italian Americans and Indigenous Peoples without disrespecting either group. Taking sides is very divisive.
- With one common day, Portsmouth residents would be encouraged to celebrate in whatever manner they wish on that day in Oct.

includeInRecords: on

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Joan Hamblet (jhamblet4@gmail.com) on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 09:08:29

address: 447 COLONIAL DR

comments: Dear Mayor Becksted and Councilors, I am writing in support of changing Columbus Day to a combined Columbus and Indigenous Peoples' Day. I feel strongly that we Americans should know the true facts about the origins of our country, and I personally would support changing the celebration of Columbus Day to a celebration for Indigenous Peoples' Day. However, I also know it takes time to educate people and for us to process and accept new ideas. In that light, I think a temporary compromise is in order. Combining Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day would give folks the opportunity to really think about the true beginnings of our country and to gradually build a consensus on changing the name permanently. Please vote in support of a combined holiday.
includeInRecords: on

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Fawn Gaudet (fawngaudet@yahoo.com) on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 15:08:12

comments:
June 12, 2021

Indigenous People's Day
Dear Honorable Portsmouth City Council Members,

My name is Fawn Gaudet and I live in New Hampshire. I am requesting Columbus Day be changed to "Indigenous People's Day". I have strong pride in my ancestry and I am a descendant of the Blackfeet Nation. Growing up in NH as a child, I was keenly aware of the injustices committed against Native Americans, this being our Nation first. Before Columbus era, there were millions of indigenous people in North America, Central America and South America. The Wabanaki, known as People of the Dawn, lived in New Hampshire long before colonists arrived. Indigenous people here thrived in harmony with Gedakina- which means "world" for the Wabanaki. Their culture was rich with tradition, honor, respect for their people, land and wildlife. For me, Columbus Day is not a day of joy. It is a day of mourning. During this period of terrorism, indigenous peoples were massacred, raped, enslaved, tortured and genocide occurred. Changing this holiday to "Indigenous People's Day" offers honor and respect to our people. As Columbus Day, the day only marks a false representation of what happened in the past. We must never repeat this. By changing the name to Indigenous People's Day, you will offer truth. It is a chance for New Hampshire residents, indigenous and non-indigenous, to honor those who came before them and respect indigenous peoples who survive to carry on such rich native traditions for our future seven generations. Please change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day.

Oliwni- Thank you in Wabanaki,
Fawn Gaudet,
Co-Leader of NH Coalition of Indigenous People's Day
Eumney,NH
awngaudet@yahoo.com
includeInRecords: on

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Allen Nelson (lshoals96@aol.com) on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 15:30:34

address: 87 Richards Ave

comments: Please leave the Columbus Day holiday alone. I agree with Jeff Cooper's letter to the Editor. There is a robust discussion to be had on this subject. Altering the observance of this day which has been an American tradition since the 1770's will be misguided, short sighted, and divisive. There is a much more constructive approach to this most interesting subject. Mr Cooper's proposal is worth considering.. I welcome a more well rounded exploration of this subject. It would be constructive and a much better approach for all of Portsmouth.
includeInRecords: on