



**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire Mayoral Blue-Ribbon Committee  
Meeting Minutes, December 14, 2022 at the Macleod Room, Portsmouth Public Library**

**Special Meeting on National Night Out Changes  
Agenda – 5:45 pm**

Attendees: Committee members - Larry Cataldo – Chair, Lori Soloway, and Peter Somssich and Elaine Apatang. Also attending were: Sgt. Brian Houde, PPD, Kathy Bergeron, former CNC chair and Fred Butts, a Ward 3 resident.

The purpose of this meeting was to explore different central locations for 1<sup>st</sup> responders to gather for National Night Out planned for August 2023. Sgt. Houde opened the meeting by rolling out a city map and discussing three prime sites. He also marked other locations. Essentially, he suggested for us to consider three elementary school locations. The group discussion focused on other central locations. For example, besides the elementary schools, we discussed Portsmouth Middle School, Portsmouth High School, St. Catherine's on Woodbury Avenue and Fire Station 2 on Lafayette/Ocean roads. Sgt. Houde will gather the information and report back on the best locations.

Our major concerns are two-fold: Will the centralization of NNO be a success among the residents? Will the eliminations of 1<sup>st</sup> responder visits to neighborhood block parties be a detriment to keeping neighborhood associations together?

Kathy Bergeron suggested that we keep the new arrangement for two years and see if it is working well. Other suggestions included: entertainment at each NNO location, sharing some locations for neighborhood block parties and providing visits from police and fire units at block parties not on the date of the NNO event. The group felt that there were plenty of opportunities to make the NNO event and individual block parties successful without unhinging what has become a long-standing tradition in Portsmouth, that is, neighborhood children and adults get together once a year, enjoy food, conversation and welcome city employees and equipment.

When the list of locations and other details become available, Larry Cataldo will conduct a survey among neighborhood representatives and block party volunteers.

### **Committee Meeting Agenda – 6:30 pm**

Committee Attendees: Larry Cataldo, Lori Soloway, Peter Somssich, Elaine Apatang and William Gatchell. In addition, Fred Butts, a resident from the 3rd Ward, also attended. Kathleen Boduch was excused.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by Chair Larry Cataldo.

#### **Change in Bylaws:**

Since there were no comments from residents, Peter Somssich made a motion to discuss the proposed changes to the bylaws allowing the option of appointing co-chair positions if no member wished to assume the role of chairperson. If co-chairs were elected, they would divide the duties of the chair person. There would be no need for a vice chair position. After discussion on the necessity of the change, the **committee voted unanimously to adopt the motion.**

#### **Newly reformed neighborhood association:**

Elaine Apatang gave a report on how Maple Haven reformed its neighborhood association. She was instrumental in working with neighborhood activists to revive the association after a number of years of inactivity. The association wants to seek sidewalk and other improvements in Maple Haven. According to Elaine, the association is now up and running. Next, on the horizon is a group from Buckminster Road who also want to reform. Larry Cataldo reported that the Frank Jones Farm association seems to have renewed its organization with a number of volunteers willing to support several CIPs to improve pedestrian safety along Woodbury Avenue. In addition, Peter Somssich is planning to work with State Representative Joan Hamblet, Ward 3, to find volunteers to revive Pannaway Manor.

#### **Spinnaker Point Gym Improvement**

Peter Somssich reported on his attempt to improve the ventilation system for the mens locker room and indoor track. He and Larry Cataldo sponsored two CIPs to fix the situation. The City told him to take the matter up with the Recreation Department. The committee had several suggestions including using the Spinnaker Point association management to help us voice our concerns with the Recreation Department.

## **Portsmouth Lights Contest update**

Elaine Apatang, Vice chair and Portsmouth Holiday Lights contest project manager reported that 42 residents registered for the contest. In addition, she arranged to have children from seven families to judge the Kid's choice displays. There are also ample volunteers among the committee to judge the other two categories. She said it was the Mayor's desire to announce the winners on WSCA's Seacoast Currents when the contest is over. So far, the project is moving along very well.

## **Upcoming Election**

Larry Cataldo announced that he is stepping down as chair but will remain on the committee. The election will be held at the January 26<sup>th</sup> committee meeting. He cited his desire to have younger members move the committee's goals forward.

## **Next Meeting**

The next committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at Conference Room A, City Hall beginning at 6:30 pm. Portsmouth 400 accepted an invitation to give the committee an update on how it can help with the many events in 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Larry Cataldo, Chair