

From: <amylandry@maine.rr.com>
To: <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>, <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>, <janton@portlandmai...>
Date: 5/27/2013 9:08 AM
Subject: Thoughts on Congress Square Plaza

Mayor Brennan and Members of the Portland City Council,

While I don't have the time to attend council meetings or other public comment opportunities, I wanted to add my opinion and perspective to the debate surrounding Congress Square Plaza. I've lived in Portland since 2001 and first starting visiting regularly as a teenager in 1995 when my father dated a woman who lived on the West End. During that period I can count on one hand the number of times I've seen Congress Square used in a way in which a true public park is intended.

My first memories of the space was as a teenager when I'd shoo my little sister past the suspect characters that often lingered just off the sidewalk there as we walked to find lunch on Exchange Street. As a young adult studying at USM, I'd walk past on my way to shows at the State Theater or to grab a late night dinner at Norms with friends. Again always a "colorful" cast of characters would greet my friends and me as we walked by. Many doing no harm, but others were often panhandling, drinking or yelling at passersby.

Now as a property owner and professional working in this city, my encounters with Congress Square are primarily driving by or occasionally walking past during the day on my way to a lunch meeting or dinner at one of the restaurants close by. I still notice how barren the park is most times sometimes with a smattering of people that look like they may have been there all day or all night.

While I understand the argument for public space, I do not believe this park is worth preserving. There are some lovely public spaces in our city that boast views of the ocean, green space, event opportunities and more. This as currently designed is not one of those. Rockbridge is willing to invest millions of dollars in a city that has a mixed history of supporting private development. We should embrace those that want to invest in our city. The Rockbridge proposal would not only boost our local economy by providing space for events like conferences and weddings, it retains and funds improvements to the park.

I urge you to support this proposal and to weigh the opinions of those who own businesses, commercial property and homes within blocks of this site over those of us (myself included) that do not. Thank you for your public service to our great city.

Sincerely,

Amy Landry
44 Coyle Street, Portland

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Park

From: Barbara Pearson <bpear774@gmail.com>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/27/2013 10:11 AM
Subject: Congress Square Park

Do not sell Congress Square Park to the hotel. Fix it up so people can enjoy the park. Currently, there are spikes in the flower beds so that people cannot sit on the edge of the planters and a lack of benches, so the park is underused. Public land should not go to serve rich people and luxury activities, but to benefit the citizens.

I have listened to concerts, watched street performances, and otherwise enjoyed the park, and I am a middle class person not whatever sort of homeless person is feared. I have also attended several antiwar demonstrations and other vigils in the park.

Poor people in Portland have already lost enough housing and so forth in the effort to make Portland more upscale. For example, getting rid of the long term rentals and single room occupancy tenants at the Eastland contributes to the homelessness problem.

Building more and more high end hotels and conference centers does not ensure that the city will grow and get more taxes, but only puts the various venues in competition for the market.

Sincerely,
Barbara Pearson
Democrat and Psychologist

Caitlin Cameron - Re: CSRSG - position statement: Bayside Neighborhood Association

From: CitymouseUS <city_mouse_us@yahoo.com>
To: Caitlin Cameron <CCameron@portlandmaine.gov>, Alex Jaegerman <AQJ@portla...>
Date: 5/28/2013 11:05 AM
Subject: Re: CSRSG - position statement: Bayside Neighborhood Association
CC: Kevin Donoghue <kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov>

Hello there,

The Bayside Neighborhood Association did not take a specific vote on the subject of whether to sell the part of Congress Square Park/Plaza to Rockbridge, based on Rockbridge's current May2013 proposal. However, the members of the Board that spoke to the issue broke into the following groups:

No-one was in favor of the proposal to sell the land to Rockbridge.

Half of the others were open to the sale in concept, but only with **truly** active use (s) on the hotel side, and with less of the land sold than is shown now. It is the lack of active uses that is the cause of the problems that Congress Square does have. Active use is something that can be best and most easily provided by Rockbridge, or their successors.

The other half were emphatically against selling any of the land, both in principle of selling public open space and specifically in Congress Square.

In addition, I personally look forward to finding out about any potential remediation of the soil, to counteract the effects of the Texaco gas station. The 1924 tax record can be seen here:

http://www.mainememory.net/artifact/38967#display-image_38967

If no evidence of remediation could be found, then we can assume that no remediation has been done, wouldn't you say?

thanks,
 Alex Landry

From: Caitlin Cameron <CCameron@portlandmaine.gov>
To: Alex Jaegerman <AQJ@portlandmaine.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 23, 2013 3:10 PM
Subject: CSRSG - position statements

Thank you all who were able to attend last night's meeting.

We received position statements from many of you prior to the meeting which will be posted on the Study Group's webpage.

For those who presented positions on Wednesday and have not, yet submitted a copy to us - please get a that to me so it can be added to the record and the webpage by the end of this week.

Thank you,

Caitlin

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

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Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square

From: Harlan Baker <hbaker@maine.edu>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 7:19 AM
Subject: Congress Square

Nick,

Selling off Congress Square to Rock Bridge is a bad idea. I think Portland has been more than kind to developers over the past few decades. This is one time we can say "NO".

Harlan Baker
44 Mitton Street
Portland, Maine 04012

Caitlin Cameron - Progress in Portland

From: James Buchanan <James@membercard.com>
To: "nmm@portlandmaine.gov" <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 2:52 PM
Subject: Progress in Portland

Hello Nick, We've met a number of times over the years. And, I appreciated your help with Will Thomas when I was Chairman of Zone Labs and we set up the Zone Urban Triathlon in Portland. I am hoping you will support the development proposal for Congress Square. As a resident of Portland, the activity and investment at the new Eastland will serve all of us through new services but importantly an increase to our tax base. Our property taxes, relative to services provide on Pine Street are pretty minimal. We would like to see this go through as an important step for the city. Thanks and please let me know. All the best, Jim

James A. Buchanan | Chief Executive Officer

Member Benefits LLC, 200 International Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801

MemberCard.com | Ph 603-276-3217 | Fax 888.267.6950 | Mobile 207.650.6865 | James@membercard.com

Caitlin Cameron - Keep Congress Square Park Public

From: Pat O'Donnell <patodonnell6@gmail.com>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 9:48 AM
Subject: Keep Congress Square Park Public

Dear Councilor Mavadones,
I don't feel that Congress Square Park should be sold or leased to Westin Hotels for an event center.
Portland Residents need public space.
Thank you,
Pat O'Donnell

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Park - Opposed to Sale

From: Ross or Kathleen Fields <fieldsofun@gmail.com>
To: Nicholas Mavodones <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 10:27 AM
Subject: Congress Square Park - Opposed to Sale
CC: Cheryl Leeman <cl@portlandmaine.gov>, David Marshall <damarshall@portlan...>

Dear Nick and the committee for Housing and Community Development,

I am writing to express my opposition to the possible sale of Congress Square Park to Westin Portland Harborview Hotel.

My initial reaction was of favoring the sale because I felt it would bring much needed vibrancy to the area.

After visiting the park and speaking to several long-time residents I have changed my view to that of keeping the park intact, continuing city ownership. However, I feel that Portland's parks, our parks, need attention and a creative solution to actually make them a desirable destination for the public.

I know that several of you have lived and travel in Europe, as have I, and know the feel many of the city parks there have. They have a certain energy, a certain community atmosphere that I know we can create here in Portland as well. Monument Square has some similar characteristics with its cafes and eateries and farmer's market.

Again, I am opposed the the sale of Congress Square Park.

Sincerely,
Ross Fields
46 Turner Street
Portland, Maine

p.s. My wife and I will celebrate our 2 year anniversary as Portland residents in July. We moved here because it was a place where we could live without vehicles. So far that is working out great. We walk all over Portland and I can tell you this, you see a lot more at that pace.

Caitlin Cameron - Fwd: congress square plaza

From: <nickmavo@aol.com>
To: <jlevine@portlandmaine.gov>, <gmitchell@portlandmaine.gov>, <AQJ@portlan...>
Date: 5/28/2013 5:31 AM
Subject: Fwd: congress square plaza

-----Original Message-----

From: Deb Keenan <debkeen2@cs.com>
 To: cal4161 <cal4161@Yahoo.com>; janton <janton@maine.rr.com>; damarshall <damarshall@portlandmaine.gov>; kjdonoghue <kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov>; jduson <jduson@portlandmaine.gov>; jcoyne <jcoyne@portlandmaine.gov>; NickMavo <NickMavo@aol.com>; mfpb <mfpb@portlandmaine.gov>
 Sent: Mon, May 27, 2013 2:22 pm
 Subject: congress square plaza

I once again write in opposition to the city selling city land to the eastland hotel. I read the most recent "packet" for the upcoming HCD meeting as well as their past minutes and minutes of other related meetings, such as the "task force" as this discussion has developed and evolved. I believe the task force has turned down the notion of selling the land 3 times now--even AFTER rock bridge was allowed to become a member of that task force (talk about trying to change the result from the inside) !!!

I may have missed something...but something seems to be missing in the whole discussion...The ORIGINAL UDAG grant which put the land in CITY hands to begin with and the whole purpose for UDAG monies to begin with . I really may have 'missed' it Pehraps you have received some information on THAT history but It does seem to be missing in the information I have read.

It is really critical that you understand the PURPOSE of UDAG funds in general and UDAG funds as used for this original project specifically before making any decision. I don't know how any rational discussion can take place with out that info

I think there are LEGAL if NOT merely moral/ethical issues at stake here .I have brought that issue up before and I assume, perhaps incorrectly, that corporation counsel office would be on top of that. CAN we legally sell the land?

I fully expect that UDAG info would be a part of your "packet". It is not. CAN we (legally) even sell the land?? I don't think we can., which would make the discussion totally moot and total a waste of everyone's time.

As to the recent HCD "packet" the endorsements' for selling the land seem rushed and luke warm at best.. It appears that several people are on several of the different committee giving endorsements. For example it appears Hillary is on several committees and has signed the letter of endorsement for Landmarks BUT the Land marks "talking points" seem to be in conflict with that 'endorsement. .Did Hillary consult with landmarks committee in her endorsement or was it her own personal endorsement? DID Landmarks endorse Hllary's endorsement (did they vote on it?) or Did someone simply ask her to dash off a last minute letter of support. That is what it looks like...even her endorsement is luke warm. The

same looks to be true with the Portland Museum of Art."endorsement". Did any of these groups actually vote on these letters of endorsement? Why are the organizations letters of support first in your packet and the letter of opposition last??? Please note we have the usual "divide" going on here: Business supporting business with "the people" opposed.

The question really come down to one thing:: can we /should we sell public land to private enterprise.. To me it is a no brainer and the answer is a resounding NO---ethically, legally and morally !!!

I don't even know why we are considering the question..The answer should be VERY clear. It is OUR PUBLIC land PERIOD ---it's not yours to give.. We would absolutely NEVER consider selling any OTHER public land and NO one would have the gall to ask us to. Would we EVER consider selling a part of DEERING OAKS or the Eastern or Western Proms or Payson Park or Lincoln Park? Of course NOT . So why are we even considering THIS proposal?

Who even suggested to Rockbridge they should ASK for our PUBLIC land?? Who even gave them ANY encouragement that this MIGHT be a possibility ? Who thought this was a "good idea" or could possibly be "win win"? Who thought there would be ANY possibility that OUR elected City Leaders would consider such a proposal? And yet here we are??

Everything else with this proposal is irrelevant.. the design , NYC standards (I mean, really??) and the nature or use of the park itself are ALL irrelevant . The only question is should we sell public land? My answers is absolutely NO. It is inconceivable I that you are even considering the question.

PS As I recall one of the requirement for UDAG is PUBLIC benefit. This park was the ONLY public benefit. I don't think you CAN sell it ,legally !!

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square

From: Harlan Baker <hbaker@maine.edu>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 7:19 AM
Subject: Congress Square

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Selling off Congress Square to Rock Bridge is a bad idea. I think Portland has been more than kind to developers over the past few decades. This is one time we can say "NO".

Harlan Baker
44 Mitton Street
Portland, Maine 04012

Caitlin Cameron - Progress in Portland

From: James Buchanan <James@membercard.com>
To: "nmm@portlandmaine.gov" <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 2:52 PM
Subject: Progress in Portland

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James A. Buchanan | Chief Executive Officer

Member Benefits LLC, 200 International Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801

MemberCard.com | Ph 603-276-3217 | Fax 888.267.6950 | Mobile 207.650.6865 | James@membercard.com



P. O. Box 7486 – Portland, ME 04112

May 27, 2013

Dear Mayor Brennan,

As an active Portland developer, both in my time as president of Olympia Development from 1997-2008 and more recently as a real estate developer on my own since returning from my time living in Italy from 2008-2011, I take a sincere and focused interest in the developments going on in Portland.

Sometimes I wonder if I'm too optimistic about where Portland is headed, but the news, press and world seem to have been waking up to many wonderful attributes Portland has to offer. I must commend not only the guidance of the city council, but that of the local businesses, non-profits and people in general who make up this great place and continue to strive to make it even better.

As you may know, I am a limited partner in several hotels in the market and was heavily involved with the development of the Hilton Garden Inn on Commercial Street along with the Baker Newman and Noyes and CIEE buildings which completed that city block. In addition, I am developing the vacant former Portland Press Herald office building into a boutique hotel.

I am writing to you, to express my sincere support of the proposed project at Congress Square Plaza. While the significant investment Rockbridge Capital is making to a historic landmark, in of itself is impressive, that investment will bring additional benefit to the local community. The arts district is still in the process of being defined and while certain areas could use significant improvements, we know that the available funds are limited. Throughout the city, there are a number of parks and plazas that are in need of capital improvements and with limited funds and challenges facing the City budget each year, it is unlikely that all of these required capital improvements can be made. As I understand it, this proposed development would include an additional 50,000 of funding for the design to improve the remaining city plaza area and reactivate that zone into a welcome and functional space for the public's enjoyment. We also know that this market has a lack of high quality meeting space to host events, be it conferences, weddings or meetings. The proposed event center adjacent to the new Westin hotel, would be a significant and welcome addition to the City and the neighborhood. Not only would this project put a derelict and non-functioning property back on the tax rolls, the remaining areas not developed by Rockbridge should be redesigned and rebuilt to make necessary improvements. As I have understood the plan being presented by



P. O. Box 7486 – Portland, ME 04112

the developer, the “new” plaza will be designed in a way to provide ample space for the public as they pass through this heavily trafficked intersection at the center of the arts district.

I recommend that the City council work together with this developer to ensure that a workable plaza remains for the public, while allowing the proposed economic engine they are requesting, significant additional investment with a 5,000 sf event center, be allowed to move forward and come to fruition.

While many in the local community question the addition of so many new hotel rooms to the City, what is becoming clear is that tourism continues to grow in both Portland and Maine while other industries in the state disappear. We all need to embrace this economic shift and take advantage of the opportunities these new properties and industry offer. Hotels provide many jobs and as that supply of guestrooms increases, so does the city tourism capacity, which will ultimately bring more tourist and their dollars into our local community – the retailers, restaurants and events in Portland will all benefit from these new projects coming online.

Portland as a city has many exciting projects on the boards and let’s all hope that they can continue to evolve, as we as a City evolve, to make this a better place for the future.

If I may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jim Brady

Mailing address:
RED Group LLC
P. O. Box 7486
Portland, ME 04112-7486

Office address:
80 Exchange Street
Suite 30
Portland, ME 04101

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Plaza

From: James Erwin <jerwin@PierceAtwood.com>
To: "mfpb@portlandmaine.gov" <mfpb@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/25/2013 1:07 PM
Subject: Congress Square Plaza
CC: "kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov" <kjdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov>, "damar...

Dear Mayor Brennan:

I am writing as a member of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce to express my full support for the Westin Harborside Hotel's plans to develop Congress Square Plaza. As a life-long resident of Maine with a 25 year professional career in downtown Portland, I am all too aware of the economic development challenges our State faces. A challenge we don't need – one that we sometimes bring on ourselves – is a reluctance to change, to innovate, to take even a small amount of risk. Currently the Plaza is not really a plaza at all, but dead space that is an uninviting, even foreboding barrier between Congress Square and the hotel. The proposed design and repurposing of the Plaza is exactly what is needed to bring the hotel out to Congress Square with an inviting, functional structure, increasing economic activity in the square that will certainly ripple outward. The risk here is infinitely small compared to the likely benefits to Congress Square and the city at large.

I urge the City to approve the proposal and let the renaissance of this iconic property be fully realized.

Thanks to you and the City Council for considering my views, and for your service to the City of Portland.

Jim Erwin
 PIERCE ATWOOD LLP

Merrill's Wharf
 254 Commercial Street
 Portland, ME 04101

PH 207.791.1237
FAX 207.791.1350

jerwin@pierceatwood.com

[BIO ▶](#)

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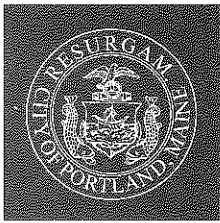
Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square

From: Joe Irace <irace1856@gmail.com>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/23/2013 8:52 AM
Subject: Congress Square

Councilman Mavodones,

I urge the city council to approve Eastland Hotel proposal for Congress Square. I travel by this square very frequently. It is nothing more than a giant urinal and huge waste of space. This is not just my opinion, every single person I speak with also agrees. I am a small business owner on Congress St and would love to see something done about that spot.

Regards, Joe Irace



PORTLAND MAINE

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Public Services Department
Michael J. Bobinsky, Director

Portland Parks Commission

May 24, 2013

Dear Ms. Cameron,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our thoughts on the proposal by Rockbridge Capital. As we understand the proposal, Rockbridge is seeking to develop some portion of the current Congress Square Park into an events center.

After a presentation by Rockbridge, and discussion among the group, the Parks Commission came up with several comments on the proposal as follows;

- Any building proposal for this location must compliment the form and function of the adjacent public space, and Congress Square as a whole; architecturally, logistically, physically and socially.
- The proposed plaza needs a design prepared by a landscape architect.
- The proposed plaza meets minimum New York City set-back dimension (40 feet). This is not sufficient to perform the functions of an urban open space.
- The proposed building use will not sufficiently activate the remaining plaza, and will serve as a barrier to activity by creating a blank edge much of the time.
- If there were to be a building on the site, it should be one that invites and engages the public, such as a restaurant or cafe with outdoor seating, or other public amenity.
- A significant financial commitment to the park and Congress Square improvement plan should be part of any development
- Lease the land long-term, so the parcel remains in City control for future use

Fundamentally, as Council-appointed stewards of public spaces, we need to answer the question; would the disposition of this public park for the construction of a one-story, private events center be something Portland would look back on with pride, or regret? While some elements of the proposed project do have some merit, and the Commission is not adamantly opposed to the idea of a building on some portion of the site, most feel that the current proposal is not strong enough to outweigh the loss of public park space.

Additionally, the Commission feels that if we are to consider a proposal to sell some of the park, we would need to be able to compare this to other options, such as a re-designed park in the same space, a fully designed smaller plaza, and other building or architecture options. To compare between the current flawed design, and the developers proposal sets up a false and limited choice.

Given these numerous considerations, the Parks Commission does not support acceptance of the Rockbridge Capitol proposal.

Thank you for considering our comments and recommendation. We look forward to continued collaboration in the coming months. Regardless of outcome we welcome the opportunity to work together on the new design for Congress Square Park.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Davison". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'D'.

Diane Davison, Chair
Portland Parks Commission

Caitlin Cameron - Keep Congress Square Park Public

From: Pat O'Donnell <patodonnell6@gmail.com>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 9:48 AM
Subject: Keep Congress Square Park Public

Dear Councilor Mavadones,
I don't feel that Congress Square Park should be sold or leased to Westin Hotels for an event center.
Portland Residents need public space.
Thank you,
Pat O'Donnell

From: Penny Stevens <penny.stevens@maine.rr.com>
To: <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/25/2013 1:46 PM
Subject: Congress Square

I am writing about my support for the Rockbridge Capitol's plans to purchase part of the current Congress Square Park and build an extension to use as a ballroom, events room etc. The current park is providing little benefit to the city. It is poorly positioned to be a real park or plaza. The two tall buildings on two sides take away from the possible ambiance of open space. Now it attracts people who exhibit undesirable behavior. I live nearby and walk across Congress St. every day but i would never walk across the park or linger in it.

Sometimes a bold move, such as this sale, is a boon to the community at large. I urge you to vote for the sale of part of the park to the Rockbridge Co.

Sincerely,
Penny Stevens
260 Vaughan St.
Portland, ME 04102

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Park

From: Rosanne Graef <rgraef@gwi.net>
To: John Coyne <jcoyne@portlandmaine.gov>, Ed Suslovic <edsuslovic@portlandm...>
Date: 5/28/2013 7:20 AM
Subject: Congress Square Park
CC: Alex Jaegerman <AQJ@portlandmaine.gov>
Attachments: CSRDG - 5.22.13 Position.pdf

Dear Members of the Housing and Community Development Committee:

Attached please find a copy of the position I submitted on behalf of the West End Neighborhood Association concerning the current proposal from Rockbridge Capital to build an event center on part of Congress Square Park.

Although I do plan to speak on Wednesday evening during the public comment period, I also wanted to emphasize some additional points.

1) Congress Square is in the center of town. It already has one one-story building on it (the restaurant part of the Westin 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 up to 150'.

2) What will this proposal provide for Portland in the long run? The current emphasis on housing 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 and downtown Portland are parts of more than business parks and retail centers, they are also neighborhoods. This quote from *World Changing* effectively sums this up:

...the right community spaces are the ones that reflect and respect their surroundings. Every good neighborhood is at its best when it is most like itself.

There are some general strategies that tend to work. Meet the neighbors. Promote good, compact development. People naturally gravitate toward certain locations and atmospheres, so allow established spaces to form around organic hubs.

Really good spaces make us want to hang out. The street, in essence, becomes an outdoor living room. Small parks, bike paths, historic building, sidewalk cafés, street trees, benches, and public art can all make being out in public a pleasure; a well-designed neighborhood keeps us from wanting to retreat to the safety of our isolated homes.

Socialize locally. Networks don't live by bits and bytes alone. Networks are made of people, and in order to do truly remarkable things, people need to get together, rub elbows, trade gossip, try out ideas, flirt, schmooze, encourage, and learn to trust, admire, and love one another. Conferences are great for this. Festivals can galvanize an entire zeitgeist. But movements really rise or fall on the strength of ongoing social events—salons, showcases, the right bar, the right café, the place it's happening. These "third places" are the epicenter of any movement, whether the goal is overthrowing a dictator or getting a stop sign put in on the school's corner.

WorldChanging, A User's Guide for the 21st Century, Edited by Alex Steffen, 2011

A revitalized and redesigned Congress Square Park could be this "third place" in the heart of Portland.

3) The proposal for an event center would only offer one attraction to Congress Square Park and it is

not an option that would have high use by the residents of Portland. Seeking more options for the Park would attract residents and tourists 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 Rockbridge for outdoor tables next to their restaurant, to the new Vinland restaurant for the same, kiosks could be built and leased to a variety of vendors - flowers, ice cream, fruits/vegetables, newsstand, etc. Games could be installed - chess, over-size puzzles - in addition to plantings and public art that's relaxing and fun to view. A variety of things to do in the park would draw more foot traffic into the entire area. For decades Maine tourism has been built predominantly on individuals and families who visit to see what Maine has to offer, not on conventions and large groups who come with planned activities that engage the bulk of their time and money. More international visitors are coming to Maine and Portland and these individuals and families, foreign and domestic, become part of the residential fabric during their stays. Having places to see, things to do and places to hang out where someone's not trying to suck every dollar out of one's wallet is a huge attraction in Maine and that kind of atmosphere needs to be available in Maine cities as well as in the great outdoors.

4) What's being offered now is heartily supported by business interests, but not by the abutting Neighborhood Associations, Portland Trails, or the Portland Public Arts Committee. This is telling. Many Portland residents who do not have a direct vested interest in the type of activity and clientele this project will draw are opposed, not because they want something for themselves, but because they want something better for the community as a whole. There are those who favor the Rockbridge proposal solely because they doubt the City's ability and political will to do anything else, please don't prove them right.

5) Unfortunately this project have been driven to a position where we're getting one offer and being hustled by an artificial time constriction to make a decision or forever lose an opportunity. The Council members are also being pressed by an equal, and I would suggest stronger, imperative: if you sell the land, it's a public asset that is gone forever. I hope you make the decision to not sell any of the park and to go forward with the RFP requested by the Congress Square Redesign Study Group two years ago.

Sincerely,

Rosanne Graef
30 Salem Street
Portland 04102

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Park - Opposed to Sale

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To: Nicholas Mavodones <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/28/2013 10:27 AM
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Dear Nick and the committee for Housing and Community Development,

I am writing to express my opposition to the possible sale of Congress Square Park to Westin Portland Harborview Hotel.

My initial reaction was of favoring the sale because I felt it would bring much needed vibrancy to the area.

After visiting the park and speaking to several long-time residents I have changed my view to that of keeping the park intact, continuing city ownership. However, I feel that Portland's parks, our parks, need attention and a creative solution to actually make them a desirable destination for the public.

I know that several of you have lived and travel in Europe, as have I, and know the feel many of the city parks there have. They have a certain energy, a certain community atmosphere that I know we can create here in Portland as well. Monument Square has some similar characteristics with its cafes and eateries and farmer's market.

Again, I am opposed the the sale of Congress Square Park.

Sincerely,
Ross Fields
46 Turner Street
Portland, Maine

p.s. My wife and I will celebrate our 2 year anniversary as Portland residents in July. We moved here because it was a place where we could live without vehicles. So far that is working out great. We walk all over Portland and I can tell you this, you see a lot more at that pace.

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square Plaza/Park

From: TW AR <twar1104@hotmail.com>
To: Nick Mavodones <nmm@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 5/23/2013 10:54 AM
Subject: Congress Square Plaza/Park

Dear Councilor Mavodones;

I can appreciate the difficult decision you will soon face regarding the proposed sale of public space to support the construction of private event space at the Congress Square Park/Plaza. While I fully support fixing the space, I no longer believe and thus support the sale as proposed. I would support a long-term lease of a much smaller (50% less) portion provided the purchaser would also provide the necessary funds to pay for the overhaul of the remaining portion of the plaza. I see the sale as a private benefit at public expense. Based on the proposal to the Parks Commission and comments made by the representatives of the developers regarding Tommy's Park, I believe their only goal is to reduce undesirable users of the park to improve the experience of their private guests. I do not oppose their goal, but we cannot sterilize the city for occasional guests. Instead, I urge you to challenge the developers to work with the city for a creative solution that is mutually beneficial as opposed to the easiest (for the developer). We as a community have worked hard to create and support the arts district and a redesigned and revitalized square could complement this vision and enhance tourism. To be sure, Portland has grittiness, but this is part of its charm and should not be eliminated merely to support non-Portlander's idyllic vision what a city should be.

Thank you,
Travis Wagner
22 Codman Street
Portland

Caitlin Cameron - Congress Square

From: "Wayne Duffett" <wayne@tecassoc.com>
To: "Michael Brennan" <mfpb@portlandmaine.gov>, "Kevin Donoghue" <kjdonoghue...>
Date: 5/27/2013 8:27 AM
Subject: Congress Square
Attachments: parksinportland.pdf

Dear Councilors,

I am writing to support selling the vacant lot at Congress and High Streets to the new owners of the Eastland. This "park" wasn't created out of need for more parks. It was created because we tore down some old buildings and had nothing to fill the hole. It's never evolved into a gathering place like Tommy's Park or Post Office Park. In fact, it never even made the list of parks kept by Public Services (attached).

So along comes Rockbridge Capital and invests **\$50,000,000** in downtown Portland renovating the Eastland. This increases our property tax base and creates jobs. Most importantly, allowing them to build in Congress Square Park will bring **more** events to the city and **more** visitors. This will benefit **all** the downtown businesses and create **more** jobs. A rising tide floats all boats.

Regards,

Wayne Duffett
52 East Commonwealth Drive
Portland

P.S. Would need to relocate the Union Station clock. How about Oceangate? Make it part of the deal with Rockbridge that they pay to move the clock.

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46 Sawyer Street Cellular 207-232-3581
South Portland, Maine 04106 wayne@tecassoc.com
