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From: Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization <info@munjoyhill.org>

To: Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization <info@munjoyhill.org>

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 at 12:41:47 PM EDT

Subject: October Excitement: Mr. Chard Maine Teacher of the Year, Celebrate HILLoween!, ReCode First Wave Comments, and More!

Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization

92 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101
info@munjoyhill.org
October 16, 2023



Proudly serving Portland's Munjoy Hill neighborhood since 1979.

**HAPPY HILL-OWEEN: DROP BY THE HILL HOUSE
ON OCTOBER 31ST FOR EXTRA FAMILY FUN!**

HAPPY HILLOWEEN!

MUNJOY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD
ORGANIZATION INVITES ALL TO:

MHNO HILLOWEEN
NEIGHBORHOOD
PARTY

PLEASE STOP BY FOR EXTRA
FUN ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT

TUESDAY, | FROM 5:00PM TO 8:00PM
OCTOBER 31, | MHNO HILL HOUSE
2023 | 92 CONGRESS ST.





CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. CHARD! 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year!

Joshua Chard, a veteran teacher at East End Community School, has been selected as the 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year. The announcement took place at a ceremony at the

school on Oct. 11, where Chard was honored by state education officials, fellow educators and students.

The Portland Public Schools were proud to make the following announcement:

Joshua Chard, a second- and third-grade looping teacher at East End Community School, has been named 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year. East End staff and students and state and local education officials celebrated Chard's selection at that school on Wednesday morning, Oct. 11. He received multiple standing ovations from students and staff.

"Joshua Chard's selection as the 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year is a testament not only to him as a remarkable educator but also is continued evidence of the high caliber of the educators we are fortunate to have at the Portland Public Schools," said Superintendent Ryan Scallon. "We are incredibly proud of Joshua and very grateful for his dedication to student success, which he demonstrates daily in his teaching."

In May, Chard – who also is the drama director at Deering High School – was named 2023 Cumberland County Teacher of the Year. He was one of 16 teachers – one from each of Maine's counties – to be selected for that honor. Then, in July, he became one of eight County Teachers of the Year named as semifinalists for 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year. Next, in August, Chard and three other teachers from around the state made it to the finalist stage.

Chard emerged as the top choice after further vetting, which included a daylong site visit to the finalists' schools by a state review panel. Read about a day with Chard and his class here:

https://mainedoeneews.net/2023/09/17/a-day-with-maine-teacher-of-the-year-finalist-joshua-chards-class/?fbclid=IwAR02PJsvxyXg9YmPKbGe006rN4b3_P4mKbf_TeuBmDoh2cWOjW0MZVBF0cU

Wednesday's ceremony featured praise and recognition for the honoree.

"Joshua Chard embodies the qualities that make Maine teachers amazing, and we're thrilled to honor him as Maine's 2024 Teacher of the Year," said Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin. "Today we celebrate Joshua's passion for teaching, his love for his students and public education, and his ability to make each and every person feel welcome and like they belong. Colleagues, parents, and community members describe Joshua as kind, loving, passionate, generous, and someone who finds joy in the uniqueness of each human."

East End Community School Principal Boyd Marley said, "East End Community School is proud of Joshua Chard. He is an example of the excellent teaching and learning that happens every day at EECS, in the Portland Public Schools and across Maine." Throughout the selection process, Chard has said recognition of him reflects on his fellow educators and the district. He also gave a special shout-out to his students, known around the school as "Chardlings."

"This recognition is about my amazing students as much as it is about me," he said. "How lucky am I to get to be inspired by these hilarious, insightful, motivated, and empathetic humans every day? They make me want to be the best teacher I can be because they deserve it and they demand it of me. I am feeling so blessed and so seen today."

East End is one of the district's most culturally diverse schools. To help begin Wednesday's ceremony, a group of "Chardlings" led the other students in a West African song and dance and it concluded with students thanking everyone for attending in a variety of languages.

Chard, who joined the Portland Public Schools in 1996, believes designing and implementing curriculum for young learners always starts through a culturally responsive

lens. He says joyful relationships are at the heart of everything he does in his classroom and feels inspired every day by the honor of lifting up and celebrating his diverse learners.

Chard cited his fifth-grade teacher as having a major influence on him. “She taught me that I was smart, talented and that I deserved to be loved just for being me,” he said. “I am the person I am because of teachers like her.”

Chard holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a concentration in theater from the University of Southern Maine, and a master’s degree in education with a K-6 literacy focus from the University of New England, and a certificate in K-6 standards-based mathematics from The American College of Education. He also certified as a K-12 teacher of English to speakers of other languages.

Chard is proud to teach at East End and Deering, two of the most culturally diverse schools north of Boston. During his 31-year career, he has been an educational technician, has taught fourth and fifth grade, and has been an instructional coach with a focus on mathematics. He has passionately dedicated his entire career to working in high-needs, urban schools and is excited to have a platform to share the amazing work that is happening there.

Outside of school, Chard can be found participating in local theater as an actor and director and exploring Maine’s beaches and lighthouses with his husband and their grandsons.

As 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year, Chard now will become the most visible exemplar of the teaching profession in the state. He’ll be invited to serve on various committees, participate in many programs and events, and speak on a number of occasions.

Matt Bernstein, the 2023 Maine Teacher of the Year, also spoke at the ceremony. “Joshua Chard is a phenomenal, passionate, and dedicated teacher who inspires those around him – both students and colleagues,” Bernstein said. “He masterfully blends high expectations for students with the creation of warm and joyous classroom environments so that all students are supported to learn, grow, and thrive. I am beyond excited that more folks will have the opportunity to hear from Joshua moving forward and I am tremendously grateful to him for representing Maine as the 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year.”

Bernstein said that Chard’s selection also helps to showcase East End Community School, which Bernstein praised as “a school that encapsulates the true meaning of community.” He said that just by walking into the school, he felt its “warmth, joy and a zest for learning.”

On behalf of the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization, with kudos to the East End Community School, our local elementary school, congratulations to Mr. Chard and the Chardlings!



Buy Tickets

Eastern
Cemetery
224 Congress St.
Portland, ME



Suggested Donation
\$10 - Adults
\$5 - 12 & under

A year after the Civil War ended, Portland planned a July 4 celebration. By the next morning, much of Portland Neck had been burned to ashes. Hear from: Journalist John Neal, a firsthand report; William Ruby, Portland's first Black fireman; John Brown and the ruin of his sugar house; Cyrus and Florence Curtis, offering a child's point of view; Anne Longfellow Pierce, poet's sister; Landscape painter George Marsh, and Elizabeth Pearson Day, who survived two Portland fires.

October 19-21 & 26-28 6:30-7:30pm
Sunday, October 22 & 29 5:30 - 6:30pm

Groups enter every 20 minutes | First come, first served | 224 Congress St. | spiritsalive.org/wats | tickets @ [Eventbrite](https://Eventbrite.com)

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Coffee & Climate



Coffee & Climate: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

An invitation from Portland's Sustainability Office:

Join us Friday, November 17th from 9am - 10am for this month's Coffee & Climate: Environmental Justice! Jiwana Soleimani, Color of Climate Program Coordinator at Gateway Community Services Maine is joining us to explore the intersection of the climate crisis and our communities. Their mission is to center the voices, experiences, and narratives of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) youth within the climate change crises and within environmental justice issues, especially as BIPOC communities and individuals are often the most impacted by these issues.

Grab a cup of coffee and join us to learn more about the importance of addressing environmental justice as we transition to a more resilient future.

Sign up for this Zoom get-together through this Zoom registration link:
https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZl0cu2hqj8vGNAD2NWj35piKvt2yclRbln_

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



**FALL CURBSIDE LEAF COLLECTION
MONDAY OCTOBER 30 - FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2023**

It is leaf-raking time again. Portland Public Works shares the following about the City's curbside leaf collection:

- Please place **paper biodegradable leaf bags** (required) curbside and leave them out even in inclement weather.
- Leaf collection is done daily by a group of crews in Public Works. We cannot accurately predict when the leaf collection crews will be on your street because it depends on the volume of leaves they collect each day, as they work their way through the City.
- Public Works crews will be collecting leaf bags for four weeks.
- Crews will NOT collect bags of mulched leaves (too heavy, safety risk), sticks, branches, rocks sod, and/or bags of dirt. Please take these things to the transfer station, Riverside Recycling, 910 Riverside Street, Portland, ME 04103 for disposal, fees may apply.

MHNO ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Handcrafters -- Needlecraft Sundays have resumed.



**Knitters!
Crocheters!
All hand needlecrafters!**



**The MHNO welcomes you to our
Needlework Sunday afternoons!**



**Sundays from 3-5
92 Congress St**



For more information, contact:
info@munjoyhill.org

FAMILY HALLOWEEN TRICK-OR-TREATERS: MHNO'S

popular **HILLOWEEN NEIGHBORHOOD PARTY** will be returning again this year on October 31st, from 5-8. As you trick-or-treat in the neighborhood, plan to drop by the Hill House for extra fun. See poster, above, for more information.

City's Annual District One Meeting November 1st at 6:00 Virtual via Zoom, Hosted by Councilor Trevorrow

The City of Portland's Annual District Meetings are coming up. The District 1 Meeting will be Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 6:00 pm. It will be a virtual meeting, via zoom. There will not be an in-person option.

It will be hosted by District 1 Councilor Anna Trevorrow. Mayor Snyder, possibly other City Councilors, City Manager Danielle West, and City staff will be available to discuss neighborhood issues and answer questions from the public. The City describes these meetings are the public's opportunity to meet their district councilor, the Mayor, and representatives from the various departments within the city.

To participate on November 1st at 6:00, [join via this Zoom Link](#).

PRESIDENT'S NOTE:

Greetings Munjoy Hill Friends and Neighbors!

The City's Planning Department, with the help of a consultant, is engaged in a multi-year process to rewrite the City's land use code. While some people think it is too technical and boring, it actually has the potential to change Portland's built environment over the coming decades.

Most changes will not be immediate. They will be felt as drafting decisions made now get implemented over many years as the cumulative impact of many individual development, demolition and redevelopment, rehabilitation, public works and infrastructure projects. The resulting changes may be as intended. The goal is to make the land use code more consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan, Portland 2030. But some resulting changes may also be unintended. That is why it is important for many sets of eyes and multiple perspectives to be represented in the drafting process.

The current set of proposed revisions, awkwardly called "ReCode Two, First Wave", propose some substantive revisions to definitions, zones, uses, and dimensional standards. Other proposed changes, including the actual zoning maps, revisions to the development review process, and revisions to specific zones, are yet to be finalized. When a full redraft of the entire Code (not just the "First Wave") is eventually approved by the Planning Board, it will be forwarded to the City Council for final review, possible revisions, and adoption.

Many of the members of the Board of Directors of the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization have been following and participating in the ReCode process over the last few years. Our focus has been on trying to safeguard the neighborhood from unintended consequences, to conserve the existing housing stock, preserve the neighborhood character, encourage any new development to be consistent with the typical compact lot development pattern, to keep new development from being grossly out of scale with its context, to foster retention of existing housing, and to incentivize workforce housing.

At the October, 2023 Board meeting, the Board endorsed submitting the following comments on ReCode Two, First Wave to the planners. If your eyes glaze over, feel free to just read the headlines.

1. THE PIECEMEAL APPROACH OF RECODE II IS A BARRIER TO MEANINGFUL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

It is difficult for citizens to meaningfully participate in the ReCode II drafting process because the “First Wave” is only definitions, zones, uses and dimensional standards. We are “in the weeds” without any context. There are no maps, no development review standards, and the rest of the land use code is missing. Without a draft of the entire land use code document, it is difficult to tell what is intended by staff and the consultant for later sections. We will need the ability to go back and comment on the “First Wave” once later sections are released. It needs to be an iterative process.

2. THE PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR THE NEW RN-5 ZONE OMITTS IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

In the purpose statement for the R-6/ New RN-5 zone, the proposed draft has **deleted** concepts that appear in the current purpose statement that refer to **conserving the existing housing stock, preserving the existing neighborhood character**, and making new development **consistent with the typical compact lot development** found on the peninsula. While perhaps imperfectly expressed in the current code, they identify concepts that are typically valued by residents. It would be better to improve the way they are referenced rather than removing them entirely.

Staff has said that similar concepts now appear in proposed Table 5-B, with the introductory paragraph emphasizing “context sensitivity.” However, while statements about “standards encouraging compatibility and context sensitivity” do appear in the RN-2, RN-3 and RN-4 zones in the context of conversion of existing structures to higher density uses, that phrase does not appear anywhere in the RN-5 zone. **Standards requiring compatibility and context sensitivity should be an integral part of the RN-5 purpose statement, and should apply to all new development as well as to the conversion of existing structures.** Similarly **rewritten design standards**, long put on hold, need to be completed and adopted so that they are a meaningful part of the development review process. Design standards are an integral part of assessing compatibility and context sensitivity.

3. HEIGHT REGULATION IS NOT IMPROVED; HEIGHTS SHOULD BE MEASURED FROM PRE-DEVELOPMENT GRADE

Measurement of heights in Portland has been problematic for at least a decade. Rather than fixing the source of the controversy, the proposed draft further embeds the misguided approach. For both the islands and mainland, dimensional height limits should be applied

from **pre-development grade** as existed as of a certain date, such as January 1, 2000. Instead, the proposed draft imposes absolutely no limits upon a developer importing fill or otherwise proposing to alter the site prior to calculating allocable height. That makes the height limits de facto non-existent and defeats the reason for having height limits in the first place. Similarly, the proposed draft does not adequately define the point of measurement; applied details such as planters should not be treated as if they are a foundation.

4. THERE SHOULD BE A CAP ON HOW MUCH GAIN CAN BE REALIZED FROM AVERAGING GRADE

The code needs to recognize that a high percentage of the sites in Portland that remain to be built upon are on steeply sloped land. In the last several years some buildings have been proposed or built on these steeply sloped sites, which take maximum advantage of grade averaging and produce **buildings that are greatly out of scale with their context**. These buildings should serve as cautionary examples and the proposed code should be adjusted to establish a maximum amount of height above the lowest grade that can be picked up by averaging grade, such as 4 feet. A cap like that will further context sensitivity from both the uphill and downhill perspectives.

5. PORTLAND'S CODE NEEDS TO INCORPORATE A METHODOLOGY FOR MEASURING GRADE THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH STANDARD ENGINEERING PRACTICES AND IS NOT AS VULNERABLE TO MANIPULATION BY APPLICANTS

The proposed definition of "grade, average" proposes minor improvements over current, but the methodology is incomplete. "Foundation" is not operationalized. Using the perimeter of the building as the element to be measured allows for heights to be "gamed" by proposing a building that is heavily crenelated or repeatedly indented on the highest part of a site, giving extra weight to that part of the perimeter. A more standard methodology for measuring grade is in order.

6. THE PROPOSED RN-5 75' BUILDING LENGTH DIMENSIONAL STANDARD IS INADEQUATE TO ADDRESS THE SCALE OF NEW BUILDINGS

The new building length dimensional standard is inadequate to control the scale of new construction. In 2020, the peninsula neighborhoods proposed approaching context sensitivity through regulating lot consolidation in order to retain a development pattern typical of compact lot development. In the alternative, they proposed that lots could be purchased by a common owner but proposed that the maximum dimensional requirements would be established by the maximum that could have been built upon the separate, non-merged lots of record.

While this 75' maximum building length restriction may attempt to get at a similar problem, 75' is too big for the Munjoy Hill neighborhood context. 50' would be more in keeping with a typical building size. Similarly, the definition does not specify that a setback would be required between two or more such buildings. Theoretically, a technical break of one foot would suffice under the proposed definition. That is not sufficient. To be contextually appropriate, a full setback on each side of the midline should be required for each building even if they are on a single large lot under common ownership.

7. THERE IS INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION PAID TO WHAT THE LAND USE CODE CAN DO TO RETAIN EXISTING HOUSING AND/OR MAKE AFFORDABLE HOUSING MORE LIKELY

So far, the sections of the proposed changes to the land use code seem to focus on new construction. **More attention needs to be paid to how the land use code can foster**

and incentivize retention of existing housing because that is where the “missing middle”, “naturally occurring affordable housing” and “workforce housing” is typically found. New construction will be expensive, and frequently in Portland the new “luxury housing” that is built is a second (or more) residence for a non-resident. The creation of luxury housing is unlikely to result in “trickle-down housing” in the Portland market which will be available to middle income residents. Perhaps the rewrite of the section on non-conforming structures will identify some opportunities for the repurposing of formerly non-residential structures into residential uses, or the retention of existing housing with upgrades or additional units which can be part of addressing the shortage of affordable housing.

In addition, more attention needs to be paid to how building heights and other dimensional standards can incentivize workforce housing. The (now repealed) Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone contained some height differentiations that should be studied for possible inclusion in the proposed ReCode changes. Instead of allowing 45 feet as of right (as proposed in ReCode II), in the MHNCOZ at least one workforce unit had to be included to increase allowable height from 35' to 45'. This was too generous; it should have required a percentage like 25% rather than a single unit to qualify for the height bonus.

The other dimensional requirements should be studied to see what other workforce housing incentives can be incorporated. Perhaps lot area per multi-family unit (725 SF/unit) could be reduced if all units (or a certain high percentage) were workforce housing.

But any adjustments to dimensional standards also need to be coupled with intensive scrutiny of the standards for what qualifies as workforce housing. For example, for proposed workforce condominium units, the ordinance should ban the practice of monthly condominium fees being assessed on a per capita basis. Instead, monthly condominium fees should be regulated so they reflect that the workforce unit is smaller, in a less desirable location, has different appliances or finishes, etc., as applicable. It defeats the intent unless the monthly carrying costs are affordable.

These seven comments summarize the Board's take on the most important issues at this stage in the redrafting process. If you have thoughts about ReCode Two, First Wave, or about the MHNO's comments, please share your thoughts with us at info@munjoyhill.org.

Or email the planners directly at recodeportland@portlandmaine.gov. The planners set a soft deadline of October 13th for submission of comments on this phase, but they say they will always accept comments.

What with municipal elections, the ReCode revision process, national politics, and all of the international conflicts, there is a lot going on. Maybe various Halloween events and the uplifting recognition of Mr. Chard and the Chardlings will provide a little welcome respite.

Hope to see you around the neighborhood,

Barbara

*Barbara Vestal
President, MHNO*

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The next monthly business meeting of the 13-members of the Board of Directors of the MHNO will be held on Monday, November 6th at 5:00 p.m. Monthly meetings are held in person at the Hill House, 92 Congress Street. If you are a member of the MHNO and are interested in sitting in on the Board of Director's meeting, please join us in person.

The MHNO is a membership organization, with our work supported by annual memberships (\$20 for an individual, \$35 for a household). For more information or to join or renew, or to make a much appreciated donate, please visit www.munjoyhill.org.
