

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Sirrell and City Council Members  
FROM: John P. Bohenko  
DATE: November 21, 2002  
SUBJ: Portsmouth Listens Brochure

As you know, the Planning Board and City staff have been working in collaboration with a group of City residents and stakeholders to organize the *Portsmouth Listens* effort. The Chamber of Commerce and the neighborhood associations are instrumental in this process and the Planning Board has endorsed the *Portsmouth Listens* approach. As we move forward to develop the City's new Master Plan, the *Portsmouth Listens* collaborative will play a key role in obtaining input from those who live and work here. Three dozen volunteers recently hand delivered more than 5,000 copies of the attached *Portsmouth Listens* brochure to City residents.

*Portsmouth Listens* will follow the "study circle" approach, which was used with great success a number of years ago in Portsmouth's school redistricting effort. The "study circle" approach essentially brings together small groups of people in structured, facilitated work sessions with the purpose of engaging them in dialogue on critical public policy issues.

The *Portsmouth Listens* study circles represent just one avenue for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to participate in the development of the City Master Plan. The Planning Board, with statutory responsibility for developing the Master Plan, will also provide many other opportunities for public input through hearings, neighborhood meetings and Planning Board work sessions.

The *Portsmouth Listens* collaborative appears to be off to a good start and their efforts should mesh well with the City's timeline for development of the Master Plan. Interviews with two Master Plan consultant teams are in the process of being scheduled for early next month, and we should have a consultant team on board and under contract by the end of the year.

I believe the work of the *Portsmouth Listens* collaborative to involve the community in shaping the future of Portsmouth will be extremely beneficial in developing the City's Master Plan. The efforts of Jim Noucas and John Tabor, co-chairs of this ambitious undertaking, are admirable and very much appreciated. We look forward to working together to ensure the success of the *Portsmouth Listens* effort.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, I would be pleased to provide it.

cc: Board of Adjustment  
Conservation Commission  
Historic District Commission  
Economic Development Commission  
Planning Board  
School Board  
Staff Master Plan Committee