

CITY COUNCIL E-MAILS

October 5, 2020 Council Meeting

ADDENDUM

The following e-mails were received:

October 1, 2020 (after 9:00 a.m.) – **October 5, 2020** (before 4:00 p.m.)

If you need further information, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 610-7208.

From: [Frank Ferraro via FormMail.com](#)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: Columbus Day
Date: Saturday, October 3, 2020 12:50:58 PM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Frank Ferraro (fferraro2010@gmail.com) on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 11:50:56

address: 55 Post Road

comments: I understand that the Portsmouth City Council is considering the elimination of Columbus Day as a holiday. I ask that the Council not do away with Columbus Day.

Columbus has been the object of revisionist efforts to paint him with all of the ills of European exploration and expansion. Columbus, the man, was a courageous explorer and certainly not the criminal and slave trader that some so-called historians have tried to make him out to be.

For much of its history, the United States considered Columbus a man worthy of admiration. Columbus Day is one of America's oldest patriotic holidays, first celebrated in the 18th century. America has more monuments to Columbus than any other nation in the world. Generations of American school children studied his life and accomplishments.

Teachers held him up as an example of a person of character, who overcame strong opposition and great disappointment but never gave up trying to prove what he believed to be true.

Since 1992, however, the reputation of Columbus has suffered at the hands of special interest groups who have used this 15th century Renaissance navigator to further their 21st century political and social agendas.

As a result, today Columbus is often depicted as a slave trader, racist, and even "the Hitler of the 15th century." A small but vocal number of historians, journalists, text-book writers and teachers have helped spread these charges despite their questionable foundation in historical fact.

They have done so principally by judging a quintessentially Renaissance man and his actions by contemporary values.

Despite this controversy, Italian Americans continue to hold Columbus in high regard both for his historic achievements and also because Columbus Day is the only day our nation recognizes the heritage of the 18 million Americans of Italian descent, who are relentlessly stereotyped by the entertainment, news and advertising industries the other 364 days of the year. Eliminating Columbus Day would be an insult to all those Italian Americans who have contributed so much to our society.

Increasingly, Italian American communities are finding their Columbus Day celebrations marred by demonstrations and their First Amendment rights denied by special interest groups who sometimes turn violent.

There is no reason to substitute another holiday for Columbus Day as there is already an Indigenous Peoples' Day. According to Wikipedia, "The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on August 9th each year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population. This event also recognizes the achievements and contributions that indigenous people make to improve world issues such as environmental protection."

The Council should declare August 9th Portsmouth's Indigenous Peoples' Day and leave Columbus Day in October.

COLUMBUS: FACT VS FICTION

In 2019, Commission for Social Justice, the anti-defamation arm of the Order Sons of Italy in America, commissioned a study on Columbus that was prepared by Dona De Sanctis, Ph.D., with contributions from Columbus scholars Robert Royal, Ph.D., president of the Faith and Reason Institute; Joseph Scafetta, Jr. and David Curfman, M.D., president of the National Columbus Celebration Association in Washington, D.C. The following is taken from that study.

FICTION: COLUMBUS DID NOT DISCOVER THE AMERICAS. THE VIKINGS DID.

FACT: Did Columbus “discover” America? In every significant way, he did. Even if others visited the continent sporadically before he did, their voyages had no historical significance.

Columbus’ voyages, however, marked the end of thousands of years of isolation between the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the world. The recorded history of the Americas and the Caribbean starts with Columbus.

FICTION: COLUMBUS FOUND SOPHISTICATED NATIVE CIVILIZATIONS.

FACT: Most of the native tribes Columbus found were hunter-gatherers who engaged in bloody tribal wars and, in the case of the Arawaks, Caribs and Canibs, slavery, torture and cannibalism.

To survive, the native populations depended on “slash-and-burn” cultivation of the land along with hunting, fishing and collecting edible wild plants, seeds and shellfish. They had no written language, history or literature. In their struggle for survival, these peoples were not the champions of the environment that they are often portrayed as today.

FICTION: COLUMBUS WAS A SLAVE-TRADER.

FACT: Columbus never owned any slaves or brought any to the Western Hemisphere from Africa.

During his first voyage in 1492, Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic). There, with the help of a tribe of friendly Taino Indians, he built a fort called Navidad and left 40 of his crew there when he returned to Spain in January 1493.

On his return to Hispaniola in November 1493, he learned that all his men had been massacred by another Taino tribe. Columbus and his men fought with these Indians, capturing about 2,000 and in 1495, sent 500 of these prisoners of war (POW) to Spain to be sold as slaves, as was the custom in 15th century Europe. He sent another 30 Indian POWs to Spain the following year, but the Spanish monarchs ordered him to stop the practice and he never again sent Indians to Europe to be sold as slaves.

It is important to note that slavery was not unique to Europe. Columbus found it practiced in the Caribbean by the Caribs and Canibs who made slaves of the tribes they conquered and also ate their victims. (Hence the word “cannibal”.)

Later Spanish explorers in Mexico and Central America found that even the more advanced civilizations of the Aztecs, Incas and Mayans kept slaves. These civilizations also practiced torture, ritual murder and the human sacrifice of their own women and children as well as of prisoners of war.

Such practices horrified the Spanish and caused them to look down on native cultures. In fact, the Spanish arrival in the New World was the decisive factor that eventually ended human sacrifice and cannibalism there.

FICTION: COLUMBUS WAS A RACIST.

FACT: No evidence indicates that Columbus thought the islanders he met were racially inferior in any way. In fact, in the journal of his first voyage, Columbus describes the Tainos and other tribes as “well-made with fine shapes and faces...their eyes were large and very beautiful...straight-limbed without exception and handsomely shaped....” He praises their generosity, innocence and intelligence, saying they could “readily become Christians as they have a good understanding.”

Initially, Columbus had friendly relations with the five Taino tribes he met during his first voyage. These relations soured with four of the five tribes after he found the colony of men he had left behind in the fort Navidad had been slaughtered.

He became good friends, however, with one tribe of Tainos led by Chief Guacanagari, who helped Columbus build his fort and fought alongside Columbus against the Taino tribes that wanted to kill the Europeans. Guacanagari paid heavily for his friendship with Columbus. His village was burned; he was wounded in battle and fled to the mountains where he died.

FICTION: COLUMBUS COMMITTED GENOCIDE.

FACT: The destruction of the native populations of North and South America over the centuries is a complex historical tragedy. No one knows exactly how many people were here when the Europeans arrived. The numbers vary from 8 million to 145 million. Many researchers believe the number to be around 40 million.

Columbus made four voyages to the Caribbean in a twelve-year period (1492-1504), spending from only seven months to two years and nine months (including the year he was shipwrecked on his fourth voyage.) It is inconceivable that he could have killed millions of people in so short a time.

Responsibility for the deaths of many thousands of natives can justly be attributed to the Spanish conquistadors and other Europeans who followed Columbus here. But even in this case, since there were more natives than Europeans, the loss of millions of lives could not have been caused by the Spaniards' warfare and forced labor alone.

In fact, most of the native populations perished because they lacked immunity to such diseases as small pox, typhoid and diphtheria as well as the non-fatal childhood diseases of measles and mumps that they caught from the Spanish explorers. These diseases were not transmitted deliberately and cannot be considered a tool of genocide. Scholars estimate that 80% of those who died were infected without ever seeing a white man.

Tragic as this epidemic was, it also bears remembering that prior to the Europeans' arrival, the Western Hemisphere was no Garden of Eden. New medical research on pre-Columbian mummies in Peru, Chile and remote areas far from the early European colonies reveals that tuberculosis, long thought European in origin, was rampant among the Indian tribes before the arrival of Columbus.

Arthritis, periodontal disease and significant bone erosion also afflicted the native populations well before the voyages of Columbus and other Europeans. Most adults, only in their 20s and 30s, had terrible teeth or none at all. Very few lived past age 40. The native populations gave the early explorers syphilis, which they brought back to Europe.

Clearly, blaming Columbus for the extermination of the native populations is as fair as blaming the native populations for killing people who die from using tobacco and cocaine, which the natives introduced to the Europeans.

FICTION: COLUMBUS DESTROYED THE BALANCE BETWEEN MAN & NATURE.

FACT: Columbus and the other Europeans brought with them Old World agricultural techniques, including crop rotation and animal breeding. They also introduced new tools (including the wheel) as well as new plants and domesticated animals, including the horse.

These imports led to improved farming methods, a greater diversity of crops and a more dependable food supply that benefited the native populations. Perfected over the centuries, they have helped make the nations in the Western Hemisphere a significant source of food for the rest of the world.

FICTION: COLUMBUS AND OTHER EUROPEANS STOLE THE NATIVES' LAND.

FACT: A sad fact of human civilization is that powerful nations usurp the land of the vanquished. The Spanish conquistadors who followed Columbus in the 16th and 17th centuries were establishing an empire through military conquest. They did what Egypt, Persia, Rome and China did before them in the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

They also did what the Aztecs, Mayans, Incas and many North American Indians did in the Americas. "The Iroquois Federation in North America subjugated so many Indians," writes Richard Gambino, "that historian Francis Parkman calls them 'the Romans of the New World.'" But Columbus himself had no part in this.

Ultimately, the United States of America became a haven for the poor and oppressed from all over the world, who find opportunities and freedoms here that their own countries deny them. And it all started with Columbus.

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Engage: Submit

REMOTE_ADDR: 75.67.107.113

From: [Paul Mannle via FormMail.com](mailto:Paul.Mannle@formmail.com)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: Council Rules
Date: Monday, October 5, 2020 1:14:30 PM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Paul Mannle (p_mannle@yahoo.com) on Monday, October 5, 2020 at 12:14:29

address: 1490 ISLINGTON STREET

comments: Dear Councilors & City Staff,

Thank you for all the work that you do.

I am writing this because of two items I have noticed – in the last Council meeting of 9/22/2020 & in the Council Packet for tonight’s meeting of 10/5/2020.

During the last Council meeting of 9/22/2020, after the Mayor had read the nominations to be considered, Mr. Lazenby interjected several times regarding the HDC appointments. The City Attorney made mention of a memorandum requested by Mr. Lazenby and shared with the Council. Then Mr. Lazenby stunning made the announcement that he was nominating Dan Rawlings to the HDC.

And now in the Council Packet for tonight’s meeting, under Mr. Lazenby’s name, is his nomination for Dan Rawling to the HDC.

May I take this opportunity to remind all of the Council Rules specifically:

RULE 23: Except for the committees created solely by the Mayor, the Mayor shall submit for approval by the City Council all nominations of non-City Councilors to committees. All nominations shall be laid on the table until the next regularly scheduled Council meeting. The Mayor shall make all appointments of the City Councilors to committees.

RULE 42: All letters, memos reports and other information provided or circulated to the City Council by staff members or received as communications to the Mayor and City Council from any person shall be included with the Agenda packet of a City Council meeting and publicly available by 5:00 pm on Friday prior to each Council meeting.

Since there is no such memorandum in the Council Packet for 9/22/2020 nor 10/5/2020, and I cannot find any ordinance which supersedes these 2 rules, I submit that Mr. Lazenby is violating BOTH of these rules TWICE, which all of the Councilors voted unanimously for 1/8/2020. I would also add that any new interpretation of rules & ordinances which pertain to the City Council should have been disclosed & discussed & voted on at the same 1/8/2020 organizational meeting.

Paul M. Mannle
1490 Islington Street

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REMOTE_ADDR: 24.147.241.185

From: [Maria E Elliott via FormMail.com](#)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: Jim Splaine's Use of Social Media
Date: Monday, October 5, 2020 3:03:09 PM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
Maria E Elliott (beemee@comcast.net) on Monday, October 5, 2020 at 14:03:08

address: 141 Sagamore Ave

comments: Jim shared an "opinion" post today on Facebook that was downright disrespectful and divisive to say the least. The comments that accompanied the post where equally as repulsive. I ask that you live up to the higher standard that you profess to hold given your status in the community. I have written to you in the past regarding your blatant disregard for conservatives in this community. You will get your wish shortly as my husband and I have decided that Portsmouth is not a place that we can call home. Prior to Portsmouth we live in an entirely "inclusive" community In NH that we were proud to call home for thirty years. I wish that were still true.

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REMOTE_ADDR: 24.61.217.203

From: [Mary Lou McElwain via FormMail.com](#)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: Masks at the polls
Date: Sunday, October 4, 2020 8:54:26 AM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
Mary Lou McElwain (ml259@comcast.net) on Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 07:54:24

address: 259 South Street

comments: I certainly hope that the mask mandate ordinance is upheld in each ward on November 3rd. The ordinance is clear. The police department needs to enforce that and should have figured out how as soon as ,if not before ,the ordinance was enacted. For Chief Merner to say as quoted in Portsmouth Herald October 1, 2020, that “ part of the solution would be to get any maskless people in and out as quickly as possible” is not an option for those of us working at the polls. Per Secretary of State, election officials can set up a voting site outdoors at the polls to accommodate anyone not willing or able to wear a mask. At Ward Five we only had two individuals who would not wear masks and who agreed to use that option. We need the police department to uphold the mandate. At these voting sites we are not dealing with tourists who are not aware of the mandate. The City Administration has done a great job with signage and education through the newspaper and online . Every!

Portsmouth resident should know the mandate by now.
Please assure us that it will be enforced.
Thank you.
Mary Lou McElwain
Selectperson Ward Five

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Engage: Submit

REMOTE_ADDR: 71.235.15.119

From: [Robin Albert Lehman via FormMail.com](#)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: Percent for Art
Date: Saturday, October 3, 2020 9:56:43 AM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
Robin Albert Lehman (ralbert52@hotmail.com) on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 08:56:41

address: 401 State St #M304

comments: Dear Councilors,

I just read the Herald article regarding the upcoming request to exempt DPW from the Percent for Art ordinance. I am against this request. Do not deny the citizens of Portsmouth their art. Art lifts us up, especially during these unsettling time. Artists need our support more than ever. The piece of art that could result from this project need not be behind a fence near the actual project. It could be placed on Pierce Island for all visitors to view.

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Engage: Submit

REMOTE_ADDR: 24.61.223.31

From: [M. Christine Dwyer via FormMail.com](#)
To: [Mayor Becksted](#); [CC - Splaine](#); [cc McEachern](#); [CC-Peter Whelan](#); [CC - Cliff Lazenby](#); [CC - Kennedy](#); [CC - Huda](#); [CC-John Tabor](#); [CC-Paige Trace](#); [City Council](#); [CityCouncil Clerk](#)
Subject: public art
Date: Monday, October 5, 2020 11:33:32 AM

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
M. Christine Dwyer (cdwyer@rmcres.com) on Monday, October 5, 2020 at 10:33:31

address: 600 Broad St

comments: Please consider using the public art funds generated from the sewer project for Peirce Island. I understand that it seems impractical to apply the funds at the plant itself where few would see an art work. But there are many other options on the Island or on the way (Four Tree walkway perhaps) where an appropriate work could be enjoyed by children and families who come to visit....or by those who come to walk their dogs. The planning we did for Prescott Park showed how few amenities we have in the City geared toward children--and we viewed many concepts for such work during the planning process. I think an art work enjoyed by children and dedicated to Rus Wilson somewhere on the Island would be an appropriate use of the reserved monies.

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REMOTE_ADDR: 174.242.78.125