

Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization

92 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101
info@munjoyhill.org
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Proudly serving Portland's Munjoy Hill neighborhood since 1979.



MHNO President Reflects on 2020

Dear MHNO Members and Friends of Members,

Another year has gone by, and this one in more of a vortex than a flash. At this time last year "pandemic" was a 15-point word in Scrabble. Corona, if not a special effect of the sun, was an adult beverage served up with a wedge of lime. And zooming was for rockets, not people.

Then, mid-March everything changed. First in words and concepts that crept into daily conversation, like social distancing, N95, the "six-foot rule." Masked banditos, we began spritzing sanitizer like cheap cologne. Our new superheroes, Drs. Fauci and Shah, didn't leap tall buildings; but they did offer critical facts and sage advice. We learned to zoom, and sweatpants became the new office attire.

But the impact of the pandemic cannot be described by disruption and inconvenience only. We are all missing family, missing friends, missing work and income. And far too many have suffered personal tragedy and irrevocable loss. We all live on edge, and our hearts go out to those who are grieving -- whether the loss of loved ones or the cascading impact of economic hardship.

Our March 2020 Board meeting would be the last held at the Hill House. As COVID-19 tightened its grip, MHNO responded by providing the community with information on food sources and distribution centers for those in need. And as summer rolled around, we organized to assist in the distribution of produce grown through the community garden program.

On May 25th, in response to the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the "Black Lives Matter" movement became a national political movement and priority. Discussing a response to social injustice appeared on the MHNO agenda, and on August 25th, MHNO posted a position statement in support of solidarity with Black Lives Matter. We recognize the need for our Board to better represent the diversity of our community. As we move forward we hope that membership in the MHNO and members on our Board of Directors better reflect the diversity of our neighborhood. If you're interested in joining us as a member of the MHNO, please go to our website, www.munjoyhill.org and click on the Join button.

The Historic District designation has remained a priority for MHNO. We have worked tirelessly in support of a Munjoy Hill Historic District, as it received unanimous support from the Historic Preservation Board, moved through the Planning Board with a 4-3 recommendation to designate, and is now in front of the City Council for a January 11th workshop and anticipated February 1st vote. We have tried to help decision-makers get a better understanding of what Munjoy Hill has to offer as a place to live and work. If approved, Munjoy Hill would become the twelfth historic district in Portland. The Hill, with its late 19th and early 20th century homes deserves this protection of its architectural integrity so that it remains an attractive and livable neighborhood, evocative of the working class families who contributed so much to the city of Portland.

With all of this as a backdrop, life goes on. This past summer, we held two outdoor "Masks and Music" social hours at our 92 Congress Street home. Unfortunately, the weather washed out two more. The Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization's involvement and contribution to our community through other activities such as winter snow shoveling assistance for seniors in need, checking on our elderly neighbors, and once life returns to normal, by hosting events that promote a sense of community and a shared Munjoy Hill experience.

MHNO continues to be a vibrant, community-based organization. We could never have anticipated the great changes this past year has brought. But these have only reinforced our mission. We are here for the people who live on Munjoy Hill. To do this, we need your help. Please join us, stay involved, and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same. Change is not only good -- it's essential. We embrace new members, and welcome their thoughts, ideas, and involvement.

In closing, we wish you a Happy, and most importantly a Healthy Holiday Season, and in every way we can think of: a far better 2021.

All Best,

Wayne

Wayne Valzania, President
Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization
Celebrating 40 Years of Community Service

Dates to Note: City Council remote workshop on the proposed Munjoy Hill Historic District on January 11th at 5:30.

Currently scheduled: City Council remote public hearing on the proposed Munjoy Hill Historic District, with possible vote, on February 1, 2021.
Estimated time not yet available.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE: *The next monthly business meeting of the 13-members of the Board of Directors of the MHNO will be held on Monday, January 4th at 6:00 p.m. It will be held remotely using Zoom. Please note that this is NOT the Annual Meeting of members, which is always held in June. If you are a member of the MHNO and are interested in sitting in on the Board of Director's meeting, please send an email to info@munjoyhill.org and request that you be emailed a link to the January MHNO Board of Director's meeting.*

As the weather turns colder, we are hoping to stay engaged with our members in a safe, socially distanced way. Any ideas are welcome. Please send me an email with suggestions!

Stay safe and be well!

Wayne Valzania,
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President

