

Synthia Ravell

From: Tom Hart <commissionerhart@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 2:24 PM
To: Synthia Ravell
Subject: FW: My decision to step down - Board of Ethics

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Marian Steimke](#)
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2020 5:17 PM
To: votencyperson@gmail.com; madbarrister@aol.com
Cc: johntaborportsmouth@gmail.com; rgamester@comcast.net; commissionerhart@gmail.com; amwjcw@comcast.net; [Onosko, Joe](#); [Robert P. Sullivan](#); [Synthia Ravell](#); [Marian Steimke](#)
Subject: FW: My decision to step down - Board of Ethics

Ms. Pearson and Attorney MacCallum:

Please see the email below from Joe Onosko.

The contact email for Commissioner Tom Hart is: CommissionerHart@gmail.com

Marian Steimke

City of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801
603.610.7759 (Direct Dial)

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From: Onosko, Joe [mailto:jonosko@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2020 3:17 PM
To: Marian Steimke <msteimke@cityofportsmouth.com>
Cc: johntaborportsmouth@gmail.com; rgamester@comcast.net; amwjcw@comcast.net; Karen Conard <kconard@cityofportsmouth.com>; Robert P. Sullivan <rpsullivan@cityofportsmouth.com>; PC Com Hart <CommissionerHart@gmail.com>
Subject: My decision to step down

Dear Board of Ethics Panel Members,

I regret to inform you that I've decided to remove — not recuse — myself from the Pop Up Portsmouth/NH ethics inquiry before you. I had looked forward to our work together.

I do not use the word "recusal" given its meaning; that is, "to excuse oneself from a case because of a potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality."

This definition does not apply to me in this particular case, as I have no doubt that I could have served as a fair and impartial participant.

I campaigned for Councilor Kennedy and placed her sign in our front yard during the 2019 election season, and have much appreciated the superior level of respect, and informed and thoughtful deliberation exhibited week in and week out among the members of the current council.

Given the gravity of the charge and the divisiveness of the issue on social media platforms, I do not want Councilor Kennedy to have any doubts about the fairness of the process

Fortunately, my fellow commissioner, Tom Hart, has agreed to take my place as the Police Commission's representative. Commissioner Hart is an ideal participant for this task, as he has 28 years of experience investigating, testifying, and prosecuting cases for Strafford County.

(Commissioner Shaheen had scheduling conflicts with some of the meetings days and times and, therefore, could not be considered.)

Finally, it is disappointing to see that Arthur Clough has called into question my ability to be impartial on this matter and to mischaracterize my level of affect when we briefly discussed the Pop Up issue.

The only moment that our chat became briefly animated was after we agreed that Trump's presidency has been quite troubling and began to discuss how best to remedy the problem at the polling booth in November.

I may have commented that Esther's actions were not collaborative but felt in no position to render a determinative judgment about an "ethics violation" given a definition will be difficult and paramount. I also told Arthur that I hadn't been following the issue closely in the Herald.

I know that this Panel will do its due diligence and I wish you the best along the way.

Sincerely,

Joe Onosko, Chair of the Portsmouth Police Commission