



Helen Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>

MMC parking garage

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To: Helen Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>

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Nell,

In the afterglow of the Planning Board workshop, I am concerned that the loss of on-street parking spaces on St. John St. is not considered a serious issue.

I find it ironic that this project is being driven by MMCs' parking needs, and the other participants in the plan, the Railroad Building and the Eagles Club, are having their parking needs addressed, but the parking needs of the neighborhood at ground zero are just being blown off. They get their brand new parking while we get our existing parking taken away.

On the stretch of St. John St. from D Street to the Railroad Building parking lot, a distance of 200 ft., there are seven residential buildings, comprising 17 units of housing and one professional office, and Alan Auto Volvo Service. These buildings have existed in their current usage for a long time, since long before modern building codes, parking requirements, zoning rules, planning boards, and planning departments, but always in harmony with the amount of parking and traffic on St. John St. Now that harmony is to be destroyed. These buildings have always relied on having a certain amount of on-street parking to function.

I also find it ironic that the City of Portland considers housing such an important issue that building owners are fined \$50,000 if they do something to their own property that results in the loss of a housing unit, and the City seems happy enough to accept our property taxes (something which MMC and the Eagles Club don't pay, I can't help but mention), but apparently feels no obligation to support the building owners in return.

Not long ago, the City approved the remodeling of 212-214 St. John St. from a two unit residential building into a four unit. But 212-214 does not even have a curb cut or driveway, let alone parking for four units. How could the City approve this remodeling unless the assumption was that the units would utilize on-street parking? And now the City is proposing to take that parking away?

With all the planning, architectural, engineering, landscaping, construction, financing, management, and other professional firepower involved in this project, I realize I don't know all the issues involved. However, I do agree with the comment made at the workshop (the speaker took the thought right out of my own head, actually) that it doesn't seem to make sense to make allowances for bicycling to the new garage. Anyone who bicycles will just go straight to the hospital to avoid walking or waiting for a shuttle. My suggestion is to minimize the bicycle lanes and use the roadway width saved to keep the on-street parking. However, if this suggestion is unsatisfactory, I'm sure all the professionals involved can come up with another way to keep the on-street parking.

Best regards,

Dan Chase