



CITYWIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. by Co-Chair Peter Somssich.
Committee members present: Elaine Apatang - Co-Chair, Kathleen Boduch – Secretary - Larry Cataldo (online), Lori Soloway, Peter Somssich, Councilor John Tabor. Excused: William Gatchell.

NEW BUSINESS

THE LEGACY PROJECT—MARY THOMAS, TALIA SPERDUTO, MARGARET HODGES

The Legacy Project Committee presented details about the new historical house plaque and legacy project. The group is spearheading an effort for as many residents as possible to investigate the heritage of their homes and, once determined and vetted, have a plaque attached to their houses. Visitors and residents will then be aware of the history that surrounds them. Owners of older homes as well as newer ones are eligible for the process. The committee noted that in time, all of our houses will be historic in some way. Plaques will cost either \$250 or \$275. The Service Credit Union is backing a discount of \$50 for the first 60 plaques whose applicants have done the research and been vetted.

Information about your house can be found at various local places: The Athenaeum, the public library, the county Registrar of Deeds website. If you cannot find all of your information, you can use any/all of these sources for help. The committee stressed that the project should be fun for the searchers. There is no telling what can be found in decades of documents.

Any research completed during this, Portsmouth's 400th anniversary, year will be eligible to have "History Lights Our Way" printed on their placards. An image of the frigate Raleigh, which appears on city and state seals, will top the plaques, which are made of cedar that is painted and varnished. Additional information and application forms will be available soon on the Portsmouth NH 400th website. For questions email plaquesports@gmail.com.

NEIGHBORHOOD WALKS and TIME CAPSULES—JIM SPLAINE

Former City Council member Jim Splaine made a presentation encouraging the Citywide Neighborhood Committee to undertake neighborhood walks. He suggested that in addition to the Neighborhood Forums that we hold each year, we go to different neighborhoods, knock on doors to find out what the residents of those areas are concerned/thinking about and have a walkabout in each area to see what is happening there.

Additionally, he suggested that we include the neighborhoods in a process of creating Time Capsules in the different areas. Residents could create committees, decide what might be important to their neighborhood, select a burial site and a container. The timing for the opening of that artifact might be 5—10—20—25 years. Residents could write letters to the residents of the future telling them about what is happening now in the area. Those capsules might include menus from restaurants, news

clippings, project summaries, photos, etc. The CNC committee will take up these ideas at a future meeting.

PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY POWER—JOHN TABOR

City Councilor and CNC member John Tabor presented a slide show in summary of the new Community Power plan that is being introduced for use by Portsmouth residents. It is a process in which we continue to use the existing infrastructure of our electric system as supplied by Eversource, but the city is able to reduce electric rates by joining thirty-three other NH communities and aggregating demand, so the coalition becomes a powerful purchaser of electricity. The NH communities are working cooperatively to make this possible for the public's benefit, providing better buying power. No taxes will be used to cover the plan. Residents may opt out of the program but need to do nothing to be included. The service will be available for both homes and businesses. More information may be found at the website www.communitypowernh.gov. John Tabor said this is a perfect example that the "government can do things for you." Community Power launches on Sunday, May 28.

CULTURAL PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE —SUZANNE DANFORTH

Suzanne is head of communications in a new Blue Ribbon Cultural Plan Subcommittee to assess and heighten the interest in the arts throughout neighborhoods in the city. The revenue the city presently gleans from art activities is approximately \$43 million. The subcommittee will look at what is available in the city and help decide what is next. Discussion will continue.

OLD BUSINESS

SPINNAKER POINT RECREATION CENTER—PETER SOMSSICH

The recreation center at Spinnaker Point is not owned by the city but it is used extensively by residents and the city now leases the property, paying for improvements that the homeowners association is not able to afford. Several problems were identified during the COVID outbreak, and the city was able to complete most of the maintenance work on those projects. However, Peter and Larry Cataldo have approached the city to see if it can purchase the facility to keep it in good running condition for all the amenities it affords, especially to seniors. The City Council has suggested that they apply to the Recreation Board to see if they can get help there. The discussion will continue.

THE GRAND PARADE FOR THE PORTSMOUTH NH 400TH ANNIVERSARY—ELAINE APATANG

Discussion was had regarding who would march and whether the committee would ask representatives from different neighborhoods to join in, holding flags representing their neighborhood, club, group, and so on. The conversation led to the idea that the committee purchase a 10' x 3' CNC banner that could be hung at various events. Elaine will create a design and she and Peter will approach a local design company for an estimate. They will submit both to the committee as soon they are available.

** Residents, you may join us in the march on Saturday, June 3 at 11am. Reach out to us at cncportsmouth@gmail.com **

WARD 5 FORUM

Fall 2023.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 13 at City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Boduch, Secretary