



Housing & Community Development Committee Minutes of September 24, 2014 Meeting

A meeting of the Portland City Council's Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC) was held on Wednesday, September 24, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 209 on the second floor of Portland City Hall. Present from the HCDC was its Chair Councilor Kevin Donoghue, and members Councilors Jon Hinck, and Nicholas Mavodones. Committee member Councilor John Coyne could not be present. City staff present included Housing & Community Development Division Director Mary Davis, HCD Program Manager Amy Grommes-Pulaski, Acting City Manager Sheila Hill-Christian (joining the meeting as noted in the minutes), Planning and Urban Development Director Jeff Levine, Waterfront Coordinator William Needelman, and Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette.

Item 1: Review and accept Minutes from previous meeting held on August 27, 2014.

On motion made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes as published.

Item 2: Review and recommendation to City Council – Improvements to CDBG Process

Ms. Pulaski gave an overview of the four recommendations for improvements, which included: (1) staff recommendation for prioritizing public infrastructure/public improvement projects for each Council District, with one priority per year for each District. There were 12 applications last year, with 4 approved; therefore, this recommendation; (2) staff supported the Allocation Committee recommendation to eliminate 3 bonus points for “basic needs” and also for “childcare programs/projects”. Last year nine of fourteen social service programs received

bonus points, seven were funded. Only one application that did not receive bonus points was funded. This is being recommended so that all applications can stand on their own. (3) Staff recommendation to preserve set-aside for community policing in the amount of \$150,000, and \$400,000 for the Employment Development Program (\$300,000 in development funds and \$100,000 in social service funds). (4) Staff recommendation to eliminate the ability for individual business to apply for funding through CDBG application process for economic development projects, since the CDBG program funds the Business Assistance Grant Program for Job Creation through the City of Portland Economic Development Department (EDD), the Portland Microenterprise Assistance Program through CEI, and the new Portland Jobs Alliance. Businesses looking for assistance can utilize one of these resources.

Councilor Mavodones requested clarification on the last recommendation.

Ms. Davis said that since there are three organizations listed above that receive CDBG funding in order to provide businesses with loans and technical assistance, it would be a duplication of effort for a business to apply directly to her staff for CDBG funds. In addition, her staff does not provide technical assistance for businesses.

Ms. Pulaski added that when a business applies for assistance from CDBG, the CDBG application process is slow with applications received by November and, if successful, applicants would see funding the following July. With this recommendation, HCD staff would refer any future business assistance requests to one of the appropriate three agencies mentioned above. To date, the EDD through the BAP program has funded \$125,000 in grant requests to approximately 7 businesses.

Councilor Mavodones said that this works, but he would not want to reduce funding for economic development through CDBG, and Ms. Pulaski assured him that funding would not be reduced because of this recommendation.

Councilor Hinck asked about competitive advantages to businesses who receive CDBG funding, and Mr. Levine said that if a business, for instance, applies to the EDD and receives a grant, then it could possibly put that business in a better competitive advantage to hire additional employees, as it is a grant/match program for job creation.

Chair Donoghue asked if there was any public comment; there being none, the public comment session was closed.

Chair Donoghue said that he was fine with the set asides as recommended. He asked about any set aside for the Home Team, and Ms. Pulaski said that is not currently one of the recommendations. Also, CDBG did not fund the Home Team last year.

Councilor Mavodones said that he was okay with no set aside for the Home Team as there may be other entities in the community to provide resources. During budget time, however, he would entertain requests for the Home Team.

Chair Donoghue said that with regard to bonus points, he was okay with no bonus points for basic needs, but he would recommend keeping in bonus points for child care. He went on to indicate that child care offers a great service to low income households to get in the workforce and for their economic health.

Councilor Mavodones said that he is supportive of the recommendation for no bonus points to level the playing field. He then made a motion to forward the recommendations as presented today by staff to the City Council for approval. Chair Donoghue seconded the motion.

Chair Donoghue then made a motion to amend the main motion to allow bonus points for child care; Councilor Mavodones seconded the motion for discussion.

Councilor Hinck said that with the Chair's explanation of the need for this, he would support this amendment.

Chair Donoghue then asked for a vote on the amendment to the main motion and it passed 2-1 (Mavodones). He then asked for a vote on the main motion, and it passed unanimously.

Item #3: Review and possible recommendation to Proceed – RFP for the sale and development of City-owned property at 65 Munjoy Street.

Mr. Levine said when the Adams School closed in 2006, the City, after due diligence, sent out an RFP for its sale. Avesta was the only proposer, but, due to market conditions and financing issues, Avesta asked for the City to divide the property into two parcels, requesting an option to develop the second at a later date, which the City did not grant. The parcel that remains undeveloped includes the parking lot – the subject of the RFP, the playground, and knoll. A consultant was hired, Bluestone Planning Group, to conduct a financial feasibility for affordable housing options on the parking lot. They offered options, with the one preferred being two triple decker's, yielding 8 units. Mr. Levine then described the design, noting that the goal is to have these affordable at 100% to 120% of area median income levels or below, and the deed would also contain this condition for 90 years. To develop these for affordable housing, the City subsidy would be offering the land at no cost. The playground and knoll would not be part of the property in the RFP.

Mr. Levine added that the property is in an R6 zone, which is currently under discussion for amending, particularly with regard to parking and ratios of cars to dwelling units.

Councilor Mavodones asked about noticing for this meeting, and Mr. Levine said that notices were mailed out, and he also placed notices on doorknobs in the neighborhood.

Councilor Mavodones asked if there had been a neighborhood meeting regarding this, and Mr. Levine indicated that there had not. Once the RFP is issued and proposals in, a neighborhood meeting could be arranged to review the proposals and provide feedback.

Ms. Davis added that since the HCDC packet was sent out, she received emails for both this and the 157 Bracket Street property; these emails are on the Committee members' desks (and attached hereto).

Chair Donoghue asked about tandem parking in driveways at 3 or 4 deep, and Mr. Levine indicated that 4 may be a bit much but is open to creative suggestions.

Chair Donoghue then asked if there was any public comment for the item.

Richard Weare, who owns property in the area, said that he created the petition that is in the meeting backup material and everyone he requested to sign the petition against the sale of the property did so. He suggested that the City have a neighborhood meeting first before considering an RFP for the property. Regarding tandem parking in driveways, 4 cars would be too much. Parking in this area is already a problem, and, with the addition of the St. Lawrence Community Center and 200 seats, it will become even more difficult. This parking lot is used for off street parking and snow bans, and perhaps for future use by St. Lawrence and should kept for parking.

(Acting City Manager Sheila Hill-Christian joined the meeting at this time.)

Ron Moss at 31 Pine Street said that housing is more important for Portland than parking.

Sean Turley of 62 Vesper Street agreed that housing is good for the area; there is public transportation for use.

Jake Jones, 56 Moody Street, shared the parking issue concerns for the neighborhood, particularly with the St. Lawrence Community Center addition, which will only exacerbate the parking issues. Even one car per unit would add to the current parking crunch, and snow ban parking is already difficult.

Ian Jacobs said that housing does not have to provide parking.

Christine McHale, of Walker Street, spoke in support of keeping this parking lot as it is, particularly for people her age – 60 and over – to have this close by; it is also needed during snow bans. This parking area is essential for the neighborhood.

Marianna Bonetti, of Wilson Street, said she and her tenants work out of town so vehicles are needed. She supports keeping the parking lot as it is.

Chair Donoghue asked if there was any further public comment, there being none, the public comment session was closed.

Councilor Mavodones suggested that the City engage with the neighborhood first in a meeting before possibly issuing an RFP. He agrees that Portland needs housing, but this interaction with the neighborhood should take place first.

Councilor Hinck said that the City will run into this issue again and again. Higher density of housing is good and needed, but he also sees the value of the parking as noted today.

Chair Donoghue, 75 Beckett Street on Munjoy Hill, said that he is always able to find a parking spot. He also supported the creation of parking spaces on the Eastern Prom, on which there are now approximately 100 new spaces. Affordable housing is desperately needed to keep young people in Portland, where many homes on Munjoy Hill are in the \$500,000 to \$1 Million range. Chair Donoghue said that he was pleased with the outreach to neighbors and renters as can be evidenced by those present today and does not object to a neighborhood meeting, but he

feels that this housing RFP should be pursued. Chair Donoghue then asked about development in lieu of parking, and Mr. Levine said that to further study this would take some time and additional funding for the consultant. He will check into this, while also noting that the R6 zoning was still under discussions for revisions.

Councilor Mavodones then suggested, and the Committee concurred, to postpone this item and have a meeting with the neighborhood. Councilor Hinck said that he hopes to be able to participate in the meeting and was looking to the neighborhood to help City leaders sort out housing and parking uses.

Item #4: Review and possible recommendation to proceed – RFP for the sale and development of City-owned property at 157 Brackett Street with the condition that adequate replacement parking be provided in any development proposal.

Mr. Levine opened this up saying that since the subject lot is actively used by Reiche School and residents, it was not considered back when staff was looking at various City lots for possible housing development. However, staff received contact for its potential development, and, therefore, this has been brought to the HCDC for guidance and possible recommendation to move forward with an RFP with the condition to replace existing parking on site or nearby. The RFP needs more clarification on the number of spaces needed, location, and safety/security requirements. Most likely, the subject lot would be added to abutting property for housing development.

Councilor Mavodones noted that the selection criteria does not have language regarding parking, which is a key issue. Reiche School's parking needs are a priority for him, and he requested staff meet with the School to determine what those needs are, as well as needs for the

residents. Councilor Mavodones said that he would like to have a stronger comfort level that there are reasonable alternatives for parking before issuing an RFP.

Chair Donoghue then opened the meeting for public comment.

Greg Frangoulis, 139 Brackett Street, said that there are approximately 30 spaces in the lot now, and, during snow bans, up to 60 cars park in tandem there, so it is a highly used parking lot for the area. Also, on Wednesday nights, there is no parking in the streets, so that is another use for the lot. In addition, 39 units are now being added at Pine and Brackett Streets. This is already a highly dense area, and the parking lot should remain.

Ron Moss(?) noted that there are two houses falling apart nearby that could be developed, and noted that any development could have parking on the ground floor and housing units above.

Resident at 119 Brackett Street – This resident also noted the ban on onstreet parking Wednesday nights, and this parking lot is the only one in the area for use. It is extremely well used, 100% daily.

Jeanne Swanton, Thomas Street, noted safety issues for Reiche School in the area, particularly crossing streets and bus drop off. The CIP had funds for Reiche School which were ultimately taken away. Many children walk to this School, and more development will make it less safe. She said that allowing this sale without addressing safety issues first is not acceptable.

Todd Alexander, 3 Carroll Street, said that he has three daughters who go to Reiche School and appreciates the concerns expressed – traffic, housing, blight problems, tax problems, and safety. The RFP being contemplated today is an opportunity for a developer to provide the City with its best idea on how lot could be used to fix some of these issues. Once developed, it will also bring in an estimated \$40,000 in additional tax dollars to the City. If the City doesn't like the proposals received, they can be thrown out. He also noted the development of the City

lot and Danforth and High street, where it was used by USM and for snow ban parking. Community Housing of Maine developed it with 30 units and 13 parking spaces. Creative development can help with neighborhood issues.

Ian Jacob of State Street said that Reiche School is a separate issue. He then referred to the draft RFP highlighting deed restrictions of 90 years for the minimum term of affordability. He suggested that a parking restriction of, for example, 20 years also be included, and then revisited after 20 years.

Judy Watson of 90 Pine Street also highlighted pedestrian and traffic safety issues that the City should address for the area and for Reiche School. Several crosswalks are needed, particularly on Brackett Street, as well as a traffic study should be conducted by the City.

Seth Parker, 80 Spruce Street, said that he lives in the area with two small children and appreciates the issues raised here today. He supports housing density, and this is an opportunity to address issues. Mr. Parker also noted that additional crosswalks and curb cuts in the area could help with pedestrian safety issues.

Kathryn Gilbert, 92 Winter Street, said that the subject lot is in back of her house, and it is never empty. A crosswalk is needed for that lot to the school. She said that that portion of Brackett Street should be a pedestrian way due to the school, residences, and businesses. Safety is definitely a concern with all the pedestrian activity.

Chad Knight, owner of “Fresh Approach”, echoed the safety concerns, noting that he could write a book on all the safety issues, particularly for children crossing the street to come to his store. If the parking lot is not available, he said it would be even worse; there is no room for development, and the School Department and safety should come first.

Carl Akery said that development can work in partnership to do something good, and appreciated the neighbors speaking to these safety issues.

Hazel Holmes, 67 Brackett Street, said that this is an active lot with various users. Replacement parking important, and the RFP lacks details needed to insure the users that ample replacement parking would be provided. She felt the City needed to hear more from the neighborhood before putting this out to RFP.

Chair Donoghue, noting no further public comment, closed the public comment session.

Councilor Mavodones agreed that there is opportunity for development to enhance an area's issues. Reiche School is a large issue for him, and he would need more clarification, as he noted earlier, to help frame key points to be included in an RFP regarding parking for both Reiche and the neighborhood, as well as clarifying language in the RFP to add parking to the selection criteria process and scoring.

Councilor Hinck agreed, adding that these safety issues should be dealt with with or without this development. Regarding an RFP for the parking lot, once there is a good understanding of parking needs, he was optimistic that the RFP could go forward.

Councilor Donoghue said that he would also like to have more details on the current parking available/needed so that a minimum amount of replacement parking spaces in an RFP can be defensible. Safety issues need to be dealt with separately from the RFP, perhaps in tandem with the budget process and appropriate Council committee.

Mr. Levine said that the parking can be tightened up in the RFP and could bring it to one of the Committee's October meetings.

Councilor Mavodones said that a meeting with the neighborhood should come first.

Councilor Hinck agreed, particularly to be sure people are listening about these safety issues.

Ms. Hill-Christian also agreed, saying that the RFP is one issue, and safety concerns are another and should be dealt with separately from the RFP by the City through various funding methods.

Councilor Mavodones concurred, noting that this proposed RFP opened the doors to both the City and public to hear about these concerns. Regarding the RFP, before he is comfortable with its issuance, he needs to get his arms around the parking needs for all involved.

Chair Donoghue said that the safety issues should move quicker than the development issues.

Ms. Hill-Christian said that City staff, including Public Safety, Traffic, and others, together with the appropriate Council Committee, can take up these safety concerns.

Chair Donoghue, noting consensus of a neighborhood meeting, as well as parking in the RFP getting tightened up, thanked everyone for their input and would look forward to the RFP coming back to this Committee.

Item #5: Review and comment on communication item – FY13/14 HUD Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) to be submitted to HUD by September 30, 2014.

Ms. Davis, noting the time, summarized this communication as a public notification of the CAPER report, which report highlights accomplishments for the CDBG, HOME, and ESG Programs. This will be submitted to HUD by September 30, 2014.

The Committee thanked Ms. Davis for the report.

Item #6: Review and comment on communication item: Update on Portland 2014/2015 Work Plan activities, including the 2014/2015 Portland Economic Scorecard.

Due to the hour, the Committee moved directly to the next item.

Item #7: Executive Session - Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A, to provide City staff direction, the Committee will go into executive session to discuss:

- a. **Provide guidance to staff related to a proposed Land Swap on Spring Street/Cotton Street and City property ownership.**
- b. **Provide guidance to staff related to a possible new tenant and lease terms for use of second floor office space at Portland Ocean Terminal.**

On motion made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to go into executive session at approximately 7:55 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A, to provide City staff direction on the item 7(a) and (b) above.

At approximately 8:20 p.m., the Committee came out of executive session and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Lori Paulette

Marianna Bonetti
P.O. Box 483
Portland, Maine

August 30, 2014

Mary Davis, Director
Housing and Neighborhood Services
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Subject: 65 Munjoy Street Lot
Former Adams School Parking Lot

Dear Ms. Davis:

As owner of the house at the corner of Munjoy and Wilson Streets, I want to voice my opposition to the proposal to sell subject property and its redevelopment. I was not able to attend the public hearing on August 27, 2014 as I did not receive sufficient advanced notice of the meeting.

This lot has been used for many years by residences of the area during snow storms when cars must be removed from the street. This is the only off street parking in the immediate area of the top of Munjoy Hill and is far closer than off street parking on the roadway leading to the boat ramp at the Eastern Prom.

I have talked to a number of residences on Munjoy Hill on the eastern side of Congress Street and they agree that this lot should be retained by the City of resident parking.

I request that this letter be passed on to the City Council's Housing and Community Development Committee to notify them of the opposition to this proposed sale.

Attached is a petition of people (property owners and tenants) in the vicinity that signed their opposition to subject property sale. It only took one hour of time to gain this many people to sign their opposition, an indication of the amount of opposition by the neighborhood to the sale of the property.

Sincerely



Marianna Bonetti

Cc: Michael Brennan, Mayor
Kevin Donoghue, Councilor District 1
Jon Hinck, Councilor at Large
Nichols Mavodones Jr., Councilor at Large

August 30, 2014

The City Council's Housing and Community Development Committee is investigating the potential sale and redevelopment of the former Adams School Parking Lot at 65 Munjoy Street. Redevelopment could include new rental apartments or condos. I am in opposition of this proposal and would like the City to continue its use as neighborhood parking, which is very important during winter snow emergencies when all cars must be removed from the City streets.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Katharine Black	80 Wilson ^{#4} St., Portland 04101
Brian Maguire	63 Wilson St A, Portland ME, 04101
Amanda Marino	65 Wilson Street, Portland, ME 04101
Robin Lee	65 Wilson Street, Portland, ME 04101
Heather Bruce	65 Wilson St, Portland ME
Sarah Auld	43 Munjoy St. Portland, ME 04101
Bruce Mason	62 Munjoy St Portland ME
Kelsey Murray	66 Munjoy Street #2
JOE WINNER	76 MUNJOY ST. #1
Kelly Beattie	80 Wilson St. #1
Andrew Andrew Foster	80 Wilson St #1
JOE FORESTELL	60 WILSON ST 1R
Kirsten McGinn	55 Atlantic St #6
Sarah Davis	45 Quebec Street #2
Rebecca Ober	55 Atlantic St. #4
Oral Leach	60 Munjoy St
Anna Leach	60 Wilson St

August 30, 2014

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Sybil McElrath	42 R Munjoy St. Portland, ME 04101
Margaret Daniels	72 Munjoy Portland
RAHEL STREET	72 MUNJOY ST. #2 PORTLAND
Brian Fisk	66 Munjoy St. Apt. 3 Portland
Meriamma Bonetti	74 Wilson St (corner)
Josh Baston	42 Munjoy St. Portland
Cadence Atkinson	42 Munjoy St. Portland
Caleb O'Connell	49 Manning St. Portland
Jim Dean	74 Wilson St. #1 Portland 04101
Monique Grier	80 Wilson St Apt 6 Portland
CHLOE MARTIN	55 ATLANTIC ST #4 04101
Mahlia Carey	54 Moody St 04101
Dake Jones	56-58 Moody St 04101
JUSTIN MECHAM	55 MOODY ST 04101
Paul Morrissey	82 Munjoy St.
Jennifer Wikstrom	82 Munjoy St.
Alex Wheelwright	76 Wilson St
Jaqueline Rogers	76 Wilson St. Portland 04101

Mary Davis - 157 Brackett

From: Andrew Calise <andrewcalise@gmail.com>
To: <mpd@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 9/22/2014 2:38 PM
Subject: 157 Brackett

Mary--

As a resident of Brackett Street, I don't see the harm in soliciting NON-BINDING proposals for development of this lot.

While I do believe the concerns regarding eliminating parking in the neighborhood are valid, this is solved by including a "parking preservation provision" within the RFP, which seems to already be in place in the draft RFP.

It may be within the city's long term interest to take advantage of the favorable real estate development climate today to generate a few good ideas for the site. I think it would be interesting to hear what some of the possibilities might be.

Thank you

Andrew Calise, 246 Brackett

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Andrew Calise
(207) 939 8974
andrewcalise@gmail.com

September 21, 2014

Members
Housing & Community Development Committee
City of Portland, Me

Dear Members of the Committee,

I would like to comment on the proposed Request For Proposals process as it seeks ideas for the redevelopment of a municipal parcel at 157 Brackett St. As a professional in the field of economic and community development, but much more importantly as a resident of the neighborhood in which this proposal is aimed, I would like to provide some thoughts on the RFP process and its intentions.

As you are aware, a city's vitality is measured not only through the economic development that occurs, particularly those that create new jobs to which residents can apply. This kind of "internal relationship," as it were, helps ensure economic growth. It provides opportunities for employees to aspire to better paying, more secure employment opportunities, and helps with the flow of those entering the workforce replacing those exiting due to retirement, etc.

The same is true for a community's, and neighborhood's continued vitality, by ensuring that new housing development opportunities provide opportunities for a variety of mixed economies to co-exist. We are all aware of the problems caused by changes in a neighborhood's housing demographic that only head in one direction economically, either up or down. Having lived in the city's West End the last few years, I have witnessed (and been part of) the economic upheaval out from under which we are beginning to emerge. Mixed economic housing opportunities in every neighborhood help those aspiring to raise their fortunes by providing good, nearby examples of what can be accomplished.

My fear, as I have seen recently with the continued sale of rental property for condominium conversion, is the loss of access to affordable housing that reflects a neighborhood's current status, and well as its future possible status. Investment in only the upper "highest and best sale" of housing stock can be as deleterious to a neighborhood as abject disinvestment. The West End has both, but fortunately continues to trend towards "general" affordability.

Several years ago, I performed a historic preservation survey of the Brackett St. neighborhood, and was surprised to find that the bulk of the residents and initial inhabitants were the grocers and tradespeople and small business owners whose economic fortunes were made in the Congress St. and (now) Old Port businesses of the period between 1880 - 1910. One only have to walk down the various blocks of this neighborhood to see the progression of architectural styles from Greek Revival to Gothic Revival to Italianate Revival. As the businesses prospered, so too did the neighborhood in which those business owner lived.

All of the above to voice my support for the process this RFP will create. The City has strong design criteria in place, and when creative developers understand how the neighborhood was created, and is in place today, they can achieve the design goals intended through this process. This process is particularly important when it comes to consideration of potential impacts upon the neighborhood through traffic, parking, and the overall fit of the project as part of the neighborhood.

So too, when the economics of the neighborhood are understood, and requirements for mixed economic housing opportunities continue to be made more available, so too will the neighborhood be allowed and encouraged to grow in a way that benefits as many members of the community as possible. We are all aware of the current challenge that affordability presents in a neighborhood that could easily go more upscale and thus perhaps less affordable for those of us already here. If the lobsterman's plight of living miles from the ocean is a function of rising property tax values based on the perception of "highest and best use," so too can the tradespeople's circumstance be made to resemble the fisherman's.

As a resident of the West End, and particularly of the Brackett St. neighborhood, I strongly support putting this public parcel to RFP so that housing development that represents all of what this neighborhood is and can be, can be made to happen.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these thoughts.

Erik Carson

10 Dow St.
Apt. #2
Portland, ME 04102

Mary Davis - Support for RFP to sell and develop city-owned lot 157 Brackett St

From: John Anton <antonatlarge@gmail.com>
To: Mary Davis <mpd@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 9/22/2014 9:29 PM
Subject: Support for RFP to sell and develop city-owned lot 157 Brackett St
CC: Kevin Donoghue <kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov>, "Nicholas M. Mavodones" <...>

Dear Ms. Davis and Councilors of the Housing and Community Development Committee:

I am writing as a parent of both a current and former Reiche student as well as a neighborhood resident. I support the city issuing a RFP to sell and develop the parking lot at 157 Brackett.

I think the RFP creates an excellent opportunity to a) relocate the current parking, b) add needed housing units to neighborhood and c) reconfigure traffic flow around the entrance at Reiche.

The parking concern raised by others is real. I believe that the RFP addresses it by requiring replacement parking.

I do not believe redevelopment of the 157 Brackett parking lot will exacerbate traffic issues on the street. In my opinion, there are two traffic issues - a) congestion at pick up and dropoff and b) speed on that block of Brackett throughout the day. I believe that a thoughtful design for the redevelopment of 157 Brackett, when coupled with the already contemplated but not yet implemented redesign of the dropoff area at Reiche, could actually improve traffic flow during school rush hours.

Speeding is rampant on both Brackett and Clark in the vicinity of Reiche. The community has made the city aware of this issue for years and the response has been inadequate. Whether or not the Council proceeds with the RFP, the City must increase traffic calming measures on these two blocks.

Again I encourage you to proceed with the RFP. If you do not receive any responses that satisfy you, you don't have to proceed.

John Anton
77 Spruce Street

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John Anton
(207) 650-8979

From: brett plymale <brettplymale@hotmail.com>
To: "mpd@portlandmaine.gov" <mpd@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 9/24/2014 12:34 PM
Subject: 157 Brackett St development

Hi Mary,

As you may remember I am the owner of 165 Brackett and worked with the City of Portland to rehabilitate the property back in 2000-2001. Over the years I've seen the property on Joy Place fall completely into ruin and the owners seem uninterested in doing anything about it- which, I guess is their right as property owners.

I'm excited by the prospect of someone taking a new look at the property and trying to find a better way to utilize its potential.

I met with Todd Alexander to go over his initial thoughts and plans, and of course to understand how they could effect my property.

Keeping an open mind, it seems like an intriguing idea to swap the current residential area with the current parking area and perhaps creating a more aesthetic street scene.

That being said, the number of units seems a bit too ambitious.

Brett Plymale

Sent from my iPhone

From: Ian Houseal
To: Davis, Mary
Date: 9/23/2014 3:01 PM
Subject: Fwd: Traffic and Safety Concerns for Reiche Community School & Current RFP for 157 Brackett St Parking Lot
Attachments: scp 2013 06.11.pdf

>>> Jeanne Swanton <jmswanton@gmail.com> 9/22/2014 10:37 PM >>>
Members of the Housing & Community Development Committee,

The Reiche School and Community Center located at 166 Brackett St., has several recorded design, structural and safety issues that need to be addressed and corrected. Although cited in many reports over a number of years, starting with the New England's School Development Council's 2009 report, very little has been done to address the situation. Among the many issues identified, there are significant safety concerns for pedestrians due to traffic congestion, lack of crosswalks at the main entrance on Brackett St, and poorly designed bus drop-off and parent drop-off sites. While no renovation has been done, congestion is to get worse in the very near future due to the approval for additional housing; *West End Place*, a 45,000 sq ft apartment building, is currently being built on the corner of Pine and Brackett (previously home to a parking lot) that will house 2 retail businesses and 39 apartments. Now, the City is considering selling the lot at 157 Brackett to be purchased for development. Allowing for the sale of the 157 Brackett St parking lot for additional housing without correcting the existing safety concerns at Reiche Community School, which is directly across the street from 157 Brackett, is irresponsible.

For your records

- The 2009 New England School Development Council Report stated that at Reiche "...there is limited parking for this facility which draws many visitors throughout the day, in addition tot the large school staff"
[http://www2.portlandschools.org/sites/default/files/NESDEC%20Final%20Report%20\(2009\).pdf](http://www2.portlandschools.org/sites/default/files/NESDEC%20Final%20Report%20(2009).pdf)
- The 2012 CIP listed renovations for Reiche starting in 2015
- The 2013 CIP removed the renovation funds set for 2015 and planned for *Buildings for our Future*, a plan for construction on 5 of the elementary schools requiring a debt package to be approved by voters (proposal attached). Unfortunately, the City Council Joint Finance Committee rejected to hold the referendum in both November 2013 and June 2014. Please note, among the many renovations for Reiche, the reconstruction of the crosswalks and bus drop off were identified as key safety concerns.
http://www2.portlandschools.org/sites/default/files/Reiche_Public_Presentation.pdf
- The 2014 CIP recognizes the *Buildings for our Future* plan, however, the bond still has not been approved to be put on the ballot. It is not on the ballot for November 2014.
- In May, 2014, at Brackett and Pine Street, construction began to replace an existing parking lot and two small building structures with a 4 story apartment building housing 39 apartments, 2 retails stores and 34 parking spaces (
<http://bangordailynews.com/2014/05/06/business/portland-officials-tout-apartment-project-being-built->

without-tax-breaks-other-government-perks/.

Reiche Community School is a walking school in an urban environment. Our children and community are put in unsafe situations everyday just to get to the school's and community center's front doors. The serious safety issues have been identified and reported, a child has suffered serious injuries from being hit while walking in the crosswalk at Brackett St and Pine St (<http://www.theforecaster.net/content/p-girlrunover-012710>), but nothing has been done. Adding more traffic and congestion without fixing glaring safety issues is not acceptable. Before any additional development is proposed, let's fix the bus drop off area, provide a safe place for parents to drop off/pick up their children and, of course, designate and provide a safe passageway for pedestrians to cross Brackett Street to/from Reiche School and Community Center.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Swanton
Reiche Parent and West End Resident
69 Thomas Street
Portland, Maine 04102

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jeanne Swanton <jmswanton@gmail.com>
Date: September 19, 2014 at 3:33:35 AM EDT
To: mpd@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: *Concerns regarding RFP for the sale and development of the city-owned parking lot at 157 Brackett St.*

Ms. Davis,

I am a West End homeowner and parent of two Reiche students. I have great concern about the sale and development of 157 Brackett St. My main concern is the safety of our neighborhood school children with the increased traffic around a poorly designed building.

The location of the property, 157 Brackett, is adjacent to Fresh Approach market, and directly across the street from Reiche Community School and Community Center. Reiche Community School serves over 360 elementary students, ages 5 through 11. The main entrance of the school/community center is poorly designed such that the bus lane is directly in front of the school doors. Pedestrians are not to walk in the bus lane but are directed (via painted crosswalk which has since worn away) to walk west up Brackett to cross the street. This is not followed by most because the directed path is out of the way from the parking lot and the convenience store (that serves inexpensive ice cream and snacks making it a popular place among the school children). In 2013, Portland Schools recognized the problematic entrance and proposed changes to the School's front entrance and bus path, however, the bond for the changes was not put on the ballot per City Council Finance Committee decision.

Brackett Street is a very busy street, both with pedestrians and cars. In February of 2012, a Reiche parent studied traffic and pedestrian numbers on both sides of the Reiche Community School Building. The following data were collected between 8:15 and 9 am in the morning (45 minute span of time) :

CLARK STREET: 87 Cars - 54 Pedestrians crossing the street
BRACKETT STREET: 195 Cars - 82 Pedestrians crossing the street

With Brackett, there is ALOT going on in the morning and afternoon: there a lot of cars and pedestrians, business deliveries for Fresh Approach at drop off time, back-ups due to the tight bus turn around and many frustrated drivers making turns on one of the 13 driveways across the street from our school. But it is not only in the morning and afternoon, with Brackett St serving as the connector between Maine Med and Mercy, there is always foot and car traffic.

This said, the problem is even going to get WORSE with the new apartment building already under construction on the corner of Pine and Brackett. That building will have businesses and 39 apartments. More traffic!!

I understand that an interested party would like to purchase both the parking lot and the adjacent residential lot to make more available housing. Development of these properties would only increase the traffic and bottlenecks already experienced at Reiche. Most distressing, however, is that development across the street from our elementary school puts our children at risk. Bus transportation is not offered to students in grades 3-5 so a great number of pedestrians are children. Additionally, many families choose to walk instead of drive (parking is not easy to find). Reiche School design makes crossing the difficult and riskier than it should. Development is already in process at the corner surely to result in increasing traffic. Additional development directly across the street is unsound.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Swanton
69 Thomas Street
Portland, ME 04102
207-809-9879

My name is Todd Alexander. I am writing this letter in support of the city's proposal to issue a Request for Proposal to create housing on a city-owned parking lot at 157 Brackett Street. I offer my comments from two perspectives.

First, my wife, Catherine, and I are residents of 3 Carroll Street. We have three daughters enrolled at the Reiche Community School. We have lived in the West End for the past 15 years.

Second, I am an affordable housing developer and, in the event that the committee decides to issue an RFP, I will likely submit a proposal. I am currently collecting input from the neighborhood before finalizing my plans. Based on those meetings, I have developed three broad goals that I would like to achieve if I am successful in the RFP process. These goals are;

- Improve the parking and traffic situation for Reiche staff and students. Any proposal should maintain the parking currently available to Reiche. And, it should contain a management plan to ensure that the parking resource is well maintained and available to the people it is intended to serve. Furthermore, this project should contribute to a long-term solution to calm traffic on Brackett Street and improve the bus drop-off area at Reiche. The existing conditions are simply too dangerous for an elementary school setting.
- Create housing that serves a diverse mix of households of varying income levels. I would like to see a housing development that reflects the economic diversity that exists in the neighborhood today and, in my opinion, makes the West End such a great place to live. This means that the housing should include a healthy mix of market rate and affordable units.
- Build something that we can all be proud of. This building will be in a high-profile area of the neighborhood. In terms of its design, amenities and operations, it should raise the bar.

While all of these goals are important to me, they are irrelevant if the city does not take the first step of issuing a non-binding RFP to determine what options, if any, are worth pursuing. With that in mind, I'd like to offer the following comments;

- Most importantly, the RFP emphasizes the need for each applicant to identify replacement parking for Reiche. This is essential. I think the idea of re-purposing this lot for housing is dead on arrival if parking for Reiche cannot be maintained and improved.
- Second, I am very pleased that this RFP sets forth high architectural and design standards. A new structure here needs to be well designed, well built and mindful of its location in the heart of our neighborhood and the West End Historic District.
- Third, I commend this committee for adopting a policy to look at city-owned real estate to identify opportunities for infill housing. Portland has a HUGE housing problem on the peninsula. We are all familiar with the steep increase in home prices. The rental situation is worse. I recently surveyed 18 apartment complexes on the peninsula, half market rate and half affordable. These properties represent about 800 total housing units. The collective vacancy rate was below 1 percent.

Exacerbating Portland's housing problem is the ever-increasing price of land and blighted properties. These parcels traditionally have served as great opportunities for developers to build moderately-priced housing. Today, owners see the local building activity and are raising the price for even the most seemingly unattractive properties. The price of land has a direct impact on the price of the finished product. The end result is that expensive condos and high-end rentals are fast becoming the only type of housing on the peninsula that is financially feasible to build.

I think Portland's current housing trends are a particularly important issue for Reiche and the East End school. These are two great urban schools that thrive because of their socio-economic diversity and the close connection among their students, teachers and parents. If we truly want vibrant, community schools on the peninsula, we need a strategy to preserve housing that is affordable for the families who will use these schools AND for the teachers and staff members who educate our kids. In my opinion, our neighborhood associations, school department and parent teacher organizations need to be thinking about this issue.

For all the reasons outlined above, I think the city's current policy of analyzing the redevelopment potential of underutilized city-owned real estate is an entirely rationale and reasonable approach.

- Finally, I also commend the committee for the process they have established to pursue this policy. Most importantly, the RFP is non-binding. Additionally, it is open to anyone to respond. The end result is a public, low-risk, low-cost process to solicit ideas from the development community. If the city does not receive any viable responses, it can choose to stop this program at any time. If there is a compelling proposal, the city has enormous flexibility to lay the ground rules going forward—including how the developer will work with all stakeholders to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

Again, I find this to be an appropriate way for the city to implement its current policy in an attempt to solve some of the housing challenges that we all face.