

CITY COUNCIL E-MAILS

ADDENDUM

Received: January 21, 2021 (after 9:00 a.m.) – January 25, 2021 (4:00 p.m.)

January 25, 2021 Council Meeting

New content:

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by CJ Fleck ([cj@seacoastbikes.org](mailto:cj@seacoastbikes.org)) on Friday, January 22, 2021 at 19:53:28

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address: 6 Rockaway Street

comments: Dear Mayor and Councilors:

As the incoming president of Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders (SABR), I want to acknowledge the due diligence the Council has taken with regards to the Middle Street bike lane project. As a group, we were pleased when - in the face of some uncertainty about design - the Council asked for data and analysis from both a nationally recognized consultant and the NH DOT. Reading through their findings, we are also encouraged to see that both sources indicate the City is going in the right direction. Introducing new bicycle infrastructure always requires minor adjustments, especially from drivers, but with some give and take all around, protected bike lanes will play an important role in Portsmouth's multi-modal transportation future.

SABR has a simple goal: encourage cycling as part of our City's way of life, for all ages and reasons that include commuting, leisure, sport, and day-to-day living. We very much agree with and support the goals of the City's Master Plan – to make cycling safe and easy throughout Portsmouth. Our City is defining itself as a leader in this field. As the City continues to implement its specific master plan for pedestrians and bicyclists, we will be delighted to continue to partner with the Council and City departments. We have a lot of knowledge, experience, and growing membership.

Here's to a safe future for Portsmouth's cyclists!

CJ Fleck  
SABR Board President, Portsmouth Resident

David Allen  
SABR Board Vice President, Portsmouth Resident

Gerald Duffy  
SABR Board Secretary, Portsmouth Resident

Steve Gerhartz  
SABR Board Treasurer, Kittery Point Resident

Matt Glenn  
SABR Board Member, Portsmouth Resident

Andy Goodell  
SABR Board Member, Dover Resident

Mary Malloy  
SABR Board Member, Portsmouth Resident

Anne Poubeau  
SABR Board Member, Portsmouth Resident

includeInRecords: on

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Marie Bodi ([marie@mcnabbgroup.com](mailto:marie@mcnabbgroup.com)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 08:44:32

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address: 3 Pleasant Street, Portsmouth, NH

comments: Dear City Councilors,

We did want to officially advise the Council, the three restaurants along Penhallow Street, Massimo, Cure & Ceres Bakery have all entered into a signed letter of agreement for the partial street closure, while maintaining their ability for outside dining the months of March & April (the closure time frame.). This letter of agreement was executed on January 19th and provided to City Staff immediately thereafter. We are now working with the respective departments within the City to address any remaining concerns. Thank you.

includeInRecords: on

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Gerald Duffy ([Gduffy44@gmail.com](mailto:Gduffy44@gmail.com)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 09:36:18

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address: 428 Pleasant St, Unit 3

comments: Mr Mayor and City Councilors:

Portsmouth doesn't need to "reopen" — with the exception of a few restaurants forced into hibernation, it's not closed. The Council doesn't seem to understand that. Urgent pandemic-related action is still required, but the Council needs to step out of the way and let it happen with the urgency required.

What made last year's Citizen Response Task Force and its subcommittees so successful was their focus on urgency, problem-solving, and fast action. A group of resident volunteers — with a variety of expertise and all with full-time jobs of their own — worked directly with the City Manager and department staff to expedite the expansion of outdoor dining, some meeting multiple times a week. Their authority and funding was carefully defined and they did an heroic job. Their work isn't done yet but it's being stymied.

In December, the Council couldn't leave well alone. By turning the task force and subcommittees into blue ribbon committees and insisting on the inclusion of a Councilor as member of the group, the Mayor has effectively slowed the group's effort to a halt, just when more urgent action and support is required for the coming year. The new need for parliamentary procedure alone costs the group valuable time in its weekly, one-hour meetings.

The "Mayor's directive" as delivered to the Blue Ribbon Committee to Reopen Portsmouth by Councilor Huda is an all-caps show-stopper. Anyone who has worked on action-based projects can see that immediately. The "all businesses" emphasis (stemming from Councilor Kennedy's take on things and ginned up complaints) bears little resemblance to reality. As we all know, the pandemic has been very selective with the damage it's caused. Some businesses have actually flourished. Other businesses, like law firms who've taken PPP money whether they needed it or not, haven't skipped a beat. Councilor Kennedy's complaints about businesses being ignored is — like so many of her views — based on personal preferences supported by anecdotes. The collective experience of the many people who worked hard on the task force would confirm that.

The restaurants — who raised the alarm in the first place — and performing arts are collectively what bring so many visitors to town — they are a central, essential attraction and they still need help to survive. In the world of triage, they need priority. Our retailers depend on them too and will fail or succeed along with them. The resources required to make the Mayor's "block-by-block collaboration" by "all businesses" a reality are so obviously beyond the means and capacity of this group that they are laughable. Except, that's it's not funny. Logistically, the Mayor's directive is impossible.

Bottom line: the Mayor and Councilor Huda need to step back and let the group do what it does best: solve problems quickly without the kind political interference or micro-management evident now. As its previous success proves, the group has its finger on the pulse of city businesses, communicates with them, and knows who needs what kind of help and when. Please let the Council know you support these volunteers and to ease up on the stifling control.

Sincerely,  
Gerald Duffy

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**The above letter from Gerald Duffy was also submitted by:**

It was submitted by Dixie ([dixiemcleantarbell@gmail.com](mailto:dixiemcleantarbell@gmail.com)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 10:14:10

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address: 25 Driftwood Lane

includeInRecords: on

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Matthew Glenn ([matthglenn@gmail.com](mailto:matthglenn@gmail.com)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 10:35:04

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address: 34 Harrison Ave

comments: Mayor and Councilors,

I look forward to the presentation tonight from Toole Design regarding the Middle St/Lafayette design, and to your discussion. It has been a comprehensive and professional study, and I hope your discussion is forward-thinking.

The many details they bring up are worth careful consideration, but in the bigger picture I'll quote from our Secretary of Transportation nominee Pete Buttigieg in his confirmation hearings last week:

"There are so many ways that people get around, and I think often we've had an auto-centric view that has forgotten, historically, about all of the other different modes. We want to make sure anytime we're doing a street design that it enables cars, and bicycles, and pedestrians and any other modes — and businesses — to co-exist in a positive way, and we should be putting funding behind that."

and also:

"Over the course of my lifetime, we've made a lot of gains as a country on dealing with the effects of drunk driving on road safety and fatalities, only to see distracted driving rise to become a new and deadly effect. I believe the number stands at something on the order of 36,000 or 38,000 lost in a single year to crashes on the road. We cannot accept that and we need to move toward a vision where every trip is a safe one, whether it's long or short, on any of America's roadways."

Sincerely,  
Matthew Glenn

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by charlie griffin (charles griffin [esq@gmail.com](mailto:esq@gmail.com)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 10:45:36

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address: 210 Hillside Drive,Portsmouth

comments: While I have no doubt that Chief Newton is worth every penny of his initial salary of \$148,557.55, I take exception to the provision in Section 3 which grants him an annual COLA increase in his base salary of between 2 and 5 percent each July 1 based upon the average for the Boston-Cambridge -Newton -MA-NH All Items Index as computed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the most recent 10 year calendar years.

I recognize that this language appears in all other employee contracts and not just this one, but feel the Council needs to revisit it for the following reasons.

1. The area covered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is overly broad. Are we to believe there is no difference in the cost of living between Portsmouth and Boston,Cambridge and Newton?

2.While Boston, Cambridge and Newton are clearly defined, what does the reference to MA-NH all items mean? The entire states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire?In this day and age is there not a narrower area e.g.Portland/Manchester that can be used to calculate increases in the cost of living for Portsmouth ?

3. Why does this contract provide for an annual minimal COLA increase of 2 percent, when the national cost of living increase established by the Bureau of Labor for the quarter ending September 30, 2020 was 1.3%, 1.6% for 2019 ,2.8% for 2018, and 2.0% for 2017 for an average of 1.925 % for the last four years.These are the same figures used to calculate annual increases in social security payments.

Given the difficult times in which the City finds itself with projected increases in the contributions to the State Retirement System as well as the possible reinstatement of Donor Town Funding under HB 504, the Council needs to look for new ways to save money and I submit re-examining the COLA language in employee contracts would be a good place to start.

As always, I thank you for your consideration.  
includeInRecords: on

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Linda Briolat ([lbriolat@comcast.net](mailto:lbriolat@comcast.net)) on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 14:55:41

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address: 260 Thornton St Portsmouth

comments: I am unclear why the mayor feels the need to have a Blue Ribbon committee to reopen the city when the task force was very successful last summer except for the roadblocks put up by some council members. That group had the downtown businesses best interest at heart and I'm not sure that is the same motivation that exists with this Blue Ribbon committee currently. The wheel doesn't need to be reinvented the task force has laid out a plan that needs to be followed. Not sure why you think that you need to start from square one which will set every business back. You want us to support downtown and restore the vibrancy that we all know to be Portsmouth. Then you all should let those people who know best what the businesses need, the task force , do their work.

I'm unclear if you all are running for re-election or not because there are about four people who actually seem to care about this city and I'm not sure what the rest of you are doing.

As I watch the meetings I wonder how long you all have lived here. Not as long as I have. I have vested interest here. I went all through school here and after college came back and was very proud to be a Portsmouth Teacher for 40 years. I love this city as did my parents and grandparents. I'm unhappy when I see people who appear to be putting roadblocks up during this stressful time when everyone needs a little help.  
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