

Google Groups

SAY NO to luxury units at 1 Joy Place

Megan <mgrumbling@hotmail.com>

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Posted in group: **Planning Board**

Dear Portland Planning Board,

I am a teacher, writer, and artist living in Portland. I was raised in Maine and have lived on Brackett Street for 13 years, and I am asking you to make a choice *against* luxury housing and new out-of-state money, and *for* the working Portlanders that make this city diverse and engaging, the working Portlanders who are desperately hoping simply to not to be pushed out of the city they love. I am asking you: Please do not approve the 12-unit high-end condominium complex proposed -- with only *one* "affordable" unit -- for One Joy Place on Brackett Street.

Portland does not need any more housing that is not affordable for all Portlanders. Almost every month, I have watched a new teacher or artist friend move to Scarborough, or Gorham, or Buxton, or Saco, or Biddeford, or Westbrook. The migration has become epidemic. And One Joy Place, situated directly across from one of Portland's most diverse schools where many so new Mainers come together, is a place that should provide housing and homes accessible to *all* Mainers -- not just those with wealth or disposable incomes.

Do we truly care about making Portland a city for all? Do we truly value the arts and artists, not just as a commodity but as the work of living people who need places to live? Do we care about the working class? About teachers? Do we truly care about welcoming new Mainers from around the world to Portland, and allowing them to stay here long enough to become part of the fabric of our community? If we *do* care about these things, then the city of Portland -- its residents, its City Council, and its planning board -- must start now to take a long view, and to make choices that are about more than just the bottom line.

Raised in Maine, I chose to come back here to live and work after college on the West Coast and grad school in New York City. I have always loved the ethos and values of this city, because they have seemed to operate on a human scale, not one blinded by capital. Over the last few years, I have come to fear that city officials have lost their bearings, have become intoxicated by the prospect of out-of-state money. As we all know, there are real human costs to such myopia. There are costs to the artists, teachers, working people, and immigrants that the city claims to value. And as we lose these valuable members of the community, there are costs to the character of the city itself.

I ask that you consider the value of housing and homes accessible to all, not just the wealthy. I ask that you decide against more luxury housing at One Joy Place, and make a choice for the inclusion of all of us who work hard to be part of this great city.

Thank you for your consideration. I trust you, as actors who work in the city's name, to make the choice that is the right one for *all* Portlanders.

Sincerely,

Megan Grumbling

Instructor, Southern Maine Community College and University of New England

139 Brackett St. #4

Portland, Maine 04102

207.772.4393

Megan Grumbling

www.megangrumbling.com