

CITY COUNCIL E-MAILS

ADDENDUM

Received: September 16, 2021 (after 9:00 a.m.) – September 20, 2021 (before 5:00 p.m.)

September 20, 2021 Council Meeting

New content:

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Arthur Bruinooge ([Abruinooge@me.com](mailto:Abruinooge@me.com)) on Saturday, September 18, 2021 at 12:14:08

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address: 291 Islington St

comments: I want to thank all of you for the support you gave for converting two tennis courts into eight pickleball courts.

I just stopped by South Playground this Saturday morning. The new courts look great. Every court was utilized and people were waiting. Everyone I spoke to was ecstatic about the new courts. I also dropped by late afternoon Friday. Most of the courts were utilized with PB players and tennis players. Middle school kids were playing tennis on the new courts and they seem to be having a great time. I am sure if they had the equipment they would play PB as well.

I think it would be great if you put out a press release and get some media attention. This new recreational addition is newsworthy and will shine brightly on Portsmouth and the City Council.

Thanks again,  
Art Bruinooge  
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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Jonathan Sandberg ([jfsandberg@yahoo.com](mailto:jfsandberg@yahoo.com)) on Sunday, September 19, 2021 at 05:58:49

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address: 160 Bartlett Street

comments: Portsmouth's Inspections Department is in serious need of reform. As of now they are not serving the interests of safety or the wellbeing of residents. I have become acutely aware of this need as I am presently suffering through the displeasure of working with them while my kitchen is being renovated. What should have been a fairly simple and straightforward four week project has been drawn out into its fourth month with no end in sight as each inspection requires lengthy and costly delays. And while this may seem trivial, it has broad implications for the affordability of housing in Portsmouth.

Inspectors have developed an adversarial relationship with builders and tradesmen by following the maxim of "if you give an inch, they will take a mile." Instead of using their broad discretion they insist on standards that are so unnecessarily high that it is nearly impossible to be compliant. The result of this is that many builders refuse to work in Portsmouth and residents have difficulty even finding people to repair their properties.

It is well known that Portsmouth suffers from an affordability problem and many in the community are hostile to new construction as a solution. One important avenue for affordable housing is to buy a fixer-upper. But if it is made unreasonably difficult to complete work because of the Inspections Department then that removes that option. And so the Inspection Department is contributing significantly to our housing crisis.

There are also many derelict and dangerous apartment buildings in Portsmouth. The one right next door to me is clearly falling apart and the tenants are suffering from it. But if the owners make any repairs and open themselves up to inspection, so many problems will be found that it will be too costly. And so the result is that even minor problems go unfixed. The irony is that while the Inspections Department is supposed to ensure that our building stock is safe and in good condition, they are encouraging noncompliance because they are so difficult to work with.

I have heard from city officials that the problems with the Inspection Department are the result of a staffing shortage and high demand and that the solution is to hire new staff. But the truth is that this has been going on for years and years and has nothing to do with the current job market. It's an institutional problem that requires wholesale reform.

Counselor McEachern has set forth a proposal to streamline the inspections process. While this is good and should be supported, it isn't enough. This process isn't as difficult in other communities. I would encourage the City Council to investigate how other cities and towns are able to succeed at finding the balance between keeping buildings safe and not being overly stringent and burdensome. And how inspectors can develop a collaborative and not adversarial relationship with residents and builders.

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Jenna Koines ([jennakoines@gmail.com](mailto:jennakoines@gmail.com)) on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 08:03:02

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address: Unit 30, 30 Cate Street

comments: Dear Councillors,

I'm writing to express my position on the Cate Street/Bartlett Street intersection which will be discussed at this evenings City Council meeting (9/20/21).

I see that two options are under consideration for approval. Both of these options address the location on the crosswalk, but do not consider rerouting the traffic, which I will call Option 3.

Option 3 would eliminate the lane between the sidewalk on east side of Islington and the "island of refuge" for pedestrians. This option is exactly what was created by the police officer who relocated the cones suggested through that action. Yes, he was unauthorized to do so, but his idea solved the safety issue from a pedestrian standpoint. This option ought to have been looked into by the engineering team.

It is critical that pedestrians are able to see oncoming traffic before setting foot into the roadway. Any solution which requires that I as a pedestrian trust that I will not be hit by oncoming traffic, which I cannot see approaching, is not a solution. I and all pedestrians must have a clear sight line of oncoming traffic before safely crossing the street.

I feel that the concerns that we residents of the neighborhood raised at the on-site meeting held over the summer have not been adequately addressed.

One last point: The study states that pedestrians would not want to go up further up Bartlett to cross Bartlett if they are heading toward Islington. We have not been interviewed about this. I would gladly walk extra steps to cross in a safe crosswalk. I will not utilize any designated crosswalk which endangers my life when crossing.

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Philippe Favet ([philfavet@yahoo.com](mailto:philfavet@yahoo.com)) on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 11:24:31

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address: 152C Dennett st

comments: Hello City Councilors! I'm writing this letter to let you know that I'm in disagreement with the 53 Green st project which include building in the NMP 100' buffer zone. The City established a zoning law for the reason to protect the NMP ecosystem, I don't see no reasons for that law to be broken. The NMP has been my home for 40 years and home to a multitude of birds species and other specimens that formed an ecosystem. I have seen many changes since I settled on its banks, some good and some bad. The next future developments are not fitting in at all and will kill overtime the ecosystem that many concerned abutters and residents have work hard to preserve. If the developers want some incentives to build, may I suggest to them to start cleaning and restore the shores and respect the 100' buffer zone. Save the NMP. Philippe Favet

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