



CITYWIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE  
NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH FORUM – WARD 1  
OCTOBER 26, 2022, 6:30 p.m. AT THE NEW FRANKLIN SCHOOL

Committee members welcomed Ward 1 residents.

Peter Somssich. The forum moderator, opened the meeting with a summary of the purpose of the CNC and the intent of these forums, which are open to the general public, not just specific ward residents. They do not require that attendees submit questions in advance. These are unique conversations between city authorities and the residents, unlike the City Council and other committees.

City officials in attendance were Mayor Deaglan McEachern, City Manager Karen Conard, Department of Public Works Director Peter Rice, Fire Chief Bill McQuillan, Deputy Police Chief Mike Maloney, School Board Chair Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, City Council member John Tabor, and NH State Representative Jackie Calli-Pitts. CNC committee members included Larry Cataldo - chair, Elaine Apatang – vice chair, Peter Somssich, and Kathleen Boduch.

**Mayor McEachern** opened the remarks by reminding the attendees that he had spent his youth at the New Franklin School, and he thanked everyone who attended and mentioned that a goal of the current council is to improve the communication between the City Council and residents. He encouraged those in attendance to continue to attend these and City Council meetings and to bring their friends. John Tabor echoed those thoughts.

**Fire Chief McQuillan** addressed the group, highlighting the work of the department: the number of calls, personnel on duty, the increase of work because of changes in the city.

**Assistant Police Chief Maloney** complimented the fire department as being great partners in keeping the residents safe. He credited them as being the best fire department he has ever worked with in his 24 years of service. They often work hand-in-hand, especially with EMT calls and emergencies. The police department now has 68 officers and hope to hire two more at the turn of the year. The population is at about 23,000 but local employment and tourism raise that number to between 50-60,000 on any given day. Safety on the streets is a major concern, with the department making about 1 traffic stop an hour every day. Many of the stops are for residents speeding in their own neighborhoods. Catalytic converter thefts are on the rise as are bike thefts. He warned residents to lock their cars. There has been a spike in DWI and DUI

stops. They are noticing a rise in methamphetamine and fentanyl use. The department has started a program to train businesses and others how to behave in an active shooter situation.

**Nancy Clayburgh** who has been active in city government for many years, is now active on the School Board. She spoke to the changes in the city and the effect of COVID on the students and their families. Scores are down, as they are everywhere, but much is being done to improve that situation. She said that the new superintendent feels the students here are almost back to normal. She complimented the staff and programs at the Robert Lister school and the CTE (technology) program at the high school for helping many students stay in school. Nancy said that the school board had done a study about the number of children who had moved into the new housing in Portsmouth. They discovered that many of the new occupants are mostly either over 55 or empty nesters, so that there will not be a need to redistrict.

**Peter Rice** spoke about his department and the ways residents can contact him/them. Click n Fix is available online for any issues that need quick attention. You can also call the dispatcher at 603-427-1530 to make a direct contact. That person will connect you with the department that you would need for your situation. He also addressed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which is a 5-year on-going plan to address needs in the city. Anyone can initiate a repair or improvement. You can get the forms online on the city website. He warned that once something is submitted it doesn't mean that it will be done right away. It has to go through an approval process before being funded. It takes time, but things can and will get done. Peter also addressed issues that have been/are being/ or will be done in Ward 1: paving, bridge work, noise barriers (North side of 95 are funded and they are going after the south side); Russell Street and Market Street work is moving forward; Edmond Ave water/sewer line project; Hanover Street garage project; Fleet Street from State to Hanover new drain line under design; Market Square working to reinforce what is good and seeking to improve things that are not, including utilities that need to be upgraded.

The attendees then had various **questions and concerns for the panel:**

- Burkitt Street: embarrassing condition
- Spill on Route 1 Bypass is a danger/concern to the residents
- Speed and safety concerns on the bypass. An attendee suggested police presence at the underpass and a reduced speed.
- Drainage of waste water and toxins into North Mill Pond
- Lack of lighting at the underpass and the new intersection off Islington
- Speeding on Woodbury at the school entrance road in the early morning when children are being dropped off, also making exiting of the school property difficult for drivers. That intersection is dangerous with cars speeding onto and off of the exits from the bypass.
- Cutts Street intersection where a bump out has been removed is dangerous. Shrubbery needs to be trimmed at the intersection. Sight line is diminished.

- Lack of safety on the traffic circle. Note: both the bypass and the traffic circle are within the jurisdiction of the State and the State Police, not Portsmouth city. DOT has denied the installation of any lights or enhanced arrows on the pavement.
- Speeding concerns Note: the mayor suggested that those concerns should be brought to the Parking Traffic and Safety Committee so that speed zones, calming tables, speed bumps, etc. can be considered. That's a good place to start the conversation.
- Bartlett Street construction projects should be better advertised so that residents can make appropriate arrangements for travel.
- Bartlett Street speed calming. Peter Rice said that the community needs to get together and reach consensus about what they feel would be the best solution and then meet with Peter and Parking/ Traffic/Safety committee. Bollards or no bollards. Speed tables, whatever. What would they prefer for their situation.
- The area under the I-95 bridge: what's happening there? It is still under consideration. Drainage needs to be enhanced before they can move forward.
- Maplewood bridge needs lights.
- Truck traffic on Bartlett is still problematic. Residents would like to see Bartlett Street returned to a neighborhood street, not used as a pass through. The complaint was that it is not local traffic.
- Car Meet-Ups, the events when many cars gather at one place and make noise and speed. The police are aware of the situation and can summons/arrest on in the event of excessive noise or lawlessness. These events are seemingly frightening, with the groups being so large, but they have not been lawless.
- Expressed concern over possible over-parking once the new development is finished in the Sheraton Hotel parking lot development.
- Several attendees expressed the thinking that Ward 1 is the "Other side of town," that pavement and sidewalks are not as well cared for as they are in other parts of the city. The bypass area doesn't look nice any more. It needs a "tidying up." The remnants of the concrete removed for the railroad crossing repair have not been removed. Peter Rice said he would look into that.
- Pot hole problem near/at Hanscom's on the bypass. Difficult problem because it is in the jurisdiction of the state, not the city.
- The WALK light needs to be adjusted on Maplewood. Peter Rice said that it has been tested and found to be working well.
- What ever happened to FREE PARKING on Sunday in the lot!
- Need for a sidewalk up by the church on Woodbury. Children are riding their bikes in the area and it is not safe. The hill at the top of that street is also a line-of-sight hazard for those turning into RiteAid.

The Committee gives special thanks to the panel of city officials for coming out and being so open. Thank you to Peter Rice for your management of the Hanover Garage project because it has been quiet and clean so far. Thanks to the police department for their survey.

Note: Following the meeting, Councilor Tabor provided a response regarding free resident parking on Sunday in the Hanover lot. Free Sunday parking is moved to Foundry Place Garage while Hanover is renovated. Must show resident ID to receive free parking. Usual rates - \$1.00 per hour; Max Rate \$20; Lost Ticket: \$20.

Submitted by  
Kathleen Boduch  
CNC Secretary