
the proposed project on the site of my olde home at 977 Brighton Avenue

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Posted in group: **Planning Board**

To: Christian Roadman and other members of the Portland [Me] Planning Board
Planning & Urban Development Department
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: Public hearing on Tuesday, July 24th regarding the proposed 40 unit apartment project at 977 Brighton Avenue

Greetings,

I must admit, when I first heard news of the proposed demolition of the home where I grew up at 977 Brighton Avenue, my heart sank to an all-time low. As you can only imagine, so many memories of the happy times in that old house came rushing back, including playing with my friends in the greenhouses where my mom and dad labored for so many years. As a youngster,

around 9 or 10, after school, my friends and I would build small 6 x 9" wooden boxes that would hold my dad's seedlings that he made available to the residents of Portland. We, by no means got rich on the small wages dad paid us. It was only two-cents a box, but after constructing fifty of them in an afternoon, it was enough to pay our way in to the Portland Theater every Saturday to catch a couple of Gene Autry or Tim Holt westerns, and still have enough change left-over for candy bar or two, a bag of popcorn and a an over-sized soft drink. The green houses are now gone and so are my mom and dad, but memories of them will forever live in my heart. Later, while attending Cheverus high school, the basement of our home is where I built my 'homemade' radio station. It only broadcast upstairs to my mom's kitchen radio, but I was on the air!

Those happy days playing disc-jockey in our home led to part time work as a high school reporter on the old WCSH-AM 970 Radio.

Years later, after service in the Marine Corps and college, I had the honor of returning to manage the same radio station. I won't go further in detail about my lengthy 41 year broadcasting career which includes 20 years in Boston and other cities, and

ended with the honor of being inducted to the Maine Broadcasting Hall of Fame in 2013. .

I only mention my career as an example of 'how' and where my successful broadcasting career began, and 'why' this house at 977 Brighton

Avenue means so much to me. But, my reason for contacting you is not about me. It's about for my late mom and dad , Joan or 'Jenny'

as her friends called her, and my dad, Ameido, or "Marty" as he was known to thousands of Portlanders. They toiled endlessly in their green houses and pansey gardens for years , growing native tomatoes, garlic and other vegetables and flowers for the folks of Portland and Southern Maine. On weekends, when we would head off to Higgins Beach or Sebago Lake with friends to enjoy summer sun-filled

days, mom and dad would have to stay behind to tend to the many hundreds of customers who would stop by to say 'hi' and make a

purchase. Although, sometimes, people would stop by just to say hello to them. My parents were loved by so many.

After the emotional side of hearing news that my olde house was to be torn down subsided a bit, I learned a project to house the elderly

was to be erected on this special plot of land. I think my mom and dad would be so pleased. I can't tell you how many of their shoppers were seniors, and how often they chatted with my parents how Portland needed more housing for folks, and those words were spoken almost sixty years ago!

In closing, I have a special request for the planners and developers of this worth-while project, I'm hoping they will give serious consideration

to erect a small plaque somewhere on the proposed building to honor my late mom and dad and the service they provided for so many years to the people of Greater Portland. It would please my family so much, but more importantly, somehow, I know it will please my parents just as much.

I apologize for taking up so much of your time, but then again, what do you expect from an olde talking head radio guy.

In all seriousness, thank you kindly for your time and consideration.

Warmest personal regards,

Joe Martelle

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