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

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

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 10:11:14 AM EDT

Subject: New Sustainability Column, Recode "First Wave", Housing Plea from the Mayor, and More

Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization

92 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101
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August 1, 2023



Proudly serving Portland's Munjoy Hill neighborhood since 1979.



Local Kids Raise Funds for MHNO at Fifth of July Lemonade Stand

Undaunted by the rain delay of the 4th of July fireworks, these MHNO kids honed their sales skills in an impromptu July 5th lemonade stand, featuring homemade mint lemonade and homemade strawberry shortcake. All proceeds benefitted the MHNO's general fund. Many thanks from the MHNO!

Monthly Highlights:

MHNO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

By Maggy Wolf, MHNO Board of Directors, m.wolf@munjoyhill.org

With our Maine summer off to a cool and rainy start, it can be easy for us to tune out the ongoing global climate crisis. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) just declared June the hottest month on record for our planet, with July and August predicted to be even hotter.

The news of the global impact of these record temperatures can be overwhelming, however, I have found that, as with many other enormous issues in today's world, focusing on our own actions is a good place to start. Once we cultivate an awareness of what we can do as individuals, we can take the next step of working with our communities, where we can harness the power of constituency to make some real changes.

This year, we have been sending you the calendar for an interesting monthly event called Coffee and Climate, sponsored by Portland and South Portland's joint One Climate Future initiative. The next one will be August 10th on the topic of "Breweries and Sustainability".

But there are many other events and activities happening around town, so we thought we could dedicate a regular column to this topic. For this inaugural MHNO Sustainable Living column, I will focus on a few general resources and a potential opportunity to begin with.

Resources

1. If you are interested in creating a baseline for your own household to see where you currently stand, you could try one of the Carbon Footprint Calculators, such as <https://coolclimate.org/calculator>

2. To get up to speed on what the City of Portland is doing, you can start by:

- studying Portland's One Climate Future joint plan with South Portland (<https://www.oneclimatefuture.org/>)
- bookmark Portland's Sustainability Office to check for events and programs and <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/573/Sustainability-Office>

- to follow them on social media:

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/SustainablePortlandME/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sustainableportlandme/>

- The City Council's Sustainability and Transportation Committee usually meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:00 PM; however, they will not meet in the month of August. <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/675/Sustainability-Transportation-Committee>

3. Local/state organizations you might look into joining:

- The Portland Climate Action Team portlandclimateaction@gmail.com
- National Resource Council of Maine <https://www.nrcm.org/>

- Maine Conservation Voters <https://www.maineconservation.org/>
- Maine Youth for Climate Justice <https://www.maine youthforclimatejustice.org/>

4. National Organizations with active local chapters:

- Sierra Club <https://www.sierraclub.org/maine>
- Citizens Climate Lobby https://citizensclimatelobby.org/chapters/ME_Portland/

Opportunity:

Some of you are probably already familiar with the Window Dressers organization and may have already participated in one of their Community Builds. From their website: "*WindowDressers brings community volunteers of all economic and social situations together to improve the warmth and comfort of interior spaces, lower heating costs, and reduce carbon dioxide pollution by producing low-cost insulating window inserts that function as custom, interior-mounted storm windows. Our staff supplies, trains, and supports teams of community volunteers as they build affordable, insulating window inserts at local Community Builds.*" <https://windowdressers.org/>

Over the past decade, there have been several Community Builds in the Portland area; but the pandemic caused a break in the momentum and now The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) is looking for some motivated volunteers to help organize and lead the next Portland Community Build. As a veteran of several builds in the past at both Irish Heritage Center and Allagash Brewery, and as a member of a "measuring team", and finally, as a satisfied customer, I can personally attest that it is a rewarding community-building experience and also very effective at reducing the carbon footprint in some of our older and drafty houses on Munjoy Hill.

If you are looking for a way to get involved, this is truly a wonderful opportunity! For more information, please contact Sofia Reali at GPCOG Sreali@gpcog.org or Steve McFarland at Window Dressers at steve.mcfarland@windowdressers.org .

City Planners Release "First Wave Recode Changes" What is the Appropriate Response?

On June 30, 2023 the City Planners released what they are calling "First Wave Recode Changes." These are limited to proposed changes to the text of the **definitions, zones, uses and dimensional standards** of the land use code. Changes to other sections will be released as they are ready. While these "first wave" changes are just an initial installment, the proposed full rewrite of the land use code has the potential to influence the pattern of new development on Munjoy Hill, and throughout the City, for decades to come.

To see the first set of proposed changes, go to <https://www.recodeportland.me/first-wave-changes>. That site summarizes what the planners consider to be major changes, and gives readers a variety of ways to review and comment on the proposed changes. The planners have scheduled three "**open houses**" on the "first wave Recode changes", one of which is **11 am - 1 pm on Wednesday, August 16th at the Portland Public Library, Rines Auditorium**. (The others are at Lyseth School and on Peaks Island.) These are "drop in" events, with presentations "on the hour." The planners seem to hope that public involvement will be concluded on the "first wave" during the summer, even though the draft was just released June 30th and the limited open houses are the only currently scheduled opportunity for explanation and two-way conversation.

It is possible to react to the proposed changes from two perspectives: from within the details of the document itself, or from a broader perspective, asking whether the proposed changes really do move us toward where Portland wants to be in 2030 or 2050.

If we were to take the detailed approach, the MHNO's comments would likely focus on the issues we raised in 2020, earlier in the ReCode process, in conjunction with other peninsula neighborhood associations. These concerns, which do not appear to have been adequately addressed so far, include: methods of ensuring compatibility of new development, restrictions on merger of lots to retain the existing small scale of development, incentives to retain existing housing, method of calculation of maximum building heights on steeply sloped lots, and incentives for construction of new long-term workforce housing.

But the preferable response seems to be to **pause the "in the weeds" review** of this complex land use code rewrite **in order to have an important community-wide conversation about whether this approach is likely to take us where we, as a city, want to be in 2030 or 2050**. If after this conversation we were to agree that the most important issues currently facing Portland are, for example, affordable housing for the unsubsidized middle, climate sustainability, and equity, then we should be asking whether the planners have really identified the critical barriers in the land use code and charted a path to address them in a meaningful way?

Maybe the ReCode's focus on new construction is misplaced. There is certainly an argument to be made that we are unlikely to build our way out of the housing crisis with expensive new construction. "Trickle down housing" doesn't work unless the people moving into those new condos are vacating a local unit. If the purchaser is just adding another part-time residence or unoccupied investment to their portfolio, the new unit is of virtually no benefit to the community.

Maybe we need the land use code to put more emphasis on retention of the housing that is already built, and focus on removing barriers to flexible repurposing of that existing space. Similarly, maybe we need to ease the transition from existing unused office space to housing. Are there land use code changes that can facilitate the creation of more housing opportunities in existing structures, such as by allowing minor changes without triggering a requirement for an expensive sprinkler system or for compliance with a new set of code standards?

Or maybe a community conversation would determine that to make more gains on housing, sustainability, and equity, the priority should be placed on different mechanisms entirely, such as enforcement of short term rental regulations or revisiting city investment in capital projects through an equity lens. The proposed rewrite of the land use code is going to take up a lot of community and staff time and attention. Let's make sure it is designed to move us toward a vision that incorporates intentional responses to our most pressing issues.

The release of the "first wave" of proposed Recode changes raises many issues. If you have ideas about the most appropriate response, please share your thoughts with the MHNO at info@munjoyhill.org.

Mayor Snyder's Plea for Housing for People Temporarily Sheltered at Portland's Expo: Can You Help?

Reprinted below is a July 19, 2023 email from Mayor Snyder to the community.

Dear Portlanders,

I'm not great at catchy emails.

I don't lure you in with provocative subject lines.

(Someone once told me that I think (and talk) in paragraphs. It's true.)

But I urge you to read this email that has to do with: HOUSING. And please forward it, or share the info as you see fit. (Thank you.)

Housing in and around Portland is very hard to come by - for so many people - including Asylum Seeking families who have been temporarily sheltered at the Portland Expo.

Yesterday I was honored to be present at a press conference announcing the Quality Housing Coalition (QHC), GPCOG, and City of Portland partnership to expand Project HOME.

Project HOME matches highly recommended tenants with landlord partners and homeshare providers, resulting in year-long housing support, guaranteed rent, and a financial guarantee.

The idea is this:

- Homeowners with a "little extra house" (this was a term used yesterday!) or landlords with a vacant unit get paired with people who need a place to stay - temporarily: the agreement is one year - until a more permanent solution is found;
- And....tenants get support from QHC - and so do the homeowners and landlords;
- And...rent is paid: there's a financial guarantee for each unit.

[Quality Housing Coalition's website - straight to the form to sign up for more info!](#)

At the press conference, we learned more about how QHC is helping people, and is poised to help even more.

Victoria Morales, with the Quality Housing Coalition, says the goal is to pair some of those families with Portland area residents who have unused space in their homes. "They may have an extra room, they may have an extra two rooms in their house, they may have a granny flat or an accessory dwelling unit," she said. "And they may not have thought that they really could be a part of the solution to the housing crisis that we're seeking." (taken from the Maine Public coverage available here: [Home Stay Program](#))

Please check it out - please spread the word.

Sincerely,
Kate Snyder



SOCIETY FOR EAST END ARTS, SEA, OPEN STUDIOS TOUR AUGUST 5TH

The East End Open Studios Tour for the Society for East End Artists is having its Open Studios Tour on Saturday, August 5th (rain date, Sunday August 6th) from 10am to 4 pm. Tour maps will show the location of each open studio. For more information, see www.seaportland.org.

COFFEE & CLIMATE: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BREWERIES

As part of the Coffee & Climate monthly speaker series, the One Climate Future team invites you to August's Coffee & Climate Event: **Sustainability in the Breweries, Thursday, August 10th from 5 pm to 7 pm at Island Dog Brewing at 125 John Roberts Road**, South Portland. The event, celebrating sustainability and resilience in Maine's brewery industry will be hosted with representatives from Orange Bike Brewing Co., Island Dog Brewing and Luke

Truman, Sustainability Coordinator for the Craft Beverage Sector at New England Environmental Finance Center. Several leaders in the industry will share the ways they have learned to run their businesses in a way that benefits their employees, helps communities, and reduces impacts on the environment. No registration required.

Motor Vehicle Thefts on the Rise in Portland

The Portland Police Department reports that the number of motor vehicles stolen in Portland has significantly risen in 2023. Last year there were two reports of stolen vehicles between July 1-16, while this year there have been 14. Year-to-date numbers show 66 thefts in 2023, compared to 46 in 2022.

The Portland Police Department is urging its citizens to take measures to decrease the chances of having your motor vehicle stolen. They have seen everything from windows being broken to gain entry, to a theft when someone left their vehicle running with the keys in the ignition while they made a delivery.

The following are tips to help you avoid becoming a victim:

- Park in a well-lit area if available.
- Keep the doors of your unattended vehicles locked and the windows shut.
- Do not leave items of value in your vehicle, including tools.
- Lock your glove box, which should only store your registration and insurance cards.
- Do not keep a spare vehicle key hidden in the same vehicle.
- If possible, keep your vehicle parked under a lighted area that you can check from your residence.
- If you have a surveillance security system at home, include your vehicle in the angle of your camera.
- And finally, be a good witness for your neighbors, co-workers, and fellow citizens. Pay attention and be aware of what is going on in your neighborhood and other places that you frequent throughout the course of your day.

Free Summer Community Concerts in Fort Allen Park

Friends of the Eastern Promenade host FREE, family-friendly concert series on Thursdays, 6 p.m. at the Fort Allen Park Bandstand. The remaining concerts are:

- August 3rd [The Empress](#)
- August 10th [Muddy Ruckus](#)

- August 17th Samuel James

Free Summer Concerts in Lincoln Park: LoveLincoln Park

Just beyond Munjoy Hill, at the corner of Franklin and Congress Streets, the Friends of Lincoln Park are presenting a free concert series on Tuesdays, 6-7:30 pm. The remaining concerts are:

August 1: Blues Prophets, good time blues for dancing and having fun; and

August 8, The Renovators, playing original rootsy-rock, blues, soul, swing, country and a lot more.

For more information, see lovelincolnpark.org

MHNO Announcements:

The Activities Committee is in search of households who want to participate in the inaugural **Munjoy Hill Hidden Treasures Yard Sale**. This will be a MHNO-sponsored, neighborhood wide reuse/replace/recycle event. If interested and for more information, email info@munjoyhill.org.

MHNO Needlecraft Sundays have paused for the Summer. They will resume Sept. 10th.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE:

Greetings, Munjoy Hill Friends and Neighbors!

So far Maine has been fortunate to avoid the extreme temperatures plaguing other parts of the world. We were also lucky the winds kept the Canadian wildfire smoke away in June and for most of July. But given all of the global climate disruption, it seems inevitable that we will eventually be impacted by smoke or other climate extremes.

*The MHNO is assessing how we can do our small part to address sustainability and climate change. This month we are introducing a monthly column, **MHNO Sustainable Living**, to be written by MHNO's immediate past president, Maggy Wolf. Other MHNO Board Members are also in the process of assessing what projects we could undertake. If you have thoughts about projects you would like to engage in with your Munjoy Hill neighbors, please email info@munjoyhill.org. And expect to hear more in the future*

*through **MHNO Sustainable Living** about how you can join with your neighbors and others to work toward environmental goals.*

Hope to see you at a concert, at the open studios tour, or otherwise around the neighborhood,

Barbara

Barbara Vestal

President, MHNO

b.vestal@munjoyhill.org

The next monthly business meeting of the 13-members of the Board of Directors of the MHNO will be held on Monday, August 7th 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.

Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization | 92 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101

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