

# Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization

92 Congress Street  
Portland, Maine 04101  
info@munjoyhill.org  
February 10, 2022



*Proudly serving Portland's Munjoy Hill neighborhood since 1979.*

**THIS SUNDAY, ALL WELCOME !**  
(even if currently cat-less)\*

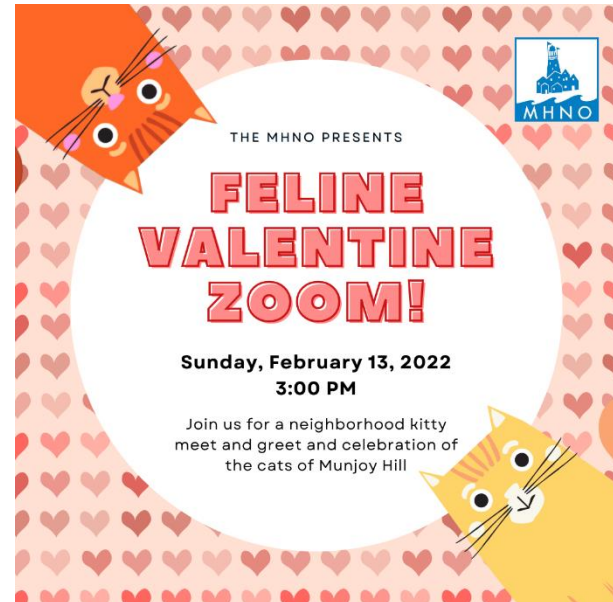
A little silly fun to ward off cabin  
fever.

ZOOM SOCIAL HOUR:

**FELINE VALENTINE!**

MUNJOY HILL CATS AND THEIR  
HUMAN COMPANIONS

February 13, 2022 at 3:00 pm



To Join the Zoom Meeting on 2/13 at 3, click:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84086815174?pwd=bTFoVnlqQjc0UzR4c2FuTzB4NUdadz0>

**\*\* Creativity definitely encouraged. All ages invited. Dogs disguised as cats, photos of favorite cats from years past, funny tales of cat antics, felines in costumes, and anything else even remotely cat-related are all welcome! )**

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## **NEW PORTLAND-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OUTLINES MULTI-PRONGED AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY**

The lack of a sufficient supply of housing affordable by a broad range of workforce and middle income residents has reached crisis proportions in many cities, including Portland. A recently released analysis of housing availability, specific to Portland and its Maine context, was researched and developed over the last five years by Karen Snyder, BSIE, MSIE, MBA, PMP, AOLCP.

Snyder, who happens to be a MHNO Board member, long-time Munjoy Hill resident and small landlord, used her industrial engineering and system analyst experience to develop this assessment. It draws upon many local studies, policies, data, and governmental actions, many of which are cited or hyperlinked in the detailed analysis.

Snyder postulates that "there is no silver bullet" to fix the "gentrification" issues which have accelerated the push of long term residents out of Portland over the past decade. She identifies and details an array of fourteen specific "fixes" which may help reverse the continued removal of affordable housing and long term residents from Portland. She asserts that progress will require a "holistic" and "multifaceted" effort, integrating many actions on several different fronts. The proposed "fixes" including state and local tax policy, code enforcement, land use code/zoning policy, investment incentives, and regulation of short term rentals, among others.

Snyder's recommended fixes, further explained and detailed in the report, are summarized below.

## Summary of Proposed Fixes for Portland, ME Affordable & Long Term Housing Crises

	<u>Where is Fix?</u>
• <a href="#">Fix #1: Protect Long Term Property Owners Who Provide Affordable housing from Property Re-evaluation</a>	State/City Level
• <a href="#">Fix #2: Encourage Continued Investment in Established Communities By Increasing Flexibility in Maintenance that May NOT Meet Zoning/Code Requirements</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #3: Consider Zoning Change for New Construction to be ONLY for Long Term Residential Housing</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #4: Strengthen the Inclusionary Workforce Zoning Policy.</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #5: Strengthen the Portland Short Term Rental Policy</a>	City Code-Chpt 6
• <a href="#">Fix #6: Ensure the Level 3 Site Plans Are Built Within One Year of Being Approved</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #7: Ensure City-Owned Land Available for Development only for Affordable Housing in 2 Ways</a>	Recode-New
• <a href="#">Fix #8: Dramatically Increase Condo Conversion Fees which go directly to Housing Trust Fund</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #9: Bring Back a Version of the New Neighbor Policy from 1997 which gave Working and Middle Class Breaks to buy in Portland and surrounding towns</a>	Recode-New
• <a href="#">Fix #10: Support the Stability and Creation of Affordable Housing with Historic District Designation</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #11: Implement Vacancy Fee (aka Empty Home Tax) for housing NOT considered full time residence.</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #12: Ensure ADUs add to Long Term Housing Options rather than another Short term rental stream.</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #13: Revise Residential Zoning Off-Peninsula</a>	Recode-Chpt 14
• <a href="#">Fix #14: Encourage Portland Community Land Trust for Individual Property Owners.</a>	Recode-New

The MHNO Board of Directors agrees that retaining (and increasing) the supply of long term housing affordable by the full spectrum of workforce and middle class residents is critical to retaining Munjoy Hill as a vibrant neighborhood. While the MHNO Board has not endorsed every element of Snyder's complex document, it believes that Snyder's analysis raises important issues and should be regarded as a valuable contribution to what should be a high priority conversation for Portland.

The full 35-page analysis may be accessed here:

[Presentation AffordableHousing PortlandME 20220206.pdf - Google Drive](#)

## MHNO Sponsors GoFundMe Fundraiser for 22 Munjoy Hill Neighbors Displaced by Fire



The January 29th fire at Munjoy Hill's Island View Apartments displaced 22 residents in 8 units. Our hearts go out to all of these neighbors.

The Board of Directors of the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization created a GoFundMe request on behalf of all 22 individuals who were displaced by the fire. Thanks to all who have donated so generously. If you wish to add your donation, the link to the request, captioned **Munjoy Hill North Street Fire Victims Fund Raiser**, is:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/raising-funds-for-north-street-fire-victims?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/raising-funds-for-north-street-fire-victims?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

100% of the funds donated will be distributed evenly to the 22 people Red Cross Portland has identified as being displaced by this fire.

Many of the families impacted will need to find permanent housing. If you know of any available housing accommodations, please contact the MHNO at [info@munjoyhill.org](mailto:info@munjoyhill.org).

Please note: This is not an MHNO fundraiser. Donations are not tax-deductible, and none of the funds will be used by the MHNO. Instead, this money will be divided between the Red Cross-identified people displaced by the fire and will go to them to be used at their discretion. One line (that can't be changed) in the GoFundMe site suggests a contribution is "for the benefit of MHNO"; that is not entirely accurate. It is for the benefit of fire victims, care of the MHNO. 100% of donations (less GoFundMe fees) will be distributed to the fire victims.

## PORTLAND PLANNING DEPARTMENT SEEKS YOUR OPINIONS IN LAND USE CODE EVALUATION SURVEY FOR RECODE 2

Portland planners are giving citizens a chance to take a survey to indicate their level of support for various land use policies which may be implemented as part of Recode 2. This Recode 2 effort is meant to revise the land use code (zoning, subdivision, etc.) so that it is consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted in 2017, entitled **Portland's Plan 2030**.

The survey focuses on 6 areas: housing, complete neighborhoods, climate change, the built environment, transportation and economic development. People can weigh in on any one or all six, depending on their interests.

After a general explanation of what the comprehensive plan recommends, people are asked to indicate their level of support for a variety of specific policies. There is also an open-ended question at the end to add any comments.

**The link to take the survey is:**

**<https://an0bbf8v1q0.typeform.com/to/ln5dyJ7K?typeform-source=www.recodeportland.me>**

If you have thoughts about:

- how to make new development more compatible with the existing neighborhood;
- whether the responsibility for accommodating more housing density should be shared by off-peninsula neighborhoods;
- whether it is important to protect Portland's remaining working waterfront from incompatible development;
- whether development should be restricted in areas vulnerable to sea level rise and climate change;
- whether an improved mass transit system is important;
- whether we should introduce more commercial businesses into residential areas; and many other topics,

then this is your chance to let the planners know what you think. You don't have to only click on their scales. You can include full paragraphs explaining your priorities.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS



### City's Charter Commission Continues its Work

The Charter Commission is continuing its work to examine the City's Charter to decide what changes, if any, to recommend. They are continuing to work toward the goal of having their recommendation(s) appear on the November 2022 ballot. To be enacted, a majority of voters will have to support the recommendations, which might be separated into more than one ballot question. In addition, by State law, for amendments to charter to be effective, the election turnout has to equal at least 30% of the votes cast in Portland in the previous gubernatorial election.

The Commission's five subcommittees (Governance, Education, Elections, Procedures, and Departments) are each looking at multiple issues. The proposals change and evolve quickly, with many Committee meetings per week.

The most recent Charter Commission meeting was on Wednesday, **February 9th**. It held a public hearing, and then deliberated and voted to recommend the submission of a **Preamble and Land Acknowledgment proposal** to the voters. This proposal makes some relatively minor amendments to the wording of the existing preamble and inserts a brand new "land acknowledgment" provision that states:

*"Portland is located in the unceded territory of the Aucocisco Band of the Wabanaki, which also includes the Abenaki, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaguoddy, and Penobscot people. European colonizers displaced Wabanaki people by force and went on to displace and harm indigenous peoples throughout what is now Maine and the United States. We acknowledge that displacement and that harm with sorrow, even as we celebrate and honor the*

*Wabanaki knowledge and culture that continue to thrive in the Tribal Nations that have and always will call this place, the Dawnland, their home."*

There was some discussion about whether the use of the word "unceded" might cause legal complications in the future, but it was unanimously voted to forward the proposal, subject to a legal review by the attorney to the Charter Commission.

On February 9th, the full Charter Commission also held a public hearing and then deliberated and voted to recommend the submission of an **Amended Police Oversight Proposal** to the voters. The original proposal was amended to change the makeup of the Civilian Police Review Board to a minimum of 4 members appointed by the City Council and 1 appointed by the Mayor (with 3 non-voting members), and to remove the requirement that they be paid a stipend. A proposed amendment to allocate a fixed percent of the Portland Police Department to fund the Board did not pass. The proposal was sent to the attorney for the Charter Commission to convert the adopted proposal into Charter language, which will be brought back for a formal vote in the future.

In addition, on February 9th the full Charter Commission had another **workshop on the different governance models** (Governance Committee's proposal, Commissioner Sheikh-Yousef's proposal, and the existing model) and also had a first reading of the Elections Committee's proposal to amend the ranked choice **voting system to address elections with more than one position.**

**The next full Charter Commission meeting**, recently added to the schedule, will be on **February 14th at 6:00**. It will be a **continuation of the workshops on governance models. There will be two panels of experts. Three professors, highly touted by Chair Kebede, are scheduled to present their analyses of "the empirical literature on the different models of city government."** They will be followed by **Earle Shettleworth and Tom MacMillan addressing the history of Portland's Charter.**

Subsequent meetings of the full Charter Commission are tentatively scheduled for February 23rd, March 9th, March 23, April 6th and April 20th at 6:00 pm.

Scheduled meetings, posted agendas and materials, and Zoom links are on the City's Agenda Center: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/129/Agendas-Minutes>.

More information may be posted on the City's webpage: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/2665/Charter-Commission-2020-2022>

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**PLANNING BOARD TO WEIGH REPEAL OF THE MUNJOY HILL  
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION OVERLAY ZONE**

The Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, February 22 at 6:30 pm to decide whether to recommend to the City Council the repeal of the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zone (MHNCOZ). At a prior workshop, a majority of the Planning Board indicated that they are inclined to repeal the MHNCOZ. Some indicated that they believe it is no longer appropriate now that the Munjoy Hill Historic District has been enacted. Final action will be up to the City Council after a future public hearing.

The MHNCOZ applies to the entire residential area of Munjoy Hill. This includes both the approximately half included in the Historic District and the other half that does not have the protections of the Historic District.

This special zoning district has a few characteristics that regulate the entire residential area of Munjoy Hill differently than the rest of the on-peninsula residential areas (e.g. Bayside, Parkside, West End).

- It reduces the general height limit to 35 feet rather than 45 feet;
- It allows developers of structures proposed to contain 3 or more units to qualify for a height bonus to 45 feet if a development includes one "workforce" housing unit;
- It includes some modest additional design requirements; and
- It establishes a process to delay demolition for up to one year of structures that are deemed by the Planning Authority to be "preferably preserved."

In theory the delay allows time to explore alternatives to demolition. There is no similar provision for demolition delay in any other part of the City.

The Munjoy Hill Historic District, enacted in 2021 and applicable to approximately one-half of Munjoy Hill, does prohibit demolition of landmark and contributing structures. Those protections would remain in place regardless of whether the MHNCOZ is repealed.



The more modest 35' height limit was arrived at for Munjoy Hill after an analysis of the scale of existing development. The goal was to encourage redevelopment on a scale which would be more compatible with the current urban fabric.

Written public comments may be submitted to [planningboard@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:planningboard@portlandmaine.gov) by February 18th. Spoken public comments may be made during the remote public hearing on February 22nd.

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**PRESIDENT'S NOTE:**

*MHNO continues to be a vibrant, community-based organization. We could never have anticipated the great changes this past year and a half has brought. But these have only reinforced our mission. We are here for the people who live on or have businesses 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. Please visit us at [www.munjoyhill.org](http://www.munjoyhill.org).*

*The next monthly business meeting of the 13-members of the Board of Directors of the MHNO will be held on Monday, March 7th at 6:00 p.m. Monthly meetings are held remotely using Zoom. 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](mailto:info@munjoyhill.org) and request that you be emailed a link to the MHNO Board of Director's meeting.*

Wayne Valzania,  
[w.valzania@munjoyhill.org](mailto:w.valzania@munjoyhill.org)  
President

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