

Dear Planning Board Member,

May 3, 2018

As a property owner and long time resident of Munjoy Hill, I am an invested stakeholder in the future of the neighborhood. Recent events here in the real estate developer's market have raised my concerns regarding the projected quality of life for the future of the Hill and its residents. The rampant "tear down and build a money-maker trend," has reached extraordinary proportions, threatening the very essence of the culture and community of the neighborhood. Destruction, in some cases, of soundly built and strong-standing buildings has been allowed, and sadly will continue after the moratorium ends. This practice needs close scrutiny and much more study to create a reasonable process that considers the demolition and construction within the context of historical significance and everyday neighborly life on the Hill.

I am appalled by some of the aesthetically deficient box style constructions, adorned with ice-cold corrugated metal, scrawny stick-like supports, crayola color discord, and no heartbeat at all. Dead boxes plopped offensively to the margin of long existing family homes and apartments. How many more little green growing spaces will be compromised? What about the bright sky, ample air space, broad views of the water, established trees, sunlight not shadow? What ordinance, judgement or persuasion has allowed the planning board to bypass sensible standards of design? What happened to the guidelines that require decision-makers to consider architectural compatibility...mass, scale, design? Those aspects of the design standards seem to have been ignored.

Munjoy Hill is a rich natural, cultural and historic resource, the very essence of which is illustrated in the many historic family homes, apartment houses, former school buildings, gardens, and public lands. It is a gem to be cared for, protected and shared for perpetuity. It should not be carved up, torn down and jammed to the limit with cold box buildings and oversized condos casting shadows on their neighbors. Please consider the fragile balance between planned development and protecting the character of this unique community.

I support the The Top 3 Planning Dept Recommendation proposed changes that MHCC (Munjoy Hill Conservation Collaborative) and now MHNO are requesting, and ask that you do the same. They are as follows:

#1: Demolition Language needing to be strengthened by incorporating : a) adding public signage, b) adding public hearing on demolition, c) adding affordable housing units, d) Planning dept proactive review for landmark/contributing status, e) Clarification and a description needed for "preferable preservation"?

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#2: Some of the specific design standards need to be inserted into the Zoning ordinance in order to ensure compatible scale/mass and architecture. Currently, some of the developers are outrageously ignoring it.

#3: Provide specific time line of Autumn 2018 for proposed historic district designation initially using the Greater Portland Landmarks two districts.

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Regards,

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