

**Maine Medical Center Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)**  
Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023

**Time:** 12:00p.m.

**Location:** via Zoom

**Recurrence:** Monthly, 2nd Wednesday

**Minutes Submitted by:** Natalie Dubail

**Minutes Edited by:** NAC Members

**Previous Meeting Minutes (February 2023) Status:** Approved

**Attendees**

Anne Pringle (WPNA) co-chair

Steve Kolkhorst (WPNA)

Marie Gray (PNA)

Peter Dugas (PNA)

Lin Parsons (WENA)

Steven Scharf (WENA)

Damon Yakovleff (LNA)

Moses Sabina (SJVNA)

Garry Bowcott (SJVNA)

Jennifer McCarthy (MMC)

Brian Batson (MMC)

Walter Pochebit (MMC)

Matt Wickenheiser (MMC)

Al Green (MMC)

Natalie Dubail (MMC)

Victoria Pelletier (CityCouncil)

Nell Donaldson (CoP)

1) **Minutes** The Minutes of February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 were **APPROVED** as presented.

2) **Construction Update (Provided in writing by Walter Pochebit prior to meeting)**

**Congress St/Malone Family Tower**

- No anticipated project impacts the remainder of this month to streets, sidewalks, after hours work etc.
- There are over 220 workers on the site every day.
- Pre-fabricated head-walls continue to be installed in patient rooms. Electrical, mechanical infrastructure

**Discussion Summary:** It was noted that there are still ongoing parking issues within the neighborhoods. To address the parking issues on Gilman St. (etc.) Turner construction has appointed an onsite coordinator and that fines and towing measures have been, and will continue, to be made.

Action to be taken: Walter will make sure snow is taken care of near construction barriers in future storms.

### **3) Maine Med Update**

Discussion Summary: Jennifer shared a reminder that the public state of emergency will end on May 11<sup>th</sup>. After this date, certain practices under COVID might be due to go away. Such as masking and testing every patient.

Right now we are seeing about 35-40 patients with COVID. She did note however that most of the COVID- positive patients were hospitalized for co-morbidities ,as opposed to COVID symptoms.

A committee member asked if, with the end of the public state of emergency, it would it be possible to resume in-person NAC meetings. Jennifer noted that because of the limited meeting space in the hospital, Zoom meetings will continue to meet on a regular basis. Jennifer suggested the possibility of having an annual NAC in-person meeting, if people were interested in that.

### **4) Caring Community Grant Process – update (10 minutes)**

Discussion summary: In the absence of the CC Grant Subcommittee Chair, Tim McNamara, Anne Pringle briefly summarized the history of the grant process. It is hoped that April 1<sup>st</sup> will be the date by which to submit applications for community grants, with decisions to be made by June. The process is that NAs will receive applications, make decisions on what they would like to submit, to be reviewed by the Grant Subcommittee, and the recommended to the full NAC. There is no limit on the number of submissions and NAs can collaborate on submissions. Previously a decision was made not split the money evenly, but to evaluate and award grants based on their merit

Damon will follow up with Tim to get the first Subcommittee meeting scheduled. A committee member said that he will create a flyer for applications.

\$30,000 will be available in grant money this year. CoP has requested completions of past grants, to document that they used for their intended purpose.

Action to be taken: A flyer will be made for the Community Grant Application process. Completion reports to be collected by the CoP.

### **5) MMC Neighborhood Engagement Process – discussion Brian Batson (25 minutes)**

Discussion summary: There was a lengthy discussion about how the NAC is structured to serve as a two-way communication link between MMC and surrounding neighborhoods. It would be helpful to understand how each NAC operates, understanding that they all operate differently. Brian Batson will solicit information on how each NA communicates with its constituency. There is a need to assess how past discussions at the NAC have been communicated and engagement/feedback sought. It was suggested that holding community forums could be held periodically in the future, to provide the opportunity for more direct engagement, perhaps this fall. It was agreed that having meetings at the neighborhood level now would be good in preparation for a larger meeting in the future. Brian expressed willingness to attend if requested.

A question was asked if the hospital was aware of the City's proposal to change the traffic pattern on Congress Street and Park Avenue. Jennifer noted that the hospital is aware, but hasn't provided any feedback officially and they haven't heard anything more about the plans in the last 6 months. Multiple NAC members and hospital members agreed it would improve ambulance flow.

Action to be taken: Brian will gather initial conversations to formal conversation between the hospital and community members to document a more formal "community engagement plan."

## **5) Old Business (10 Minutes)**

- Food Pantry/Community Policing Update – Brian Batson

Discussion summary: The food pantry opened on January 24 and is now open on a limited basis, 2 days a week for a few hours, due to staffing and food supply issues. They are seeing long lines in the morning. There are boundaries on how much food each person can take and they need to have a balanced grocery cart. The food pantry is not widely advertised, as it is based off of community knowledge, there was a press release when it first opened up back in January.

A member of the NAC asked if they were able to refer people from the community to the food pantry. Jennifer said they are not turning anyone away, but initially it is intended for employees and clients with food insecurities. As of right now, the pantry does not have the capacity for larger numbers. Once the pantry becomes more stable and they are certain there will be enough food, it is expected that the pantry will expand hours and clientele served. It was mentioned that if the NAC would like to refer volunteers, that would be helpful.

A sign for community policing will be going up soon; this will be the same decal as various community policing centers in the city.

Concern was expressed about loitering around the food pantry. MMC is going to monitor the area. While benches outside are planned, consideration must be given to whether this would promote loitering. A Subcommittee of food pantry reps, SJV and community policing members will meet to discuss site amenities and another mural on the north wall facing D'Angelos.

Action to be taken: The NAC will find a day that the pantry is not open to tour it. Brian will look into and report on the demographics of food pantry users.

- Recuperative Care Center Issues

Discussion summary: Concerns about loitering, smoking, and garbage in the area have been an ongoing issue at the facility. There have been measures to reduce the amount of garbage in the area, including getting a larger dumpster, more frequent trash pickup and educating staff that they need to be breaking down boxes. Most of the concerns are because of the loiterers, including people sleeping in the entry ways. It was acknowledged that it is Greater Portland Health's job to address these issues. The responsibility for addressing issues on the street was discussed and needs further follow up by GPH, MMC, and the City. Creative solutions to smoking, parking and loitering need to be identified and implemented, with a report back to the NAC.

Action to be taken: A follow up meeting to discuss creative problem-solving. Councilor Pelletier will look into special permission to enforce no-trespass orders.

- Neighborhood Parking Management – Anne Pringle

Discussion summary: Due to ongoing construction, parking in the city has been harder than ever for the residents. Night shift staff are taking up on-street parking spaces needed by residents without off-street parking. A request was made for MMC to allow neighborhood residents and nighttime staff to use the South Lot for nighttime parking.

Action to be taken: Brian will follow up with Jamie Grant

## 7) New Business

- **222 St John Street** – The question was raised what MMC’s intended plans were for the building. Jennifer stated that MMC intends to develop these buildings into housing.
- **19 West Street and “The Mansions”** It was reported that all properties have now been divested by MMC and will be converted to housing

## 7) Adjourn

Next meeting: April 12, 2023 @ 12pm

Submitted by: Natalie Dubail

### Acronym List:

**CoP-** City of Portland

**LNA** – Libbytown Neighborhood Association

**MMC** – Maine Medical Center

**NAC** – Neighborhood Advisory Committee

**PNA-** Parkside Neighborhood Association

**SJVNA** – Saint John Valley Neighborhood Association

**SNF-** Skilled Nursing Facility

**WENA** – West End Neighborhood Association

**WPNA-** Western Promenade Neighborhood Association