

Greg Mitchell - Congress Square Park

From: Rosanne Graef <rgraef@gwi.net>
To: Rosanne Graef <rgraef@gwi.net>
Date: 9/6/2013 12:42 PM
Subject: Congress Square Park
Attachments: CSRDG - 5.22.13 Position.pdf; HCDC Remarks.June.2013.pdf

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to express my continued opposition to the proposed sale of part of Congress Square Park to Rockbridge Capital for use as the site of a future event center for the Westin Harbor View Hotel. Rather than repeat myself, I have attached my remarks from a meeting of the Congress Square Redesign Study Group and also a meeting of the Housing and Urban Development Committee earlier this summer. I still believe the reasons I gave then are sound, but I also feel that now the whole process of this proposal has become so flawed that to continue with any sale of land at this point would be a grave error. In addition to my earlier concerns, we now have the situation where confusion reigns as a parallel visioning process for the entire Congress Square is being carried out, as well as a traffic study to determine the feasibility and advisability of returning High and State Streets to two-way traffic. How can sound decision-making about any of these issues take place in such a rushed and disorganized environment?

For these and many other reasons, I urge you to vote against the proposed sale of land at Congress Square Park and to return to the Congress Square Redesign Study Group's request for an RFP for the entire park space. Once some thoughtful proposal and options have been developed and presented to the City Council and the public and once the traffic study has been completed, then proceed with decisions about the future development and uses of this pivotal location in the heart of Portland's Downtown.

Sincerely,

Rosanne Graef, 30A Salem St.
West End Neighborhood Association, President and
Representative to the Congress Square Redesign Study Group

My name is Rosanne Graef, I live at 30 Salem Street. In your packet you have a copy of the position I submitted on behalf of the West End Neighborhood Association in opposition to the current proposal from Rockbridge Capital to build an event center on part of Congress Square Park.

Tonight I personally want to emphasize some additional points.

1) Congress Square is in the center of Town. There already is a one-story building next to the park (the restaurant section of the Eastland Hotel). The event center Rockbridge is proposing is also a one-story building. This is not an efficient use of in-town space where the code allows buildings up to 150' in height.

2) The attractive drawing of the part of the park that will remain open public space is not part of the proposal, it is merely a concept—there's no plan for benches, plantings, a fountain or the multi-colored sculpture billed as a "memorial to art". What's left for the public is roughly what's there now between the Congress Street sidewalk and the Union Station clock.

3) What will this proposal provide for Portland in the long run? The current emphasis on housing in the city is to have more dense housing on the peninsula and encourage people to not have cars, but to walk, bike and use public transportation. It's those future residents and the residents already here who will bring long-lasting vitality to the downtown. They need accessible, attractive open space. Congress Square Park is part of more than just a business and retail center, it is part of a neighborhood. A redesign of the entire Congress Square Park could create a vibrant core for this Portland neighborhood.

4) An event center offers one attraction to draw people into the plaza at any particular time, and is not an option that would have high use by the residents of Portland. Having more activities in the Park would attract residents and visitors alike and not make one private entity the dominant presence on the entire High Street block from Congress Street to Cumberland Avenue. The City of Portland could retain ownership of the park and offer leases to the Westin Harbor View, as well as the new Vinland restaurant, for outdoor seating and tables, kiosks could be built and leased to a variety of vendors for ice cream, flowers, fruits/vegetables, a newsstand, etc. Games could be installed such as chess or over-sized puzzles; in addition to plantings, a fountain or public art that's relaxing and fun to view. A variety of things to do and see in the park would draw more foot traffic into the entire area. It's the activity of people that brings vitality to a space, not buildings.

5) For decades Maine tourism has been built predominantly on individuals and families who visit to see what we have to offer, or on conventions and

The West End Neighborhood Association(WENA) would like to see Congress Square, and Congress Square Park specifically, designed, programmed and maintained in a manner befitting its location in the heart of the peninsula and the downtown. This site should not be the "gateway" to anything, but, rather, a desirable destination in its own right.

Over the past 10-15 years, Congress Square Park has been neglected while much attention has been given to other spaces such as Post Office/Tommy's Park, Deering Oaks, Monument Square, etc. A variety of financial and social forces have contributed to the deterioration of Congress Square Park. Perhaps Portland is only capable of concentrating on one public space at a time, resulting in a space needing to hit rock bottom before it can begin to resurface.

In 2008 when the order for the formation of this study group was passed by the City Council, Congress Square Park had reached that point. It's obvious that something needs to happen, but, as it stands now, with the ambiguity of the future ownership of the land the park occupies, this proposal is not it.

While we appreciate what Rockbridge has been through in getting to this stage, we don't think this offer should ever have been made to them by the City in the way in which it was. We could conceivably be comfortable with a long-term lease on the land, but in proposing to sell a public asset without notification to the public, we firmly believe someone made a grave mistake. Any idea to sell should have been an open process, available to all comers and bidders and therein lies our opposition.

We would request that an RFP for full-park designs be issued, as recommended by the CSRSG 2 years ago, so the public can see other visions of what Congress Square Park could be and hear other suggestions for ameliorating its current problems. The study group was tasked with investigating possibilities for improving the park, not with deciding whether it should be sold. WENA would like to see that process followed.

Therefore, on behalf of the West End Neighborhood Association, I vote no on this proposal.

Rosanne Graef
President, West End Neighborhood Association
PO Box 7898
Portland, ME 04112
www.wenamaine.org

Greg Mitchell - Fwd: Greater Portland Landmarks Comments on Proposed Congress Square Purchase & Sale Agreement

From: Greg Mitchell
Subject: Fwd: Greater Portland Landmarks Comments on Proposed Congress Square Purchase & Sale Agreement

>>> Sally-OHP <ohpinc@maine.rr.com> 9/6/2013 7:01 AM >>>

Mark and Jeff: Hilary Bassett asked that I forward to you this statement about the Purchase and Sale Agreement for a portion of the Congress Square Plaza as she did not have your email addresses when she sent this earlier this morning.

Thank you for your hard work on this issue and for considering our views.

Sally Oldham
 Chair, Public Issues Committee
 Greater Portland Landmarks Board of Trustees

Begin forwarded message:

From: Hilary Bassett <hbassett@portlandlandmarks.org>
Subject: Greater Portland Landmarks Comments on Proposed Congress Square Purchase & Sale Agreement
Date: September 6, 2013 1:59:51 AM EDT
To: "Brennan, Mike (mfpb@portlandmaine.gov)" <mfpb@portlandmaine.gov>, "damarshall@portlandmaine.gov" <damarshall@portlandmaine.gov>, "kdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov" <kdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov>, "jcoyne@portlandmaine.gov" <jcoyne@portlandmaine.gov>, "edsuslovic@portlandmaine.gov" <edsuslovic@portlandmaine.gov>, "janton@portlandmaine.gov" <janton@portlandmaine.gov>, "Jill Duson (jduson@maine.rr.com)" <jduson@maine.rr.com>, "nmm@portlandmaine.gov" <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>, Cheryl Leeman <cl@portlandmaine.gov>
Cc: Sally Oldham <ohpinc@maine.rr.com>, "AQJ@portlandmaine.gov" <AQJ@portlandmaine.gov>, Deb Andrews <DGA@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Mayor Brennan and Councilors: We would like to share a statement we have been working on in advance of the Council hearing on Monday regarding the proposed purchase and sale agreement regarding a portion of Congress Square Plaza. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Greater Portland Landmarks

Statement Regarding the Proposed Purchase & Sale Agreement for a Portion of Congress Square Plaza

Sept. 6, 2013

The proposed sale of a portion of Congress Square Plaza, combined with an integrated redevelopment of the event space, the remaining plaza and the adjacent public spaces has the

potential to be a win-win situation. However, there are several concerning provisions in the proposed Purchase & Sale agreement which we believe need to be amended before we can encourage the Council to enter into this agreement.

1. We are concerned that the Purchase & Sale calls for the City to transfer title to Rockbridge in 45-75 days, and then gives the City the right to require Rockbridge to transfer title back to the City at a later date if Rockbridge fails to meet certain conditions. This is a very unusual way to structure a real estate transaction. It makes it too difficult for the City to enforce the contingencies which are designed to guarantee a public benefit. The City should hold on to ownership of the land until Rockbridge shows that it is able to live up to the expectations and get required approvals. Then the City can convey the land.
2. We are concerned that the Purchase & Sale does not hold Rockbridge to a higher review standard when deciding whether to sell public park land. It calls for ordinary Planning Board site plan and Historic Preservation Board review for new construction using the standards that would be applicable for development on land which is privately owned. We have suggested before that as a pre-condition for the conveyance, the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Board should make a finding that Rockbridge's final plans will be integrated with the City's plans for the entire intersection and also result in creatively redesigned, high quality public open space in which the structure, the plaza, and the intersection redesign enhance each other. That language is contained in Paragraph 14 (c) of the Purchase & Sale in an aspirational way -- what the City is aspiring for in the planning process -- but there is no enforcement provision. There is no express contingency allowing the City to opt not to sell if Rockbridge fails to engage in a collaborative process which produces an integrated building and plaza design which is a vast improvement for the public.
3. Similarly we are concerned that the Purchase & Sale does not set the right standard for the Planning Authority. It says that the City can ask for the property back if the "Planning Authority" determines that the final plan is not of the quality of the plan presented on May 29, 2013. We believe the May 29 plan is not an appropriate reference and that it sets the bar too low. The May 29 plan is just the starting point. The entire planning process is designed to use a collaborative process to improve on that design. The Planning Authority -- the City Manager or the Planning Director -- needs to be able to say no to conveying land to Rockbridge if the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Board determine that Rockbridge's final plans are not integrated with the City's plans for the entire intersection and will not result in creatively redesigned, high quality public open space in which the structure, the plaza, and the intersection redesign enhance each other.
4. We are concerned that the standards for the public benefits are set too low. The relationship and interface of the public space to the immediately adjacent space of the event center is important, therefore, the proposed agreement should be amended so that the City requires more public benefit and retains more oversight of future changes. We have to assume that we will not end up with anything more than the minimum requirements. According to the restrictions included in the Purchase & Sale, Rockbridge could provide art displays only 6 days a year. Rockbridge could keep this event center use of the addition for only 10 years. Even though it is in the pedestrian activities district, it might be able take advantage of an exception which allows blank walls facing the Plaza if it meets minimal marketing requirements. As written, these changes would not even require Council approval unless Rockbridge proposed a non-hotel use.
5. Finally, two things that are related to but not part of the Purchase & Sale:
 - a) We think that it is essential that any money paid to purchase part of the plaza be earmarked for redevelopment of the public portion of the plaza including the relocation of the Union Station Clock. That way there is a secure source of funds to put toward implementation of plaza improvements, including relocation of the Union Station Clock.
 - b) Additionally a reasonable process must be established for relocation of the Clock so

that it is not just put back into storage and forgotten. The Clock is an important part of the City's history and merits a thoughtful relocation and placement in the public realm. Again, thank you for your hard work on this issue and for considering our views.

Hilary Bassett

Executive Director

Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.

93 High Street

Portland, ME 04101

www.portlandlandmarks.org

207 774-5561 ext 101

Sept. 3, 2013

M.P. AKERS
Portland, ME

Portland City Council
re: Workshop meeting (9/3)
386 Congress St.
Portland, ME 04112

RE: Congress Square Park

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

good ethics helped drive renovation of the Old Port district years ago. In contrast, a question the ethics behind a current force to sell the public park land known as "Congress Square Plaza".

- (1) Proponents of the idea to sell the public park to a company (hotel) seem motivated without concern for what such a sale could set off, a national trend: cities selling portions of their public parks to the highest bidder - or, in Portland's case, to lone bidder. The proposed local sale lacks fair bidding competition.
- (2) The proposed sale seems based upon disregard for traditional differences between private property ownership rights and public property ownership rights - in effect, an affront to each category if even one public park gets sold. Neighbors OPPOSE.
- (3) There is an appearance of a public-private monopoly business activity between City Council and a hotel due to unusual haste by City Hall in the process.

If unethical government prevails while the national economy is afloat, how many public parks will be sold once "Obamacare" starts tanking the economy? Is the prospective local buyer getting special treatment? Will other hotels demand equal opportunity regarding other Portland public parks? Sincerely, M.P. Akers

Wendy Stanley
70 Roberts Street
Portland, Maine 04102
(207) 899-2530

RECEIVED AUG 22 2013

Dear Mayor Brennan:

I Am extremely Bothered that the
City Appears to Be going Ahead with Selling
Congress Square.

We have so little public space Downtown -
And with the city growing - Friday Art
walks expanding 3000

How shortsighted - - -

And then I read the proposed price!
'524,000 for something we can't
Replace.

Please Do Not Allow This

Sincerely.

Wendy Stanley

Wendy Stanley
70 Roberts Street
Portland, Maine 04102
(207) 899-2530

RECEIVED AUG 22 2013

Hi Greg -
per attached letter to our mayor, I am deeply
troubled by a few people in city government
Deciding to sell Congress Square.
It is OUR space. We have so little public
space already.
Where is your vision? And for such a pretty
Amount of money...
I am an Architect, recently returned from
Paris, what a gift to witness honored public
spaces.
We have the ability to be a great city.
Wendy Stanley

Lori Paulette - Fwd: Re: Congress Square Park

From: Caitlin Cameron
To: Paulette, Lori
Date: 8/21/2013 10:48 AM
Subject: Fwd: Re: Congress Square Park

Lori,

below is public comment to be added to the record regarding the Rockbridge decision.

Thanks,

Caitlin

On 8/20/13 9:13 PM, craig foster wrote:

I attempted to respond to the idea section but was unsuccessful. The Council is making a huge case out of a simple issue. We only have one hotel in the city with convention type facilities. The westin if it has facilities would attract many more visitors and dollars to the city.

Where is the best place to get this point across?

Craig Foster

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Western Promenade Neighborhood Association" group.
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to wpromneighassn+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.
For more options, visit https://groups.google.com/groups/opt_out.

Caitlin Cameron, LEED AP, Associate AIA
Urban Designer | Planning & Urban Development Department
City of Portland, Maine
389 Congress Street, 4th Floor Portland, ME 04101
(207) 874-8901 | ccameron@portlandmaine.gov

Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, Under the Clock Tower:
<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/planning/undertheclocktower.asp>



August 21, 2013

Dear Members of the Housing and Community Development Committee:

The Portland Museum of Art favors the proposed sale of a portion of Congress Square to Rockbridge. We encourage the City Council to reinvest the funds from the sale into the redesign of the resulting open space in the plaza and re-engineering of the adjacent intersection. These improvements to the Congress Square intersection would greatly improve the pedestrian experience and enhance this gateway to downtown. The Portland Museum of Art, residents, and the surrounding businesses in the Arts District will benefit greatly from an event facility, a newly designed space for public art, and visitor-friendly outdoor areas.

Taking into account this opportunity from Rockbridge, along with what we hope is an aesthetically pleasing design that can be agreed upon by the appropriate committees and the public, the museum is encouraged to see this project moving forward through the City's development process.

Sincerely,

Mark H.C. Bessire
Director

Lori Paulette - Congress Square Park Land Sale

From: "Steve Hewins" <steve@portlandmaine.com>
To: "Kiladjian, Gerard" <GKiladjian@HartHotels.com>, "Bill Duggan (Videopo...
Date: 8/20/2013 11:44 AM
Subject: Congress Square Park Land Sale
Attachments: westin 2_0001.pdf

Good Morning Everyone –

Thanks to those of you who have sent me comments – I appreciate it!

My view is that open space in the downtown district is important and like any development or change in use, the values must be carefully weighed. After a few days researching this issue, meeting with city leaders, the New Castle folks, touring the project and talking with members of the arts and merchant community, I am convinced that the PDD needs to present a strong position of support for the land sale to Rockbridge, at both the Housing and Community Development Committee on Wednesday night, and in front of the City Council in a couple of weeks.

I have attached the CVB's letter of support as additional reference. As you know the Chamber of Commerce is highly supportive. Here are the key elements for the PDD's position as I see it:

- The Re-Visioning of Congress Square The park is not going away. It will be smaller – about 4800 square feet plus the sidewalk – roughly a 1/3 of the previous size. This sale will help define the square and make the overall re-visioning effort now underway more valid by removing any ambiguity with the park's dimensions and future use.
- Benefit to the Hospitality Industry With 4 hotels set to open within the next couple of years, the Westin's meeting/convention space is vital to the success of ALL hotels in the city. The other downtown hotels will benefit by handling the overflow when the Westin hosts a convention in this new facility, helping to expand Portland's seasonal industry to its potential as a year round visitor destination.
- Benefit to the Developing Arts District The increase in visitor traffic will be a benefit to all the burgeoning Arts District businesses and organizations. Presently, there does not appear to be enough commerce to support the district's viability, let alone its future growth. This area needs more community, municipal and business support; not a park that is an unnatural part of its history.
- Drawing more Cruise Visitors A revitalized Congress Sq. will attract passengers to a more safe and vibrant area, including a place to drop cruise passengers via a free or reduced rate Trolley. This affords passengers, and other visitors taking the service, the opportunity to venture deeper into Portland, and a downhill walk back to the waterfront via Congress Street (or a hop onto the shuttle for the return).
- Foundation for Growth This project represents the perfect balance between the opportunity for some open space, returning a commercial property back to the tax rolls, and a revitalization anchor for an area that has been on a 30-year decline trajectory. Rockbridge has shown itself to be a reliable, trustworthy partner for the city. We should return that support with an approval of this negotiated deal.

Best, Steve

Steve Hewins
 Interim Executive Director
 Portland's Downtown District
 549 Congress Street

Portland, Maine 04101
207.772.6828
www.portlandmaine.com
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August 20, 2013

Greg Mitchell
Director, Economic Development
The City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Room 308
Portland, Maine 04101

Dear Greg,

Maine College of Art is credited for investing in the restoration of the Porteous Building nearly 20 years ago and serving as a catalyst for the Arts District on downtown Congress Street. I am pleased to report that for the fourth year in a row, our enrollment has increased in both our undergraduate and graduate degree programs, now bringing more than 400 students annually to Portland from across Maine as well as from around the country and the world. Our attraction to art students is directly linked to the quality of life provided by our urban campus. We are pleased to continue our investment in the 500 block of Congress Street with the addition last fall of a third residence hall at 11 Shepley Street and the current renovation of 85 Free Street to house our new major in Textile and Fashion Design and the former Art Mart as our new Artists at Work Center and an additional classroom.

Almost half our 2000 living alumni make Maine their home, with the majority of those remaining in the Portland area, many of whom are local entrepreneurs.

To sustain the investment of the College and its people in Portland, we encourage initiatives that both promote the quality of life downtown while at the same time increasing the local tax base. We are especially supportive of business investment in public spaces that are available to the entire community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Tuski".

Donald Tuski, PhD.
President

Lori Paulette - RE: Congress Square

From: "Kiladjian, Gerard" <GKiladjian@HartHotels.com>
To: Steve Hewins <steve@portlandmaine.com>, "Bill Duggan (Videoport)" <vid...>
Date: 8/19/2013 3:55 PM
Subject: RE: Congress Square

Steve:

I have always been in support of this sale. Area businesses will benefit far more from an event center than a park. We have seen historically how many people the park attracts, and that will not change no matter how much more attractive we make it. An event center will allow the hotel to bring more conferences and events throughout the year, not just weddings on weekends, which will change the entire intersection and business climate in the area.

From a hotelier perspective, we have too many hotels coming to the market. This event center is actually critical to the success of the rest of us. If the Westin is able to host larger group events, they will have less rooms to sell to individual travelers who the rest of the hotel compete for. The Eastland was a convention hotel and it needs to remain as a convention hotel. These facilities will allow the Westin to bring new upscale business to the market that Portland otherwise cannot accommodate.

Thanks Steve

Gerard Kiladjian | General Manager
 Portland Harbor Hotel | www.Portlandharborhotel.com
 468 Fore St., Portland ME 04101 | (207) 523-2010

From: Steve Hewins [mailto:steve@portlandmaine.com]
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2013 2:42 PM
To: 'Bill Duggan (Videoport)'; 'Brad McCurtain'; 'Dan Edwards'; 'Dave Marshall'; 'David Marshall'; 'Doug Fuss'; 'Kiladjian, Gerard'; 'Greg Mitchell'; 'Josh Benthien'; 'June Usher'; 'Lori Paulette'; 'Michael J. Casey'; 'Michael Mastronardi (164 Middle & Market)'; 'Mike McDonald'; 'Penelope E. St. Louis'; 'Phil Haughey'; 'Trish Welmer'
Subject: Congress Square

Hi All – As you know the city is planning the sale of 2/3 of the Congress Square Park to New Castle Hotels and Resorts for the construction of an event and meeting facility. The terms have been negotiated and the plan is being placed before the Housing and Community Development Committee this Wednesday evening. Attached is some information on the plan, and P and S documents.

I met with Mayor Brennan this morning and discussed the project at some length. He indicated that it is not a 'done deal' and welcomed the PDD's support at this meeting and in two weeks when the full council will vote on the transaction. I plan on speaking at both meetings.

I toured the property with Bruce Wennerstrom and several people from the Chamber, and the work they are doing is really spectacular. Clearly, it will be an enormously positive new presence in the heart of the Arts District.

There are many businesses and organizations, large and small, lining up in support of the land sale, but certainly

more visible supporters would be welcome. Please forward to me your thoughts or comments. While I understand and appreciate the concerns of those opposing the project, I feel that the larger good to the community – especially to the merchants and organizations located in the burgeoning arts district - significantly outweighs this loss of 9500 square feet of public space.

If you are aware of anyone I should speak with on this project, please feel free to forward that information. Also, let me know of any important points that should be addressed by the PDD during these two sessions. Thanks very much for the assistance, Steve

Steve Hewins
Interim Executive Director
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Lori Paulette - RE: Congress Square

From: "Penelope E. St Louis" <STLOUP@mmc.org>
To: 'Steve Hewins' <steve@portlandmaine.com>, "'Bill Duggan (Videoport)'" <v...
Date: 8/19/2013 2:50 PM
Subject: RE: Congress Square

I am, and always have been, very much in support of the sale of this property to the adjacent hotel owners. The site used to house a building built to the corner and the "more recent" attempts at a City "park" in this location have failed. From an urban planning perspective the space is simply not suitable for a park.

When working for the City I found Rockbridge Capital to be a very reliable and trustworthy partner, "willing to put their money where their mouth is" so to speak. And they have. They have, indeed, done exceptional work on the building to date and have invested significant monies to do so. In my opinion, the additional of a ballroom or conference space on the site of the "park," and its management by these owners, will enhance the offerings of this space and add to the economic growth and prosperity of Portland.

My thoughts...

Penelope E. St. Louis
 Corporate Counsel
 MaineHealth
 110 Free Street
 Portland, Maine 04101
 207-661-7157

From: Steve Hewins [mailto:steve@portlandmaine.com]
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2013 2:42 PM
To: 'Bill Duggan (Videoport)'; 'Brad McCurtain'; 'Dan Edwards'; 'Dave Marshall'; 'David Marshall'; 'Doug Fuss'; 'Gerard Kiladjian'; 'Greg Mitchell'; 'Josh Benthien'; 'June Usher'; 'Lori Paulette'; 'Michael J. Casey'; 'Michael Mastronardi (164 Middle & Market)'; 'Mike McDonald'; Penelope E. St Louis; 'Phil Haughey'; 'Trish Weimer'
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Steve Hewins
Interim Executive Director
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Lori Paulette - Formal Request for amendment to the passage of Sale Agreement on Congress Square

From: Frank Turek <turekfrank@gmail.com>
To: Nick Mavodones <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>, John Coyne <jcoyne@portlandmaine...>
Date: 8/19/2013 11:25 AM
Subject: Formal Request for amendment to the passage of Sale Agreement on Congress Square
CC: Lori Paulette <LJN@portlandmaine.gov>, Greg Mitchell <gmitchell@portland...>

Dear Councilor Mavodones, HCD Committee members and others involved in the agenda for the HCDC Meeting agenda for August 21st.

Many are anticipating that this committee will vote positively on the "recommendation to City Council on draft Purchase and Sale Agreement to sell a portion of Congress Square Plaza."

Should the HCD committee vote positively, I would request that this committee recognize the unprecedented nature and the strong public interest in this sale. If you recognize the controversial nature of this vote I would ask you to amend the recommendation to city council.

I request that you amend your recommendation to City Council to strongly recommend that they impose a super-majority vote for it's passage.

There is precedent in this in the ordinance regarding the Land Bank Commission and their protected properties.

Section 2-43c

(c) Disposition of property interests. Any request to use, improve or dispose of any property interest in the Land Bank in a manner otherwise prohibited by this article shall become effective only after review and recommendation thereon by the commission and approval of six (6) members of the City Council;

Of course I would much rather have the vote be required to be unanimous or at least a 7-2 vote, but I see the compliance to the Land Bank ordinance a fair compromise.

Your serious reflection on my proposal will be greatly appreciated.

If you require me to submit this request more formally and within the rules of the committee in order that it be recognized please let me know, as soon as possible.

Regards,
Frank Turek
The Friends of Congress Square

Lori Paulette - Re: Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC)

From: Ed Pollack <ed@edpollackfinearts.com>
To: Lori Paulette <ljn@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 8/16/2013 5:36 PM
Subject: Re: Housing and Community Development Committee (HCDC)
CC: <ed@edpollackfinearts.com>

Thank you for sending the materials. I will be away and unable to attend the meeting, but as the owner of a local business in the Arts District I strongly support this proposed Agreement, and would appreciate it if this communication can be made part of the record.

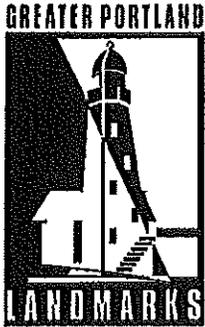
Thank you.

Ed Pollack

--

Edward T. Pollack
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617-610-7173 (Cell)
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June 6, 2013



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- Joseph Conforti
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- Julle Larry
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Gregory A. Mitchell
Economic Development Department
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: Congress Square Plaza

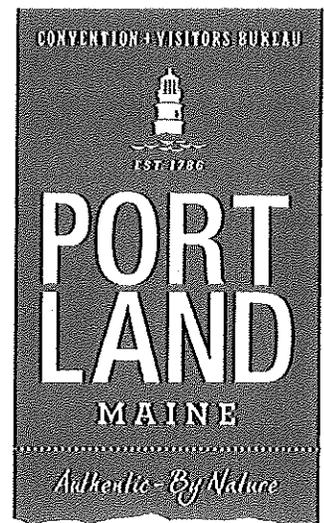
Dear Greg:

Now that the Housing and Community Development Committee has voted to give you responsibility to put together a draft Purchase and Sale Agreement (or Ground Lease) with Rockbridge Capital, Landmarks would like to share our thoughts about the contingencies that we believe should be included in the proposed agreement. We presented the same recommendation on contingencies at the last Congress Square Redesign Task Force meeting. The final motion, supported by six Task Force members, recommended that the HCD Committee recommend that the land be sold only if the contingencies, outlined below, were met.

The contingencies in the agreement provide the best opportunity to spell out the anticipated process that must be completed and standards that must be met before the City is obligated to turn over control of this public resource to a private owner. To meet the justifiably high expectations of those who believe the City should relinquish control of public land only if we get to a win-win design solution, significant coordinated design efforts will be required of both Rockbridge and the City. As the discussion to date has been contentious, we believe it is important to be very clear about expectations for both process and standards. Similarly, as this is not simply a private development on privately-owned land, it is the City's opportunity to set the design bar higher than the usual site plan and certificate of appropriateness standards; the City may legally require more as a quid pro quo for agreeing to transfer an interest in publicly-owned land.

We believe it is important for the Purchase and Sale Agreement to state that the City's obligation to close on the sale of the land is contingent upon:

1. Rockbridge continuing to work with the City and with community representatives on the design of the structure, and particularly upon the interaction of the structure and the public realm, after the execution of the contract;
2. The City developing a final design for the portion of the plaza that will remain in public control, as well as for the entire High/Congress/Free Street intersection, in parallel with the development of Rockbridge's event center design;
3. Rockbridge's final plan for the event center receiving all required final approvals from the Historic Preservation Board and the Planning Board prior to closing; and
4. The Historic Preservation Board and the Planning Board, after reviewing both Rockbridge's design for the event center and the City's design for the public portion of the plaza and the entire intersection, both finding by affirmative vote that the City's and Rockbridge's final plans will result in creatively redesigned, high-quality public open space in which the structure, the plaza, and the intersection redesign enhance each other.



To: Council Members of the HCDC
From: Barbara Whitten, President + CEO
Greater Portland Convention + Visitors Bureau
Date: April 19, 2013
Re: Westin Portland Harborview Hotel and Congress Square

Please accept this letter of support for the expansion of the Westin Portland Harborview Hotel to include purchasing a portion of Congress Square and converting it into much needed meeting space for our city.

As President of the Convention + Visitors Bureau, I unfortunately experienced several groups who fully intended to bring their business to downtown, but decided not to come as a result of site visits that left them disturbed because of the activity they witnessed in Congress Square. It is most concerning to have millions of dollars that could have come to our city meet elsewhere because they did not feel safe in Portland.

We are on the verge of opening more than 500 new hotel rooms in the downtown and most of these new properties will not offer any significant new meeting space. The new meeting space at the Westin will allow us to attract more conference business and additionally generate overflow rooms for many of these new hotels being built.

As Portland prepares to welcome visitors for its upcoming summer season, everyone in the hospitality industry is eager to capture a fair share of these lucrative travelers. However, when November comes and the tourist numbers go down significantly, we'll need conference properties like the Westin to help us bring off season business to Portland to fill our restaurants, museums, and retail stores with conference attendees. Adding new meeting space in Congress Square will provide year-round use for the property, while still allowing for public access. It will also provide much needed revenues to the city and bring significant new economic prosperity to our community.

The Convention + Visitors Bureau has embarked on a new multi-media campaign to attract new conference business called "Bring Yours Home". Now, as in the past, we continue to turn away groups on a regular basis because of the lack of conference space. The Convention + Visitors Bureau is doing everything possible to market our city, create new jobs, and strengthen our tax base. Please help us continue by recommending approval of this proposed meeting space. It is a win-win for our citizens and our business community.

CONVENTION + VISITORS BUREAU

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.....
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