PC33

Jo Coyne
36 Salem Street
Portland, Maine 04102
207.775.3902 / jocoyne@gwi.net

December 6, 2016

Planning Board
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Dear Chairperson Boepple and Board members:

Late last spring, a few of us in the Salem/Clark/Summer Street neighborhood decided to look into the proposed cold storage facility that we'd heard about in the press. At that point we knew only that Americold's submission in response to the Maine Port Authority's Request for Proposal (RFP) had been selected as the winning bid. We contacted the manager of Americold's current facility on Read St., who referred us to MPA Director John Henshaw, who referred us to Bill Needelman. A meeting and tour of the site were planned for interested neighbors for mid-July.

Several neighbors gathered at the International Marine Terminal, along with John and Bill. Tuck O'Brien also was present. John and Bill talked about the need for cold storage and the RFP process. Many of us had seen huge white warehouses after Googling "cold storage facility" and we asked what to expect. . We were told Americold was in the early development stage and no plans had been submitted yet. We were reminded that current zoning limited building heights to 45' (depending on the roof line) and that Americold would have to apply for an exception if they wanted to build higher. **No mention was made of the City's intent to rezone the western waterfront to 70'.**

Shortly after the meeting, several neighbors sent a letter to Americold expressing hope that Americold's project would be on the lower end of the height/mass spectrum for cold storage facilities since a wide range of efficient, economically viable sizes exist. Late in August an "outreach" meeting was held at the IMT, with officials from the City, Americold, Eimskip, and the Port Authority, along with WENA President Ian Jacob, WPNA President Anne Pringle and neighbor Mark McCain. Americold officials talked of building to 65' but said they wanted to build an attractive building and have an open dialogue with neighbors and city officials. **Again, City officials said nothing about plans to rezone the waterfront.**

On October 13, WENA and WPNA hosted a meeting of neighbors, Americold executives and city officials. Americold insisted they needed to build to 70'. Bill Needelman presented a proposal for rezoning the western waterfront to 70' that had been crafted by the Economic Development Department (EDD) and that soon would be sent to the Planning Board. **This was the first time the proposal to rezone the western waterfront was made public.**

The proposal, which you later gave a first reading at your October 25 workshop, offered three options:

1. Rezone building heights in the entire western waterfront to 70".
2. Rezone to 70' only for warehouse facilities such as those needed for cold storage.
3. Rezone to 70' only for the site currently under consideration by Americold.

Since the Port Authority's RFP clearly indicated a height limit of 45' and Americold's submission contained three alternatives, two at 45' interior height and one at 70', we question the City's push to rezone at 70', especially since another RFP applicant proposed a 40' interior height building. Additionally, even though the City speaks only of the need for cold storage, all of Americold's alternatives propose a significant amount of dry storage. Dry product can be stored elsewhere, such as in Americold's existing facility on Read Street, although industry insiders speculate that Americold will want to consolidate operations. **The waterfront is zoned for marine use only. A cold storage facility of reasonable size is appropriate to the Americold site. A warehouse of any size storing substantial amounts of dry product is not.**

The implications for Commercial Street traffic are huge. The I-295 connector was built to direct through-traffic off the peninsula and is used heavily by commuters. Truck traffic on Commercial Street will increase dramatically even if a 45' high cold storage facility is built. Imagine what the street would be like with a 70' warehouse for cold and dry goods being trucked in and out, in addition to goods coming in by ship and out by truck or rail.

About 60 residents attended the City-sponsored neighborhood meeting on November 3 to speak in opposition to the proposed 70' rezoning, including some who do not live in the West End but who feel strongly that a huge, out-of-scale white box has no place on Portland's waterfront. Residents clearly want the City to achieve a better balance between economic development and existing neighborhoods than what's on the table. The fourth rezoning option that EDD plans to present on December 13 will not resolve the conflict.

It is clear that what is being proposed for the Americold site is a warehouse, plain and simple, despite all the talk of cold storage needs. Current zoning at 45', which was set after careful study, is sufficient for a reasonably sized facility that will meet those needs. Waterfront development doesn't have to be ugly and out-of-scale. Please help protect our beautiful port.

Sincerely,

Jo Coyne

Jo Coyne

PC34

Dec. 4, 2016

Dear Ms. Boepple,

We are concerned about the proposed raising of the building height on Commercial Street, in particular the Americold Building. We feel strongly that the building height should not be increased above the existing limit of 45 feet. A higher structure would impose an industrial environment adjacent to a well maintained residential area and an Historic District. West Commercial Street is the southern entry way into what Henry Wadworth Longfellow called " the beautiful city by the sea"

The proposed building is a featureless white structure that will eliminate the view of the waterfront there.

We ask you to vote not to raise the height of the Americold Building.

Dick and Penny Stevens
260 Vaughan St.
Portland, ME 04102

PC35

336 Danforth Street
Portland, Maine 04012
207-774-1288/207-871-0790 FAX
robertsonsonia@hotmail.com

December 6, 2016

RE: Waterfront Zoning Text Change for Building Height

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

The three text amendments the Economic Development Department is proposing to the WPDZ have their genesis in the Americold cold storage building project.

Text Change One which adds cold storage specifically as a permitted use makes sense. Eimskip obviously needs cold storage to continue to be the economic engine for Portland's waterfront that it is. Change One should be approved.

Only Americold may require immediate zoning changes. Leave the remainder of the WPDZ as currently zoned. This would be consistent with Merrill/Sprague zoning being left as is at their request.

Text Change Two has evolved over the past two months from 70' to 50'. We see no reason to change the existing 45'. Originally Americold responded to an RFP for a 45' cold storage building. We would like to see a 3D model of what it is Americold is actually proposing and what height it is they now say they need. At whatever height this is going to be a **massive** structure.

Leave the height at 45'. An exception for the Americold structure should be made only if Americold can honestly demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt a cold storage facility cannot be built within a 45' height limitation.

Portland Yacht Services property is really the remainder of the WPDZ. As no plans are on record other than retail buildings along Commercial Street at 45', there is no reason to raise the height to 50'. The Central Waterfront height was just raised to 50' to accommodate development. As there is no

planned development, there is no reason to change the height. As Merrill/Sprague's zoning remains as it is , so should the zoning on this property remain as it is. Development of this property will have significant impact. Before any zoning is changed along this waterfront, a master plan needs to be submitted for consideration.

This process has been moving at lightning speed. Economic Development is the only entity that has had more than two months to analyze the impact of a height change along the entire zone. It seems sensible to wait to see what the Americold building looks like. It could be more of a blight than anyone anticipates.

Economic Development has said the city needs to be ready for future unanticipated business growth. That growth being unidentified as yet does not need more height than 45'. And if the need presents itself , sthe height issue can be reexamined.

Western Commercial Street is the gateway to Portland. To raise the height limits jeopardizes that gateway. It will be very easy to reduce Portland to a Hartford, CT - a city on water no one can see. The vision of a wall of 350' long buildings along both sides of Commercial Street is truly the stuff of nightmares.

Text Change Three proposes changes that are sweeping in their impact. Once again no one has had time to adequately consider all the implications of these changes.

Too much. Too fast. Proceed with Americold. Americold is the current economic engine. Time is needed to thoroughly examine zoning changes to the remainder of the WPDZ. Let the current zoning stand as iss at 45'. Reject Text Changes Two and Three.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sonia B. Robertson John O. Robertson

PC36

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: The West Commercial Street cold storage facility

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Mon, Dec 5, 2016 at 3:36 PM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jill Osgood** <osgood.jill@gmail.com>
Date: Monday, December 5, 2016
Subject: The West Commercial Street cold storage facility
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Mr. O'brien,

As a long time resident of Portland and the west end, I ask that as the Planning Director of our wonderful city you provide a voice of moderation and reason in this time of economic and population growth.

We can all agree that the economic explosion that Portland has experienced in the last several years is a positive thing. I remember the days of the early 90's when you could drive the length of Congress Street and see every other store front empty. I enjoy watching the Eimskip containers being loaded on to the ships and as a student of USM recognize the prosperous relationship the city now has with Iceland.

I also realize that Portland will continue to grow, in some ways positively and in some ways not. Someday all of Commercial Street will be developed. What I ask is for mindful growth. Zoning limitations have been carefully and thoughtfully put in to place. What is the sense of this process if every time a new development comes along a request is made for a revision of the current zoning law?

There is no reason other than more money for the zoning height to be changed for the cold storage facility. Please keep the limit to 45 feet, the current legal limit.

Regards,
Jill Osgood
41 Brackett Street
Portland, Maine

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Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC37

December 6, 2016

To the Members of the Planning Board:

A significant argument for overturning the existing provisions of the Waterfront Port Development Zone is that the current height, bulk and siting requirements are bizarre and convoluted, difficult to interpret and confusing. Staff has said that they appear to have been designed for a specific development scheme that never came to pass. We have heard that this cumbersome zoning shoulders at least as much of the blame for the lack of development along West Commercial St. as the previous ownership of the parcels, market conditions, small parcels and the problematic soils.

In fact the existing WPDZ provisions are not particularly cumbersome and in the words of one former Planning Board member, "*were developed after a lot of thought to careful rezoning appropriate to the City by the Sea*". Since they are virtually identical to ones adopted for a portion of the Eastern Waterfront formerly occupied by Portland Yacht Service, it is clear that the WPDZ (east of Merrill's operation) was not zoned to satisfy the hankerings of a particular unknown developer.

So why the unusual zoning? Plotting the two height exceptions to the standard 45' max. building height, on a street map of the abutting neighborhoods makes it obvious that greater heights were established in relation to the elevation of these streets. Building heights at 70' above mean sea level* are allowed as Danforth Street starts to rise above Valley St. They go to 75' as Danforth Street rises further toward Emery. But past Emery St., small-scale streets hug the hillside and no exceptions to the underlying 45' are permitted. (see attached)

The 45' height is also not arbitrary, but matched the height on the rest of Commercial St. "*Forty five feet allowed a reasonable rate of return on investment – given the bearing capacity of the soils and in keeping with the long-held commitment to putting taller buildings on the spine of the Peninsula – with heights dropping toward the waterfront. Forty five feet allows a definite return but doesn't wreck the waterfront*" (It has been raised to 50' in the central district to accommodate the ventilation requirements for commercial ground floor uses with office use above which are not permitted in the WPDZ.)

The massing and siting requirements of the current zoning can be seen as a Form Based Code, but without the diagrams. They allow portions of buildings or entire buildings, to be tall, but with substantial separations. The unusual horizontal diagonal measurement frees these buildings to take any form while limiting the mass; limitations to depth make it clear that taller construction must not be applied to the whole lot – thereby obliterating views from above. Tall buildings must be separated from each other by 150' which is clearly designed to allow visual access to the shoreline from Commercial St. Height and siting limitations are adjustable in relation to each other as they are in other parts of the code, such as residential heights and side yard setbacks.

Another argument for the proposed zoning language is that since the district was industrial in the past, these changes will allow it to return to its historically appropriate intended use. However maps of the time show that industry was limited to rail tracks and the gas works. It is doubtful that the substantial buildings that overlook this zone would ever have been built if they looked out over warehouses and grain elevators instead of rail yards. As a cautionary note, the gas works had such a continuing depressing effect on the area immediately facing the Americold project,that a city councilor in 1982 referred to it as a 'combat zone' and a 'slum'.

The proposed language that you are considering trivializes the impact of massive building scale and siting on Commercial St. A 60-foot straight-on view slot between super-sized long buildings will be imperceptible to people in cars entering or leaving Portland. The 450' maximum building length pretends to decrease the wall effect on the street. For comparison sake, a photo of the Noyes Storage Building as seen from the Whole Foods parking lot is attached. That storage building is a petite 30 feet high and 200 feet long. More than double its length and height as is proposed and then imagine a series of these overwhelming buildings along Commercial St. The same street that The West Commercial Corridor Study (January 2016) focused on to " Enhance ... and create an attractive gateway to Portland's waterfront".

If the Planning Board accepts the proposed changes to the WPDZ, it will represent a significant departure from planning principles that have guided Portland's development and protected its assets in the past. Namely that building heights must decrease in height from the spine to the edges. And that visual access to the Fore River and Harbor gives meaning to the City as a whole and character to the neighborhoods that overlook it.

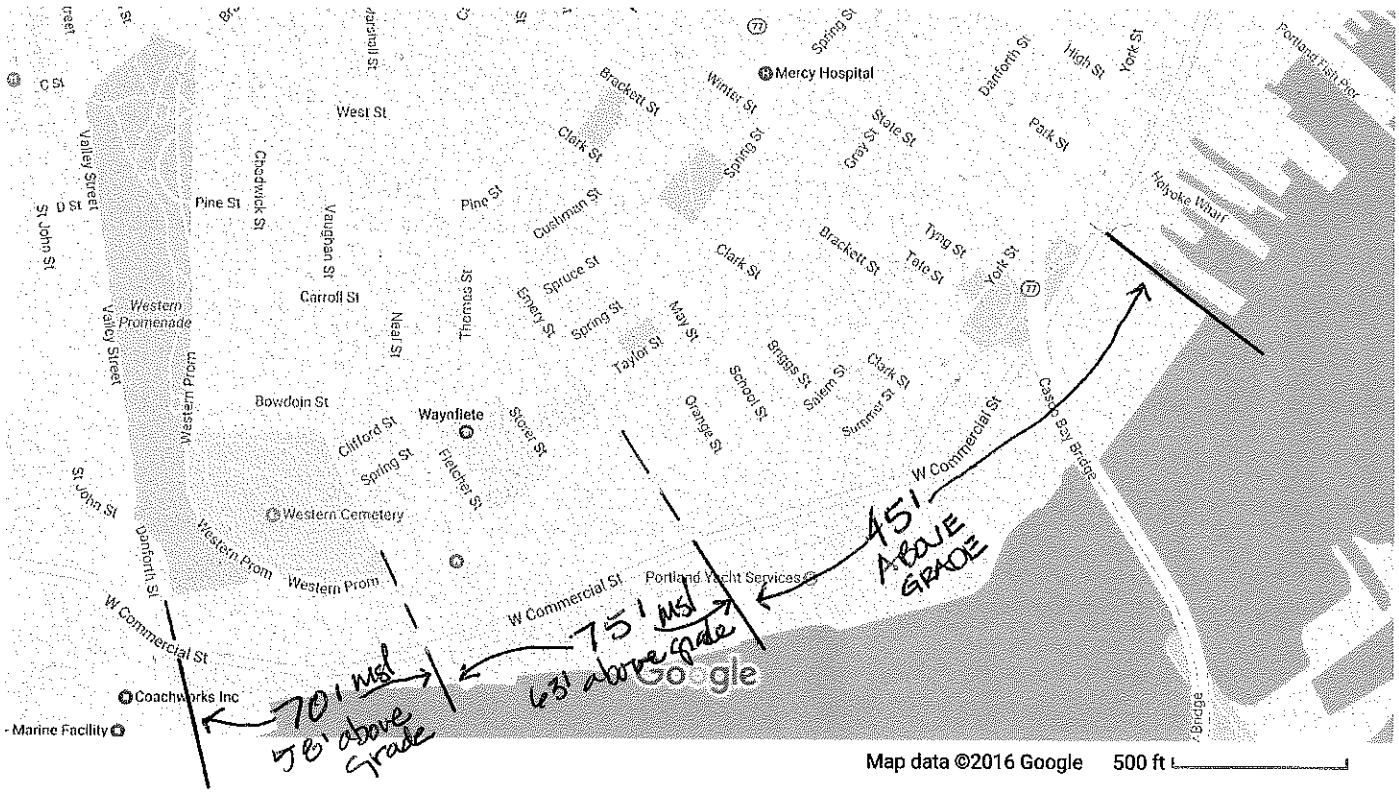
This is not about whether a few individuals have the right to a view, but whether inspiring and valuable character-defining features of the city will be tossed away. Portland can have an industrial zone that doesn't, in the words of the former board member, '*wreck the waterfront*' and bring wholesale devaluation to neighboring residential areas. I urge you to reject the proposed changes to the WPDZ.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Constance Bloomfield, 380 Danforth St.

* The Mean Sea Level measurement is the cumbersome part of the WPDZ zoning. Its use may relate to a traditional maritime/pier standard – or it may be in the code as recognition that the most important aspect of visual access to water is the actual surface of the water. Simply subtracting the average grade of the zone above mean sea level (=/- 12') from the 70' and 75' height exceptions would clarify the only bewildering part of the WPDZ.

Google Maps


Mercy Hospital
Spring St
Winter St
Brackett St
Clark St
West St
Pine St
Cushman St
Spruce St
Carroll St
Vaughan St
Chadwick St
Thomas St
Neal St
Emery St
Spring St
Taylor St
May St
Briggs St
School St
Salem St
Clark St
Summer St
Orange St
Tyng St
Tate St
Gray St
State St
Danforth St
High St
York St
Park St
Portland Fish Pier
Holyoke Wharf
Casco Bay Bridge
W Commercial St
Portland Yacht Services
Bowdoin St
Waynflete
Clifford St
Spring St
Fletcher St
Stover St
Western Cemetery
Western Prom
Valley Street
St John St
Danforth St
Coachworks Inc
Marine Facility
Google
Map data ©2016 Google
500 ft
70' MSL
58' above grade
75' MSL
63' above grade
45' ABOVE GRADE

From: **Constance Bloomfield** cbloomfi@maine.rr.com
Subject:
Date: December 6, 2016 at 3:19 PM
To: constance bloomfield cbloomfi@maine.rr.com

Sent from my iPhone

PC38

December 3, 2016

Members of the City of Portland Planning Board

RE: Western Port Development District proposed zoning amendments

I thank the Planning Board for allowing public comments on the proposed alterations to the zoning for the waterfront district (WPDZ) along West Commercial Street. I will begin by stating unequivocally that developing the waterfront in this area is clearly good for Portland and its economy, so it makes sense to many of us that there is encouragement in zoning for various marine activities in this area. To date, the addition of Portland Yacht Services has proven acceptable to those of us living directly above along the several streets of what could be called the Southern Promenade, which I will henceforth shorten to SoPro. In some ways, it has added to the character of the neighborhood.

However, both the existing zoning and certainly the proposed changes have profound negative effects on the entire SoPro neighborhood, most of which is not only residential, but in an Historic Preservation District as well. The latter imposes strong requirements that development not detract from the essential character of the area. We find that allowed development in the western waterfront will obliterate all views of the Fore River, in most instances leaving only views of the docks on Turner Island and the mud flats on either side. That contrasts sharply with what is visible now, including all the lively marine activity that passes along the River. That is surely a major impact on the character of the adjacent neighborhood.

We are certainly aware that a recent referendum implies that no one has a right to a view. However, the issue here is that proposed 450-foot-long buildings with potential heights of 57 feet above mean sea level (under the current 45-foot limit restriction) or 82 feet above mean sea level (under the proposed 70-foot limit) will eliminate any view of the water for some 60-70 residences (and many times that number of housing units), all to serve the interest of one or two owners. Most realtors would put the value of water views on the Peninsula in Portland at a 15-25% margin. Eradicating that much property value is simply unacceptable. That says nothing about lost property taxes for the City, especially when the SoPro area is experiencing a high degree of turnover, improvements and renovation. For instance, 6 homes at the west end of Danforth Street have changed owners just in the past two years, with consequent revaluations going sharply upward. Those new owners chose this area to see the water and its various marine activities. We certainly did a decade ago, when we purchased a 140-year old house that needed and got a quarter of a million dollars in repairs. Tour buses now stop along Danforth Street to allow visitors to enjoy looking at views of the Fore River.

We have before the City right now an application to build a two-family condominium on the last empty lot on Danforth Street. The plan includes almost full-height glass walls on the south side, overlooking the Fore River. If there is nothing to look at out that window but a steel warehouse wall and roof, at nearly the height of our floor, we will have to cancel that project. That means the loss to the City of about $20,00 per year in new property tax revenue, in perpetuity. That will also mean the loss of two new housing units, in a period in which housing shortage is an almost a daily subject in the news. In Portland, as in many other cities, views are now monetized, with rather high stakes for both owners and tax revenue. This has to be taken into consideration, regardless of the question of rights to a view.

At the maximum allowable size, very large warehouses or storage facilities will also direct even more noise from Commercial Street into our bedrooms. This will be a major concern if the 24/7 plan for trucking along Commercial Street proceeds. Currently, noise is somewhat objectionable, but half of it is dissipated out over the River. This proposed plan will concentrate that noise by reflecting all of it upward to our homes, while continuing throughout the night.

I know that aesthetics rarely is admitted in planning decisions in relation to economic development. However, the Board must consider what the effect of 70-foot-high, 450-foot-long steel walls along the south side of Commercial Street will do to the impressions that visitors have of Portland. They will create a dark, forbidding steel canyon along most of the length of the street. This is the major gateway to the most attractive part of Portland for tourists—the Old Port. Trying to replicate here the New Jersey entrance to Manhattan (one of the most oppressive and ugly entries to any major city in the world) is very questionable. Most major cities in the US are working very hard to improve their waterscapes and keep waterfront buildings to a lower height. Why are we going in the opposite direction?

We urge the Planning Board to suspend any changes to the existing zoning requirements for height and mass in the WPDZ until these very weighty issues have found a proper balance between economic development and its potentially major negative impact on a large number of Portland citizens living in and enjoying the immediate residential adjacency.

Sincerely,

William R. McFarlane, M.D.
380 Danforth Street
Portland, Maine 04102

PC39

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Samar Post Jamali** <samar.jamali@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Dec 7, 2016 at 8:53 PM
Subject: Waterfront zoning changes
To: bab@portlandmaine.gov, sgo@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: estrimling@portlandmaine.gov, sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov, wbn@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Planning Board:

I am writing to express that I am against the proposed zoning change for the Waterfront Port Development Zone (WPDZ). I strongly oppose any changes across the WPDZ.

My reasons are, briefly:
- the creation of more warehouses will not create more jobs- it will create large spaces with few people employed. This is not a boon for the working waterfront and the people who hope to be employed there and/or maintain jobs there.
-Portland is experiencing popularity and growth unprecedented in its recent history. Destroying the vistas and creating a corridor of warehouses as drivers and travelers and commuters and workers enter from South Portland or 295 via Merrill Terminal will hamper the experience of the city and likely lead to less potential growth.

Much of Portland's appeal, and economic, comes from its working waterfront- a **real** working waterfront - and the open views. Please do not ruin this.

Thank you for your consideration.

Samar Post Jamali
358 Danforth Street
Portland 04102

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Samar Post Jamali

PC40

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Devens** <deviehamlen@hotmail.com>
Date: Wed, Dec 7, 2016 at 8:58 PM
Subject: WPDZ zoning
To: "bab@portlandmaine.gov" <bab@portlandmaine.gov>, "estrimling@portlandmaine.gov" <estrimling@portlandmaine.gov>, "sgo@portlandmaine.gov" <sgo@portlandmaine.gov>, "sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov" <sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov>, "wbn@portlandmaine.gov" <wbn@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Planning Board Member,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes to the zoning along commercial street from Portland Yacht Services to Merrill Marine Terminal. While I support economic development, the proposed zoning changes would detrimental to the very reasons Portland has become so popular - development that is in the with the beauty of the city, smart and sustainable growth, and a unique working waterfront that melds independent businesses, such as fishing, with commerce, and housing.

Sincerely,
Devens M. Hamlen
358 Danforth

Sent from my iPhone

PC41

From: Kelly Spence [mailto:kspence@maineseafoodventures.com]
Sent: Friday, December 09, 2016 10:15 AM
To: Michelle Brooks
Subject: Support for Americold's New Faciliy

Hi Michelle,

Ready Seafood supports the move of Americold to the proposed new location on the waterfront in Portland. Ready Seafood is lobster company that ships fresh and frozen lobster products both locally and worldwide. Ready Seafood is committed to the local economy not only with local fishing, research, and sustainability efforts - but by providing jobs to more than 200 employees in the greater Portland area.

We are happy to voice our support in favor of the move to the waterfront. This will facilitate ease of transportation by its location close to the interstate and help keep large trailers off of the roads near the parks and high school around Stevens Avenue, Baxter Boulevard & Washington street.

Please find our attached logo to use in your presentation. If you have any other questions, please let me know.

Thank you!

--
Kelly Spence

Operations Analyst II
Maine Seafood Ventures
2 Custom House Wharf
Portland, Maine 04101
Tel: 508 330 2201
www.maineseafoodventures.com

PC42

GREATER PORTLAND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

December 6, 2016

Mr. William Needelman
Waterfront Coordinator
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Bill,

On behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), I am writing to express our support for the City's application for a text amendment to the Waterfront Port Development (WPDZ). We understand that this change will facilitate the construction of a cold storage warehouse at the International Marine Terminal in Portland.

The Port of Portland is one of Maine's greatest economic assets. According to our own 2008 study, the working waterfront generates over 3,500 jobs, $100 million in wages, and $200 million in direct economic impact. Since then, we have identified the expansion of the Port as a critical project for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region and the federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative.

GPCOG is the regional planning agency serving 26 cities and towns in Greater Portland and the Sebago Lakes region. As a federally designated Economic Development District, one of our core responsibilities is the creation of a CEDS for the region. Our strategy, developed from 2011 to 2013, prioritizes agriculture and fisheries as the region's top clusters. To support this cluster, one of the high priority projects in our CEDS update, adopted on June 8, 2016, is to "Increase access of Maine products to global markets," including the development of "cold storage capacity on the waterfront for farms and fisheries." Your project directly supports this goal.

On May 28, 2014, the White House designated the Greater Portland Sustainable Food Production Cluster, led by GPCOG, as one of the nation's 12 Manufacturing Communities. One of our six IMCP goals is to "increase Maine's global food exports by 25%." Achievement of this goal has more economic impact than any other goal in our plan, generating $133 million and 800 jobs to the state's economy. This impact is related not to the construction or operation of the warehouse but to Maine food manufacturers, which will now have access to new markets in Europe as a result of the warehouse and the transatlantic service associated with it.

Serving the Greater Portland and Lakes Region Communities
970 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 201 ♦ Portland, Maine 04103 ♦ Telephone (207) 774-9891 ♦ Fax (207) 774-7149

For more details on our CEDS or IMCP initiative, please visit our plans online at www.gpcog.org/economic-comm-development/gpcog-economic-dev-district/.

Thank you for your leadership in facilitating the prosperity of the state and region.

Sincerely,

Kristina Egan
Executive Director

PC43

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Americold Project

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Thu, Dec 15, 2016 at 8:32 AM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Please add

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Zack** <zpaakkonen@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, December 1, 2016
Subject: Americold Project
To: estrimling@portlandmaine.gov, sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov, WBN@portlandmaine.gov, sgo@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: Alice Neal <aaneal@gmail.com>

Dear Mayor Strimling, Councilor Thibodeau, Waterfront Coordinator Needelman, and Planning Director O'Brien -

I am writing as a resident of the affected neighborhood in opposition to the proposed zoning amendment to allow the Americold cold storage project as proposed, and my spouse, Alice Neal-Paakkonen copied on this email, joins in opposition. We are requesting that copies of this message go to the Planning Board for their consideration as we are unable to attend the planning meeting due to scheduling. Please note that we are not in opposition to the project outright. In fact, I have been a resident of Portland for almost 20 years and in that time, have seen large industrial facilities empty and be re-purposed. My wife, Alice Neal-Paakkonen, who joins me in this request, has lived in Portland for 13 years. Frankly, Portland needs industry, and I was glad to see the development of the International Marine Terminal and that lot generally. However, that project was able to be performed without a detrimental impact to Portland residents. On its face, this project is different. If it had remained at the height originally disclosed to residents, the project might well have been a benefit to Portland. However, as currently proposed, it is a detriment, and we oppose the proposed zoning amendment to allow a seventy-foot facility.

Regarding the affected neighborhood, my spouse and I have resided here now for over eight years, and we hope to remain here for a very long time. Over the last several years as a resident of Portland, I have watched project after project go forward in Portland, impacting other neighborhoods. I've also seen the City attempt to go forward with these projects without taking into account the opinions of the residents who have to live with those projects, to detrimental effect on the neighborhoods, the residents, and the relationship between Portland residents and the City. I had hoped this project would be different.

This project, quite simply, is going to destroy the view for a great many people in my neighborhood as well as impact the safety of West Commercial Street. I am especially disappointed that the height viewing scheduled to address concerns was scheduled for a time of day and day of week when many, if not most, of the residents in this neighborhood are at work. I'm trying not to be a cynic about why it was scheduled that way, but it does seem that if the City were really concerned about the thoughts of the residents, it would schedule this viewing, as well as public meetings related to this issue, at times that were easier for residents who have day jobs to attend.

Regarding the view itself, please keep in mind that not only residents of my neighborhood enjoy seeing the water. I often see cars (many of which do not have Maine license plates) pause when at the bottom of Clark Street. I sometimes see them pull over to the side of the road to look at the river, even occasionally getting out to take photos. It is hard to imagine anyone wanting to stop and admire the view if they're faced with a 70-foot industrial wall with compressors, unless they are taking pictures to show people at home how Portland stuck an ugly giant box right in the middle of what would have been (and was once) a spectacular view.

Of course, it's not only the view. Because of where I live, I'm a frequent traveler, usually by car but sometimes by foot, on the affected section of Commercial Street. Given the recent work to the intersection of Beach Street, the driving lane traveling west on Commercial Street is already dangerously tight at crowded times of day as the lane to turn onto the Casco Bay Bridge often backs up considerably and cars in the turn lane hug the center line. Bicycles often are at risk on either side, and pedestrians generally already avoid the area, and if they walk there at all now, walk up onto the (occasionally overgrown and not lit or marked) lawn near the old railroad right of way. When the sun is at the wrong angle, this stretch of road is already extremely dangerous. If Portland now adds to this mix an even larger volume of turning or entering tractor trailer traffic to this stretch of the street, (which my understanding was that the rail line extension for the

marine terminal was designed to assist with but has not eliminated) accidents involving cars, pedestrians, bicycles, and tractor trailers are sure to occur.

Part of what makes Portland the unique place where people stay and causes us to be on top of so many lists are our water views and the fact that, although our streets are getting more crowded, it's generally a safe place to be. As I have lived in Portland, I have seen views and uncongested streets being taken away from residents one neighborhood at a time. There is no reason why we can't preserve both the industrial nature of Western Commercial Street, the current state of traffic, and the views that residents of the neighborhood below Danforth Street and visitors to our city have enjoyed for many decades. Why can't we have both Americold, at forty-five feet, and water views and public safety, too?

Zack Paakkonen

Alice Neal-Paakkonen

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC44

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **ashley salisbury** <ashleysalisbury@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Dec 6, 2016 at 9:12 AM
Subject: Americold Project
To: jpj@portlandmaine.gov

Jon,

I'm frustrated by several aspects of this Americold proposal:

1. Poor cost-benefit analysis. This project will have a steep cost to our city's tourist and residential appeal--the TRUE ECONOMIC ENGINE of our city. No warehouse will add enough benefit to our economy to compensate. Economic development means LONG TERM economic development. We are not a maritime economy; we are a tourist and relocater economy.

2. Disingenuous process. I'm disappointed by the lack of transparency from Mitchell and Needleman on this project--last minute disclosures, poor access to decision makers, everything Jo Coyne has outlined. Expect yet another EXPENSIVE LAWSUIT by citizens against the city.

3. Failure to address true public cost of this project:
- The GATEWAY TO OUR CITY--the wonderful views as you drive along commercial street--will now greet commuters and tourists with a hideous white box.
- Sunset views from HARBORVIEW PARK (used by hundreds per day) will be destroyed
- Tens of thousands of COMMUTERS per day on commercial street and coming over the Casco Bay Bridge will have a HIGHLIGHT OF THEIR DAY--the view of the bridge and bay--ruined.

Maine is DIFFERENT, and that is why TOURISTS come and PEOPLE RELOCATE here. We are not driven only by dollars and short-term thinking, so please rein in this misguided effort to sell our waterfront.

Thank you again for your service and ear,
Ashley Salisbury

26 Brackett Street
Portland Maine

--
Jon P. Jennings
City Manager
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 874-8689 Office
(207) 874-8669 Fax
jpj@portlandmaine.gov
www.portlandmaine.gov

PC45

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Eli Dale** <elidale@maine.rr.com>
Date: Sat, Dec 10, 2016 at 5:12 PM
Subject: Planning Board December 13 Agenda Change
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov, wbn@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov, estrimling@portlandmaine.gov, jpj@portlandmaine.gov, bigwhitebox@gwi.net

Dear Planning Board and co-conspirators,

So you decided to postpone the Americold zoning ordinance violation (oh, excuse me, "text change") to another day. Because the Economic Development Department – showing clear bias – finds building an out-of-scale white box on the waterfront "exciting." They need more time to come up with excuses for Americold's bait-and-switch. They need to strategize. And they asked nicely, I guess.

Well, I am now going to ask you nicely: Stop playing games with public comment. Stop being the handmaiden of developers. Stop trying to sneak things past us by changing an agenda four days before a meeting. Confer with *all* stakeholders before you change an agenda.

The damage you have done cannot be undone. Congratulations, you achieved the goal of screwing up public participation in this issue.

People in the West End have worked very hard to keep each other notified of activities regarding Americold. I guess someone in the EDD heard that flyers had been delivered door to door alerting citizens of the meeting on December 13. So what do you do? You hide the matter up your sleeve.

Folks who don't hear about the agenda change will come on December 13 and find they have been bamboozled. They might even get mad at neighborhood organizers, thinking this has become a wild goose chase. Others wait for an undisclosed new date while EDD stays in bed with Americold. Meanwhile, EDD and Planning get to hope that West Enders will not have the energy to put out another flyer. Maybe we'll only have four days notice of the new date and won't be able.

BTW, generally we are not anti-industry or anti-Americold. We are against violating our neighborhood height rules. It is possible to be in favor of development without ruining the quality of life here.

And once again, Planning reinforces its reputation of doing everything it can for developers while ignoring a duty to keep Portland livable.

Very Sincerely,

Elizabeth (Eli) Dale

Salem Street

PC46

Hi Bill,
Sadly we are out of town so will not be at cold storage meeting tomorrow.

We strongly support option 2:
Add cold storage as a permitted use BUT retain the 45' height restriction for the entire zone with the exception of the cold storage building the height of which is limited to 70' -including mechanicals I hope!

The cold storage business is an economic engine for portland. BUT Increasing the height of the entire zone to 70' will result in the walling off of commercial st from the water. This is the gateway to our "city by the sea". Option 2 accommodates the cold storage but does not sacrifice the waterfront as has happened in Hartford CT.

Best, Sonia and Jock Robertson

PC47

Dear Sirs,

I have lived on the hill overlooking the Fore River for 45 years. It is a very pleasant view but not an ocean view. It is an activity view with trees, buildings, boats, cranes and people doing things. In the past, I often walked my dog along the railroad tracks on the shore of the Fore River below my house. I loved the scenery, but it was not the beauty of raw nature and the sea I saw; it was an historical scene; a mixture of rotten railroad ties, deteriorating shipping piers, old bollards waiting longingly for a docking line. It had it's own sad beauty, reflecting former years when this area was the center of bustling commerce, with ships unloading their cargo to grain elevators and railroad cars and connecting the sea to the land. I remember thinking what a great part of the harbor this was how nice it would be to find some way to bring it back to life, instead of having it remain a sad, derelict reminder of the vibrant past. It looks, now, as if we may have found the ideal lead players in Eimskip and then Americold, and we need to do our best to accommodate their needs as well as our own.

Our City Planner has put together a productive series of community discussions, and most of us have had a chance to share our opinions. We all have our own personal interests and preferences, some large and some small. Some can be accommodated, some cannot. As we work toward the best solution, let us not lose sight of the big picture, that is, the value to the community of having a clean, productive and economically viable industry using this precious piece of property in the most appropriate way and adding real vitality to our working waterfront.

Jeremy R Morton, MD
75 Vaughan Street

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **peter green** <plgmaine@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Oct 25, 2016 at 7:24 AM
Subject: Fw: western waterfront building height
To: "wbn@portlandmaine.gov" <wbn@portlandmaine.gov>

PC48

On the good side, a big Americold building would be an excellent opportunity for public art, on it's sides and even on top. I'd vote for that.

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: peter green <plgmaine@yahoo.com>
To: "wbn@portlandmaine.gov" <wbn@portlandmaine.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 25, 2016 7:00 AM
Subject: Fw: western waterfront building height

Good morning Bill,

I don't need you to reply as I just read the article explaining things in the PPH.

I'll go on your record right now as someone who thinks 45 feet is enough for anything on the waterfront. I see no good thing about building part of what will develop into a tall wall of buildings blocking the rest of the city from seeing things. I feel the same way about the architecturally BORING and ANTISEPTIC wall that will be built on the east end.

And a question I would ask is that if Americold goes bankrupt and leaves that giant box there, a condition be put in its original approval (if if even gets one) that it remove the building before it goes belly-up.

See you at the meeting.

Peter Green

PC49

Dear Ethan, Spencer and Tuck:

We are writing to express our opposition to proposals to amend current zoning to permit a 70 foot cold storage warehouse and raise height limits to 70 feet along the Western Waterfront.

The proposals before the Planning Board challenge the best interests of the neighborhood and the city in at least seven ways:

1. The value of waterfront: Over the past 30 years most cities have been trying to make the most of their waterfronts as unique and beautiful places that attract tourists and residents alike, with the kind of success Portland has seen already in the Old Port and is encouraging in the East End. The Fore River has equal potential in this regard. In another twenty years, the big tanks remaining along the River are likely to be gone. When these are gone, the Fore River from Thomson's point to the Casco Bay Bridge could become a beautiful shoreline and avenue attracting wildlife, residents and visitors to Portland and South Portland. By allowing the Americold and other enormous warehouses along West Commercial St., however, the City will be blighting this part of Portland and South Portland for the next 50 years, foreclosing any uses other than industrial.

2. Stretching "marine uses" till they break: Portlanders have made it clear in old and new Comprehensive plans that they are in favor of a working waterfront, and "marine uses" have been part of zoning requirements for the waterfront. We don't know what percentage of goods in the Americold Warehouse will actually be arriving or departing by ship. It would be terrible to sacrifice the Western Waterfront to permit the construction of the Americold behemoth only to discover that half of it is being used for goods that could, and should, have stayed off the peninsula at Americold's Reid St. warehouse.

3. Scale: The Americold warehouse's proposed height of seventy feet is out of keeping with the entire city's scale. The proposed building will be a blight on the City reminding us of other eyesores, such as Portland House on the Eastern Prom, or the Franklin Connector. Have we really not learned anything from such huge and poorly conceived projects? A monster cargo hub despoiling the City's entrance is poised to be the next in Portland's architecture of shame

4. Taxes and property values: A wall of warehouses and a truck corridor will seriously compromise the value of the neighborhood that has begun to flourish up the hill from Commercial Street. Residents who have invested in reviving properties that used to be run down and ignored and are now paying significant property taxes to the city.

5. Costs and benefits: It is unclear to us as Portland citizens what calculus the City is using to consider these proposals. Where are the data to support these

proposals? What promises have the City and State made to woo and keep Eimskip and Americold on the Western Waterfront? What are the costs to taxpayers? What are the hoped for returns? The public deserves to have answers to these questions. To maintain trust between the City and its citizens it is essential for the City to practice 'open government' and make clear what the calculus of gain and loss has been for the parties involved. Particularly for the neighbors whose losses in terms of added noise, pollution and traffic, and loss of views and property value have not apparently been included in the City's considerations.

6. Truck traffic and noise.: Where is evidence of the City's examination of the noise and traffic impacts of increasing numbers of trucks? The noise of trucks backing up is already challenging for neighbors and we can only imagine how much worse it will be should the Eimskip and Americold facilities want to go to a 24/7 schedule.

7. Declining air quality. It's likely that air pollution in this part of Portland is already considerable, wedged as it is between two major bridges, flown over by airplanes coming and going from the airport, and serving ships that may use problematic fuels (see: http://www.enfos.com/blog/2015/06/23/behemoths-of-emission-how-a-container-ship-can-out-pollute-50-million-cars/) The EPA has called out US ports for the pollution released by ships, trains and trucks. (https://blog.epa.gov/blog/2016/09/air-pollution-at-our-nations-ports-can-be-reduced-now/) Particulates from diesel exhaust are significant contributors to deterioration of human health and well-being. (https://www.arb.ca.gov/research/diesel/diesel-health.htm)A cold storage warehouse that will be operating refrigeration units 24/7, and many more trucks using diesel fuel and emitting more particulate pollution will add to an already challenging situation for residents.

We would prefer that the City not grant permission to raise any height limits on the Western Water front beyond the current maximums, for the Americold warehouse or for the rest of the Western Waterfront zone .

If however, you view some change as essential, we ask that you think deeply about the Western Waterfront as a gateway to the City – an entrance that serves as an invitation to residents and visitor alike to enjoy values that we all hold: respect for nature, history, and equity. Thomson's Point nearly succumbed to a developmental fate akin to that currently threatening the Western Waterfront. Instead, it's now becoming a lively and attractive site further up the Fore River thanks to imagination and hard work by a creative coalition that formed when big business plans evaporated.
If the City of Portland is determined to sacrifice a beautiful aspect of the West End, it should still give neighboring residents a way a way to preserve and enjoy their waterfront and offer those entering the City a fitting welcome. Many waterfronts in many cities are in congested areas, and even those manage to build walkways, greenways,

and pocket parks. With imagination and thoughtful design for the entire Western Waterfront, the City can and should make sure that West Commercial Street embodies an invitation welcoming the rest of the world to Portland.

Pamela Shaw and Kent Redford 12-6-16

PC50

WESTERN PROMENADE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

December 8, 2016

Portland Planning Board
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101

RE: Proposed Changes to the WPDZ

Dear Members of the Board:

Residents of our neighborhood are well aware that it is bounded by two long-established industrial zones, the IMb and WPDZ. Text provisions in both are intended to strike an appropriate balance between business and residential uses.

WPNA has been educating itself since the City announced, with the Americold project as a catalyst, that it proposes three (now four) options to amend the WPDZ. We have held a general neighborhood meeting to solicit reactions from residents, held several small-group meetings with those most affected, met with City staff and Americold representatives, and received a primer from a warehouse engineer.

With this background, WPNA offers the following comments on the proposal before you:

~~First, it must be recognized the WPDZ really consists of four informal "subzones": 1) the MPA parcel (including the Americold site); 2) the Portland Yacht Services parcel, now partially developed; 3) the Cianbro site; and 4) the Merrill/Sprague site. As currently operating, each of these has different uses and different impacts on the affected neighborhoods.

~~There is only one specific proposal in the public domain, the proposed Americold warehouse facility, intended to support the Eimskip container operation. That proposal has changed from the concepts originally submitted to the MPA. WPNA believe that the burden of proof must be placed on Americold to adequately justify to the Board why the increase in maximum height is required to assure a feasible project. If, as a result, a zoning change is approved, we would like to see specific reference to design requirements, allowed hours of operation, noise limitations, lighting mitigation, etc. We recognize that there are performance standards in the existing code, but would like to see site-specific performance standards for this major operation.

~~Further changes to the WPDZ should not be approved at this time and until the community has the opportunity to assess the myriad impacts of the Americold project as it begins operations in a completed facility.

~~As has been identified, the western waterfront is a major gateway to the City of Portland. Recognizing that it is a long-established industrial site, there should be sufficient time allowed for thoughtful community-based planning to assure that uses dependent on the **deep water** (not just water access) contribute to a visually appealing gateway impression and not a massive over-development of the site, which the current zoning appears to preclude and which protections appear to be substantially changed in the proposals before the Board.

From a variety of perspectives, our western waterfront is a significant asset for the City of Portland. **It is essential to continue to seek the proper balance between business and residential interests.**

Thank you for your careful consideration of these points.

Sincerely,

Anne B. Pringle
President

PC51

Elizabeth Dale
40 Salem Street
Portland, ME 04102

December 5, 2016

Dear Editor:

Why must Portland's City Hall always buckle under to the demands of developers at the expense of her citizens?

Word seems to have gotten out that any developer that wants to violate Portland's building codes just needs to ask and it shall be given. One of the latest: the shameless bait-and-switch by Americold, which made a bid to build a cold-storage facility on property on the western waterfront, knowing full well the height restriction in that zone was 45 feet. They even presented preliminary sketches of buildings which conformed with code.

“Oh,” Americold now says. “We need 70 feet.” “Okay,” says City Hall, “Whatever you want!” Then they spout whatever talking points have been handed to them about being “a world-class port.” Then we have to go to meetings to ask them to do their jobs.

Dear City Hall: Please enforce the ordinance. Please don't make us sue you (again). Please remember you are *civil* servants, not corporate servants. Please remember who pays your salaries.

This is not a NIMBY complaint. I haven't met a single person in the West End of Portland who objects to having industry at the shoreline here. We like Eimskip. We like Portland Yacht Services. We just want our corporate neighbors to be *good* neighbors. Not only should Americold comply with the current code, but they should also commit to aesthetic upgrades: a beautiful mural on the side of the building; a green roof; a varied facade. Americold, you are welcome here if you work on fitting in as a neighbor. Otherwise, please just withdraw and go back to your cave.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Dale

Portland Press Herald

Posted December 9

Letter to the editor: Portland City Hall seems to tell developer Americold, 'Whatever you want!'

Why must Portland's City Hall always buckle under to the demands of developers at the expense of her citizens? Word seems to have gotten out that any developer that wants to violate Portland's building codes just needs to ask and it shall be given.

One of the latest: the shameless bait-and-switch by Americold, which made a bid to build a cold-storage facility on property on the western waterfront, knowing full well the height restriction in that zone was 45 feet. They even presented preliminary sketches of buildings that conformed with code.

"Oh," Americold now says. "We need 70 feet." "OK," says City Hall, "Whatever you want!" Then they spout whatever talking points have been handed to them about being "a world-class port." Then we have to go to meetings to ask them to do their jobs.

Dear City Hall: Please enforce the ordinance. Please don't make us sue you (again). Please remember you are civil servants, not corporate servants. Please remember who pays your salaries.

This is not a "not in my backyard" complaint. I haven't met a single person in the West End of Portland who objects to having industry at the shoreline here. We like Eimskip. We like Portland Yacht Services. We just want our corporate neighbors to be good neighbors.

Not only should Americold comply with the current code, but they should also commit to aesthetic upgrades: a beautiful mural on the side of the building; a green roof; a varied facade.

Americold, you are welcome here if you work on fitting in as a neighbor. Otherwise, please just withdraw and go back to your cave.

Elizabeth Dale

Portland

http://www.pressherald.com/2016/12/09/letter-to-the-editor-portland-city-hall-seems-to-tell-developer-americold-whatever-you-want/

Portland Press Herald

Posted October 27

Letter to the editor: Cold storage building height will ruin waterfront views

As optimistic as the concept "The sky's the limit" is, in Portland it is an Achilles' heel: i.e., "a weakness in spite of overall strength, which can actually lead to downfall."

I grew up with a panoramic view of the New York skyline from the cliffs of Weehawken, New Jersey, before moving to New York, where I had the opposite view of the towering Palisades, both views totally unobstructed.

Later on, in San Francisco, I enjoyed a view of the iconic Golden Gate Bridge. Fourteen years ago, my wife and I left the City by the Bay for Portland, a beautiful historic seaport, where we enjoy another compelling view – the Fore River – from a house that was built by a sea captain.

What if these views were suddenly taken from us? What would be the appeal for residents and tourists? Think of our poor Captain Nathaniel Dyer's wife if she couldn't look out over what is now Commercial Street to see if her long-absent husband was on his way home in time for dinner!

We need to engage in serious thought to Americold's plan to build a 70-foot-high white box cold storage building at the International Marine Terminal, on the western end of Commercial Street's "waterfront." Ostensibly, Americold's plans for this facility are beneficial, nurturing and geographically suitable to Portland's economy – if they think 45 feet, not 70 feet.

This area has been developing rapidly, with the Gulf of Marine Research Center and Courtyard Marriott fast becoming an attraction for the lucrative tourist trade and new business, including the highly appreciated Eimskip, from India Street along the picturesque waterfront out to the Gateway to Portland.

Let's continue to enhance our waterfront, not destroy it by changing our slogan from "The sky's the limit" to "Our waterfront is the limit."

Frank E. Reilly

Portland

http://www.pressherald.com/2016/10/27/letter-to-the-editor-cold-storage-building-height-will-ruin-waterfront-views/

Portland Press Herald

Posted November 7

Letter to the editor: Strict oversight critical to Portland waterfront development

The stretch of the Fore River running from the Veterans Memorial Bridge to the Casco Bay Bridge is now under a bright light, thanks to a proposal from the cold-storage company Americold and the city's Economic Development Department for a zoning change to raise building heights on West Commercial Street to 70 feet from the current 45.

This proposal has come up quickly, and unfortunately, Portland doesn't have much of a plan to guide what and how development happens. So we should pay close attention to big decisions, especially one that would permit the erection of 70-foot warehouses on a key vista and entrance to the heart of Portland.

There's great potential for positive economic development for the city in the "portification" of this area, and it's already happening, with the help of Eimskip, for example.

However, with that development should come the responsibility to ensure we don't sell off the extraordinary mix of vistas, architecture, water and green that makes Portland unique.

In fact, the city has an opportunity to create a truly groundbreaking mixed-use corridor along the Fore River. Let's hit pause on increasing height limits till we can get all those committed to this part of Portland to contribute to a plan that takes into account aesthetic, environmental and economic interests. Together we can create an iconic and appropriate gateway to the city.

Pamela Shaw

Portland

http://www.pressherald.com/2016/11/07/letter-to-the-editor-strict-oversight-critical-to-portland-waterfront-development/

Portland Press Herald

Posted December 15
Updated December 15

Letter to the editor: To be a good neighbor, Americold needs to follow Portland zoning rules like everyone else

Americold's request to alter zoning restrictions on the western waterfront should send ripples of concern through all Portland property owners.

Property taxpayers rightfully expect established zoning standards to be upheld. If city officials advocate for zoning changes at the whim of every developer or project proposal, we cease to have effective zoning. It is a paradigm of corrupt governance.

Suggesting that neighbors are rallying around their scenic view is an overt attempt to mitigate the real concerns of property taxpayers. Zoning must be applied equally, regardless if the investor is a local private developer or if the heavy hand of the LePage administration backing a corporation out of Atlanta.

Neighbors of the proposal are not anti-development. On the contrary, the neighborhood has long encouraged development of an area long fallow. Their common perspective and desire, however, is that their neighbors be held to the same standards to which they are held. It is the golden rule of building community.

Americold won a contract and, by their own admission, found themselves unable to deliver without changing the zoning parameters. Instead of acknowledging their failure, they are asking neighbors to shoulder the burden. They are asking for the rules not to apply to them. It is difficult to imagine anything less neighborly.

Gary Wagner

Portland

http://www.pressherald.com/2016/12/15/letter-to-the-editor-to-be-a-good-neighbor-americold-needs-to-follow-the-zoning-rules-like-everyone-else/

PC56

August 16, 2016

Patrick Ballard, Vice President
Business Development, Consumer Packaged Goods & Protein Sector
Americold Logistics LLC
10 Glenlake Parkway, Suite 600
Atlanta, Georgia 30328

Dear Mr. Ballard,

As neighbors of the cold-storage warehouse Americold is planning to build next year in Portland, Maine, we are writing in hopes of beginning a dialogue about its design and siting.

The building will span perhaps two acres of waterfront land, making it the largest landmark for thousands of people entering Portland daily from Interstate 295 onto West Commercial Street and over the Casco Bay Bridge. We believe the warehouse could be a notable gateway building for Portland's waterfront, with innovative environmental and design elements that would generate significant good will and good press.

We understand this warehouse needs to be bulky to maximize its cubic footage. A recent research report by the commercial real estate company Jones Lang LaSalle noted that new cold storage buildings have a preferred ceiling height of 36 to 40 feet. We hope the Portland building will be on the lower end of that range to help maintain a sense of scale suitable for the city's waterfront. In addition, without exceeding a reasonable construction budget, the building's facade could incorporate appropriate architectural elements, materials and massing to reflect its status as a gateway building, rather than an expanse of white wall panels.

In view of Americold's record of environmental stewardship, a green roof seems like a natural fit. It would reduce Americold's municipal stormwater-runoff fee and reduce the building's energy demands by as much as 10 percent. It would also be a remarkable visual statement seen by many people, including airline travelers during the standard low-altitude descent into Portland's Jetport.

A built-in-place green roof would add upwards of $8 a square foot, but cooling equipment would last longer, as would the roof itself, protected from temperature extremes and ultraviolet radiation. As one example of longevity, Ford Motor Company planted out a 10-acre factory roof in Dearborn, Michigan, a dozen years ago, with a life span of another 25 to 50 years.

Finally, in order to maintain view corridors on either side of the warehouse, we would deeply appreciate any design and engineering elements that would reduce its length parallel to West Commercial Street, such as using an automated retrieval system and extending the building footprint farther toward the river.

We would be happy to meet informally with Americold representatives to discuss how our desires as your future neighbors and your functional needs can meld in a positive way. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mark McCain, 45 Summer Street, Portland, Maine 04102 smarkmccain@yahoo.com
Jo Coyne, 36 Salem Street jocoyne@gwi.net
Elizabeth Dale, 40 Salem Street elidale@maine.rr.com
Norris Dale, 40 Salem Street ndale@norrisdale.com
Justin Funk, 90 Salem Street funkj82@gmail.com
Rachael Harkness, 25 Summer Street weyand.rachael@gmail.com
Seth Harkness, 25 Summer Street seth.harkness@gmail.com
Rachel Kobasa, 40 Brackett Street rachel.kobasa@gmail.com
Peter Lawrence, 5 Bond Street plawrenc@gwi.net
Dr. Mary McCann, 49 Summer Street drmmccann@gmail.com
Sara Miller, 96 Salem Street snpdrgn@maine.rr.com
Caitlin Mushial, 36 Clark Street cmushial@yahoo.com
Erik Mushial, 36 Clark Street erik@allmtngroup.com
Pilar Nadal, 40 Brackett Street pickwickindiepress@gmail.com
Karen Sarfaty, 46 Salem Street sarfatyk@gmail.com
Mike Stone, 116 Salem Street mstone800@gmail.com
Sidney St. F. Thaxter, Esq., 49 Summer Street sthaxter@curtisthaxter.com
Jeannie Verrando, 116 Salem Street jeannieverrando@gmail.com
Cornelia Walworth, 45 Summer Street walworthmccain@maine.rr.com

cc: Fred Boehler, President and Chief Executive Officer, Americold
John Henshaw, Executive Director, Maine Port Authority
Barbara Barhydt, Development Review Manager, City of Portland

(Also sent by electronic mail 8/16/2016)

WEST END NEWS

Posted November 3, 2016

La Vida Local: Irregular Notes on West End Life / ***by Rosanne Graef, Past President – WENA***

Today's Topic: The Uglification of the Jewel by the Sea

When the Editor of the West End News announced that this month's theme would be "Looking Ahead," I thought, "Great! We can finally move on from the endless campaign!" The uglification topic is not, however, without controversy. As such, please note that the sentiments expressed in this article are solely my own and do not represent those of the West End Neighborhood Association..

If you've been living in Portland for longer than a couple of weeks, you're probably aware of the tensions and discord that have bubbled up around the city in response to any number of development proposals. This is a natural and healthy occurrence. Especially true when the resultant structures will change the look and feel of a neighborhood for many years to come.

What's often most disheartening, though, are not the changes themselves. Rather, be concerned about the round-about way their proponents wriggle them through the permitting process. A straightforward request gets modified, adjusted or expanded to the point where residents who initially endorsed an idea become vehemently opposed.

View from 58 Fore Street. The 2015 Ballot Question 2 asked voters to protect this view from development.

WPDZ and Americold

Case in point is the Waterfront Port Development Zone (WPDZ) on West Commercial Street between the Casco Bay Bridge and Veterans Bridge. Over the past few years, land parcels have changed hands amongst various state, city and private players. The end vision is to resurrect marine-related activity along that stretch. Overall the residents of the immediate neighborhood are supportive of these efforts. Eimskip, the International Marine Terminal and extension of rail access, as well as Portland Yacht Services are largely welcomed waterfront uses.

Now it looks like that honeymoon is approaching its end. The Portland Economic Development Department is requesting a text change in the WPDZ to allow taller buildings, increasing from the current 45' to 70'. Specifically, this change is in support of a cold storage building to be built by Americold which won the City's RFP in 2015 for such a facility. Although looking at an unimaginative big white box is no one's idea of a great view, at 45' it was something that could be lived with. Especially, in light of the economic benefit that would result.

An "ugly" white box could come to dominate the view of the Western Waterfront. Above model is a height study block and not an architectural drawing. -Americold WPDZ Text Amendment (Memo and Attachments), Planning Board materials, October 18, 2016

For Whom Does the Economic Development Department Work?

In August, some informal meetings between city, state and Americold officials and consultants and residents of the neighborhood took place. At those meetings, most residents' concerns focused on the monolithic façades that cold storage facilities present to the world. This was also true at an initial presentation by project consultants Woodard & Curran to the West End Neighborhood Association.

The inappropriateness of that kind of structure facing a highly desirable and expensive residential area seems apparent. Also, consider the sterility and charmlessness a giant warehouse would present to travelers along Commercial Street, one of the more heavily used roadways on the peninsula.

People spoke of color, landscaping, surface materials, visibility of activity. Moreover, they urged Americold to recognize that this parcel of land next to the Fore River is not tucked away in an industrial park. It is in a prime location in one of the most scenic cities on the East Coast. Neighbors want Americold to develop their design with these considerations in mind.

This is when the wriggling began. By the time of a neighborhood meeting on October 13th to present initial concept designs, somehow 45' became an unworkable height limitation. And so the Economic Development Department began the process of requesting a text change in the WPDZ. Indeed, this text change could allow the cold storage building to tower 70 feet on a 120,000 square foot footprint. This is textbook uglification.

Nobody likes to start playing a game and have the ref change the rules after the first round. But it certainly feels like that's what's happening here. Who in City Hall is looking out for the already-developed residential neighborhoods? Is anyone? Or do the charms of the latest suitor always hold sway? Who will stop the uglification of Portland?

http://www.thewestendnews.com/

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Western Waterfront Zone Text Change Workshop postponed

1 message

William Needelman <wbn@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Dec 20, 2016 at 3:39 PM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Comment for posting.

Bill
Bill Needelman
Waterfront Coordinator
Economic Development Department
City of Portland, Maine
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101-3509

(207) 874-8722 tel.
(207) 756-8258 fax.
wbn@portlandmaine.gov

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Elizabeth Parsons** <ecparsons33@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Dec 20, 2016 at 1:57 PM
Subject: RE: Western Waterfront Zone Text Change Workshop postponed
To: William Needelman <wbn@portlandmaine.gov>

Hi, Bill:
Thanks for the notice below. Herewith, a few observations about the Americold project specifically and West Commercial more generally from my perspective as a West Ender.

If it is true that Americold responded to the RFP with a building plan that met current code limits; got that plan approved; and subsequently said they'd need a height variance of such magnitude, then that looks like a classic "bait and switch" maneuver. The City's response should be to push back hard, not to capitulate.

West Commercial could be a wonderfully inviting entrance into the City especially in contrast to the very dreary Congress Street entrance off I-95. Careful thought, though, that balances aesthetics, ecological responsibility, and economic interests needs to go into it all. Ideally, the new master plan would do this sort of thing. But, the number and types of construction projects courted and/or approved throughout the City over the past few years do not instill confidence that there is sufficient interest in doing such visionary planning *and in sticking with it*.

Time remains, however, to do things appropriately on West Commercial. The redeveloped IMT has turned out nicely. The Sprague buildings fit well as, of course, does the tree planting on the side opposite the new rail spur. So it's quite possible for Portland to devise something noteworthy and healthy for the rest of West Commercial over the next several years.

It will take a lot of hard work on the part of everyone, however, to make sure we find common ground. I hope City officials are willing to do this. Quite a number of us in the West End are and I'd be happy to expand on anything I've

said here if need be.

Warm regards,

Liz Parsons

Winter Street

From: William Needelman [mailto:wbn@portlandmaine.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2016 11:47 AM
To: William Needelman; O'Brien, Stuart; Mitchell, Greg; Grondin, Jessica
Subject: Western Waterfront Zone Text Change Workshop postponed

To Western Waterfront neighbors and interested parties,

With the agreement of the Maine Port Authority and Americold, the City of Portland Economic Development Department has requested to postpone the December 13 Planning Board Workshop to consider text amendments to the Waterfront Port Development Zone.

The EDD and proponents of the amendments request additional time to better document and illustrate design concepts that reflect the potential of Portland's International Marine Terminal and the working waterfront.

The next meeting has not yet been scheduled, but we have requested a place on a Planning Board agenda in the month of January to keep potential development options on track.

Please forward to any who may have been interested in attending the meeting. Apologies to all who may be inconvenienced by this change in schedule.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at any time

Bill Needelman
Waterfront Coordinator

Economic Development Department
City of Portland, Maine
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101-3509

(207) 874-8722 tel.
(207) 756-8258 fax.
wbn@portlandmaine.gov

Notice: Under Maine law, documents - including e-mails - in the possession of public officials or city employees about government business may be classified as public records. There are very few exceptions. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.

PC59

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Zoning changes : Americold

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Fri, Dec 23, 2016 at 2:54 PM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: <bluesmegsun@securespeed.us>
Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2016 at 8:11 AM
Subject: Zoning changes : Americold
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov

Good morning Mr. O'Brien,

I am writing as a west end home owner & city of Portland property tax payer. I do hope, at this point, that those of us who want a zoning height restriction to be respected & the growth of this great city to be slowed down that you do not refer to us as "anti-development".....nothing could be further from the truth.

I am writing in opposition to this considered 70' zoning change for Americold because when they began their presentation of a storage facility 45' was fully workable & what they were asking for. AS we've seen with so many of these development projects, which are eating up our city at an alarming rate (undoable once done), the bait & switch takes place which is exactly what happened with this project.

I fully respect & want a working waterfront but in regard to these cold storage containers reaching 70' along the Commercial St stretch affecting property owners, their property values & the fabulous Commercial St views I am absolutely against a change that would allow opening this kind of development going down the line.

I could go on listing all of the reasons why I believe the zoning restrictions should NOT BE changed but I think & hope, by now, that you understand what the issues are. I am writing as a woman who has raised her family, established a great business & owned a wonderful old building in the West end & pay extraordinary taxes for my property. We are the backbone of this great city but somehow decisions are being made that impact our quality of lives here & that our input is somehow looked at as "anti" everything instead of information that is honest & has everything to do with our quality of lives.

I love Portland ME but watching what has been allowed in the development of this city, particularly with respect to the VERY high-end condos displacing so many people in a very short time, I am very disappointed.

Please share this with the economic development panel as someone who OPPOSES this considered zoning change.

Thank you for your time.

Most respectfully, Deborah McCoy 185 Clark ST.

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC60

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: concerns

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 11:01 AM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: <pamelashelp@aol.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 26, 2016 at 11:47 AM
Subject: concerns
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Tuck O'Brien, and Board Members,
I am writing to share my concerns regarding the proposed zoning change to the Working Waterfront, Portland's West End.
I was on the Board of "Portland West" also, I was appointed V.P. of that Board in the 80ies. When issues concerning the use of the waterfront were presented, we as a Board, focused our energies on strongly supporting that the Waterfront be zoned for Commercial use. Our vision at that time was commercial fishing, and related needs. Our vision was supported. Thankfully.
I'm disheartened to think that so little attention to detail is focused today on the Waterfront with this new proposal to expand zoning height from 45' to 70', to accommodate multiple (short term) requests from Americold. As well as Ptd Yacht Services, et all. ...The impact of this zoning change is deplorable. To block this stretch of Commercial Street from it's "view" is unthinkable!!!..
This pristine corridor welcomes folks to the Old Port, and the City of Portland! Magnificent for those visiting via automobile. Traveling this corridor to our City. To block this strip of Nature remaining is unconscionable. This is valuable, visual pristine land...Irreplaceable to those of us living in the area. To destroy more of it is unthinkable!!!
Changes to this corridor demands strict attention to detail. Planning. A VISION for this corridor is essential.
Raising the zoning height does not in any way satisfy the "vision" of the Board of the 80'ies....or of long term planning for today's world.
As an aside..my son, now 32, used to plant a tree down there on every Birthday..thru his growing years...Now, that little "forest" is gone! Sadly. One families story of accessing that waterfront...now blocked from use. Heart breaking!!!
Please, do not approve the increase in zoning...
Pleas, do have a long term vision for this egress to our City.
Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

Pamela W. Shelton

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC61

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Western waterfront

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 11:02 AM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: <plawrenc@gwi.net>
Date: Fri, Dec 30, 2016 at 2:09 PM
Subject: Western waterfront
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Planning Board member:

The proposed 70-foot height limit in the western waterfront industrial area raises significant concerns about potential uses and activities there. It would allow certain types of development that should be located elsewhere, other than on that narrow strip of land along the valuable shoreline.

Please keep the maximum height at 45 feet, carefully control the proposed uses in that area, and register my opposition to the 70-foot limit.

Peter Lawrence
5 Bond St. (in the Salem-Danforth area)
Portland 04102
772-8717

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC62

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Waterfront zoning - Portland's future is in jeopardy

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 11:03 AM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Justin Funk** <Justin.Funk@partnerspharmacy.com>
Date: Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 7:55 AM
Subject: Waterfront zoning - Portland's future is in jeopardy
To: "sgo@portlandmaine.gov" <sgo@portlandmaine.gov>, "JPJ@portlandmaine.gov" <JPJ@portlandmaine.gov>, "gmitchell@portlandmaine.gov" <gmitchell@portlandmaine.gov>, "WBN@portlandmaine.gov" <WBN@portlandmaine.gov>, "sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov" <sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov>
Cc: Jo Coyne <jocoyne@gwi.net>

Good morning,

I am writing to again voice my extreme displeasure with what is being proposed on the west end waterfront. It is clear for the citizens of Portland to see that a need for cold storage or another more suitable business can be met with the 45' building height already allowed through existing zoning.

Was this the plan all along? Trying to pull a bait and switch by building to 70' changes the focus from waterborne commerce to the warehousing. This should have been discussed publicly before going out to bid, not after.

It is troubling to think that everyone that enters Portland will be greeted with such an eyesore of a building. A white box? Really? Let's higher our standards, and keep our city great for everyone near and far, not lower them for the short term benefit of few.

Even more concerning is that the truck traffic on West Commercial will become much more of a nightmare. Entering the city will become dangerous merging into one lane with many more trucks along commercial.

When I purchased my home on the west end I did it because I was proud and excited to be owning a home in Portland and knew that the 45' building height would prevent any drastic changes to our beautiful, historic city. Do not ruin what we have. Let's find the best fit and a win win situation, not what some think is "exciting" for the wrong reasons.

There is nothing exciting about doing the wrong thing.

Sincerely,

Justin Funk
90 Salem Street
Portland, ME

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Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC63

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: FW: Americold building on Commercial St.

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 11:57 AM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Sara Miller** <sara@snapdragonreps.com>
Date: Fri, Dec 30, 2016 at 4:40 PM
Subject: FW: Americold building on Commercial St.
To: "sgo@portlandmaine.gov" <sgo@portlandmaine.gov>

Dear Tuck,

I sent this over on Dec. 5th but noticed it was not listed in the public letters section so I was asked to re-send to you.

Thanks very much,

Sara

From: Sara Miller
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2016 1:02 PM
To: 'jpj@portlandmaine.gov' <jpj@portlandmaine.gov>; 'estrimpling@portlandmaine.gov' <estrimpling@portlandmaine.gov>; 'stibodeau@portlandmaine.gov' <stibodeau@portlandmaine.gov>; 'WBN@portlandmaine.gov' <WBN@portlandmaine.gov>; 'sgo@portlandmaine.gov' <sgo@portlandmaine.gov>
Cc: 'jsteinglass@woodardcurran.com' <jsteinglass@woodardcurran.com>; 'john.j.henshaw@maine.gov' <john.j.henshaw@maine.gov>
Subject: Americold building on Commercial St.

Good Morning,

I am writing with regard to the proposed building height exception that the city is seeking for Americold.

I live at 96 Salem St. and have been here for approximately 18 years and am 100% against raising the height allowance on future buildings being planned for the West Commercial St. waterfront.

I knew that the waterfront was coded as “working waterfront” when I purchased my home, however when I moved here, the area below my house only included the Star Match Factory.

At that time, there were no plans to erect tall buildings blocking the view & a 45 ft. height limit was on the books.

Several years ago, I attended meetings regarding Phineas Sprague's Yacht Services

plan to move his facility from the East End to the West End. Of course, he was not initially supposed to build where he ended up,

but sold off some of his acreage to allow Eimskip to come to Portland and consequently moved his buildings further West.

I watched his buildings go up with a lot of concern and consternation but was somewhat relieved to keep a very small part of the view I have so enjoyed, which was the

primary reason I bought this property.

There have been other "improvements" to the West Commercial St. corridor which have taken place over the course of the last several years including work on the railway line, new security walls, street improvements, etc.

We are contending with excessive noise from the new railway line and the many cars squeaking across the tracks day and night, which will likely only worsen in the future.

So yes, as residents who support a working waterfront that was on the books when we chose to reside here, we have already supported it and sacrificed quiet, views, etc. up to this point in time.

Now, we are being told that we need to go a step further. Americold, who previously agreed to a 45 ft. height limit, wants 70 feet. And now that they want 70 feet

Phineas Sprague would like 70 ft. for his new buildings which are in the planning stages West of his existing buildings.

There seems to be no problem with this and it seems that whatever Americold and any future builders want will get the okay without regard to the many residents & taxpayers who

are most impacted by this fateful decision.

Is there any thought to our precious waterfront, to the aesthetics of our city, to ruining our neighborhood and property values?

70 foot buildings will not only block the views on a long segment of our Western waterfront; they will most certainly ruin the feeling and aesthetics of a large historic neighborhood. This won't just impact our neighborhood, our view and our home values, but in addition will impact how our city looks to tourists and visitors driving in on West Commercial St. (yes, those tourists and visitors who are essential to our local economy) This would also affect the view from South Portland; is there any regard to how driving across the bridge from South Portland and seeing a giant white nondescript building blocking everything will make people feel about Portland? What say do we have on something that affects so many of us to such a large degree? I believe that any new height exception is a fateful decision and should be taken very seriously by everyone involved.

I urge all council members, planning board members, Americold representatives, prospective architects, builders and Commercial St. property owners, and any other proponent of

the 70 foot height proposal to please rethink their stance on this. 45 feet is enough. 45 feet is what Americold originally agreed to. 45 feet is what Phineas Sprague originally agreed to. 45 feet will still impact our neighborhood & our view, and that is the height which was on the books when many of us bought our properties and settled in this very special neighborhood.

Please say NO to 70 feet!

Respectfully yours,

Sara C. Miller

Snapdragon Sales, Inc.

Sara C. Miller

P.O. Box 147

Portland, ME. 04112

Tel: 207 772-3755

Fax: 866 481-3755

Cell: 207 939-3807

Email: sara@snapdragonreps.com

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

PC64

Portland Maine | Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Portland Planning Board meeting re: West Commercial Street

1 message

Tuck O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov> Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 2:45 PM
To: Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Sally Cody** <sally.cody@thorntonacademy.org>
Date: Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 2:43 PM
Subject: Portland Planning Board meeting re: West Commercial Street
To: sgo@portlandmaine.gov
Cc: JPJ@portlandmaine.gov, gmitchell@portlandmaine.gov, WBN@portlandmaine.gov, sthibodeau@portlandmaine.gov

Members of the Portland Planning Board, et al.:

Please do NOT change the existing zoning which limits building heights to 45' on W. Commercial Street. We want to be able to continue to observe the renewed activity along W. Commercial Street and the Fore River. Our view has already been limited by previous construction.

Thank you,
Sara Anne Cody
78 Salem Street
Portland, ME 04102-3916
207-773-6579
sally.cody@thorntonacademy.org

--
Tuck O'Brien
City Planning Director
Department of Planning and Urban Development
Office: (207) 874-8724
Cell: (207) 553-0255

Att. 65

Google Groups

Commercial Street Zoning Issue

Mark Bessire <markhcb@gmail.com> Jan 14, 2017 4:47 PM

Posted in group: **Planning Board**

Dear Planning Board of the City of Portland,

A few years ago the West End community worked with JB Brown to negotiate a deal together for a zoning change that worked for both parties. Today the city seems to have come to the community already having made the decision to change a zoning restriction that was not even requested. We feel strongly that the city is coming to the neighborhood because they have to - not because they want to work with us. This is the sad reason why Portlanders resort to referendum.

We support the development and growth of Portland but feel the city is giving up too much for too little return. The commercial street entrance to Portland is the last chance to have a gateway to the city that reflects our conservation efforts to keep Portland special. It is the city's amenities and culture that created our renaissance and we should not give up those qualities in favor of a zoning change that will forever destroy our last gateway. Hospitality and tourism is our fastest growing economic and jobs engine. Please do not change the zoning and jeopardize our success.

Please do not grant a full zoning change for the entire area under consideration creating a monolith of industrial buildings with no character that will hinder our true growth potential and not benefit the citizens and other businesses of Portland.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark and Aimée Bessire
314 Danforth Street
Portland, ME 04102

the FORECASTER

Posted January 16, 2017

Letter: Portland waterfront project 'a nonstarter'

In its winning bid to build a cold-storage warehouse in Portland, Americold Logistics promised "a showpiece facility … (in) harmony with the local surroundings."

But now Americold wants to erect the largest eyesore to ever call the city home: a box 68 feet tall, spanning almost three acres at the gateway to Portland's waterfront.

You have to admire Americold's chutzpah, proposing to build 55 percent higher than zoning allows on land it will lease, perhaps for close to nothing, from us Mainers. City staff wants to give Americold the bonus height with a zoning "text change."

For Americold, it makes perfect sense to push the zoning envelope. After all, its cold-storage customers are focused on what's inside the building. And its owners, led by the Los Angeles private equity firm of multi-billionaire Ron Burkle, are focused on profit.

Economic development is laudable, but City Hall is giving away the store to Burkle.

The problem with a 45-foot warehouse in Portland is not profitability, or sufficient size to serve the International Marine Terminal, but rather that Americold wants to shift trucked product from its Read Street warehouse to this site, which is zoned solely for port-related uses.

When chasing the holy grail of economic development in past decades, Portland has made judgment errors, often irreparable, that supporters considered faultless. This could happen today with Americold's titanic warehouse. The Planning Board will be discussing the height increase Tuesday, Jan. 24, at City Hall. They should tell Americold the proposal is a nonstarter.

Mark McCain
Portland

the FORECASTER

Posted January 16, 2017

Letter: Portland waterfront zoning proposal is unfair

Americold's request to alter zoning restrictions on the western waterfront should plunge ripples of concern through all Portland property owners.

Property taxpayers rightfully expect established zoning standards to be maintained. If city officials advocate for zoning changes at the whim of every developer or project proposal we cease to have effective zoning. It is a paradigm of corrupt governance.

Suggesting neighbors are "rallying around their scenic view" is an overt attempt to mitigate the real concerns of property taxpayers. Zoning must be applied equally, regardless if the investor is local private developer or a corporation out of Atlanta, Georgia, backed by the Lepage administration.

Neighbors to the proposal are not anti-development. On the contrary, the neighborhood has long encouraged development of an area long fallow. Their common perspective and desire however is that their neighbors be held to the same standards to which they are held. It is the golden rule of building community.

Americold, by their own admission, found themselves unable to deliver on a contract without changing the zoning parameters. Instead of acknowledging their failure, they are asking neighbors to shoulder the burden. They are asking for the rules not to apply to them. It is difficult to imagine anything less neighborly.

Gary Wagner
Portland

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Proposed development on Commercial St.

1 message

Aaron Bourassa <aaron@greatfallsinc.com> Tue, Jan 17, 2017 at 6:00 PM
To: "planningboard@portlandmaine.gov" <planningboard@portlandmaine.gov>

Hello Portland Planning Dept.,

As a lifetime resident of South Portland I am concerned about the visual impact and the traffic created by the proposed zoning changes on the Portland's western waterfront.

Commercial street is an important part of the the vista and gateway not just for Portland, but South Portland as well. Changing the zoning to 70' to build large warehouses would create a waterfront zone that is out of scale with the surroundings and would stand in the way of Portland's connection to the water.

I am also concerned about the added traffic associated with trucks entering and exiting by the bridge. For these reasons I believe that it is important that the planning board contain the size and scale of any Americold facility to the minimum required by Eimskip, and under any condition, remain within the existing zoning restrictions of the western waterfront.

Aaron Bourassa
62 Sawyer St.
South Portland
Maine 04106

PC69

Portland Maine | Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

The Gateway to Our City

1 message

Hawkes, Alison <ahawkes@capeelizabethschools.org> Tue, Jan 17, 2017 at 3:32 PM
To: jmy@portlandmaine.gov

I am writing in regards to a proposal to extend the Americold height limit in our lovely neighborhood and our great city, from 45' to 70'.

First of all, last year I voted against a referendum to limit growth on the waterfront. I do want to encourage business and growth. At the time of the referendum, I was even aware that there was a proposal to build in front of our neighborhood. Had I know then that there was a proposal to almost double the height of buildings on the waterfront (apparently just in front of our neighborhood), I would have voted differently and also encouraged others to do the same.

I have accepted the changes in front of our house. I have made peace with the bright lights which seem like they are better suited for a football field with a game in progress. I am ok with the "elephant" crane which is frequently going, even on Sundays. I am ok with the beeping of trucks backing up, and the noise of the train. I am all for Eimskip, as long as they are a good neighbor, and are creating jobs.

I am NOT ok with a huge building that does not meet requirements we would ask at any other place in Portland. It is NOT about losing a view for me. This building will be an eyesore for our entire city. People coming across the "Million Dollar" bridge will see a building which is inordinately disproportional to the rest of the city. People entering the city from Commercial St will be greeted by this monstrosity. The boatyard there now is a nice entry and is aesthetically pleasing. If the cold storage was at the 45' height and more architecturally appealing, I still would not like it but I would accept this as an investment into our city.

I am very upset that this plan has even gotten this far. The planning board does not seem to care about the laws that were made, about the appearance of our city, nor about the lovely neighborhood above the proposed facility. I love our city and live here for diversity. I am not, however, inclined to accept lower standards so that an out of state business can make a profit.

Alison Hawkes
17 Summer St

Under Maine's Freedom of Access law, documents - including e-mail - about school district business are classified as public records and may be subject to disclosure.

Open Minds and Open Doors

PC70

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Waterfront Port Development Zone text amendments
1 message

'peter green' via Planning Board <planningboard@portlandmaine.gov> Wed, Jan 18, 2017 at 11:30 AM
Reply-To: peter green <plgmaine@yahoo.com>
To: "planningboard@portlandmaine.gov" <planningboard@portlandmaine.gov>

January 18, 2017

To the Portland Planning Board:

I live in close proximity to the proposed Americold building and where zoning changes are proposed. If these changes are approved, unlike many of my neighbors, my current “view” will not be changed. However, their “view” and the “view” of the tens of thousands of people who daily drive by on Commercial St. will be like a solid punch in the eyes similar to the punch delivered by the Portland House on the Eastern Prom with its outrageous bulk and height.

Portland should not approve yet another architectural eyesore, residential or commercial.

I offer three remedies.

First, keep the reasonable height limit of 45' or raise it no higher than an absolute maximum of 55'.

Second, somehow require the building to avoid being a monolithic intrusion. Perhaps have it pass an architectural review by the Portland Architects Association.

Third, consider asking that rather than one monolithic building, Americold and Eimskip consider building two buildings which complement each other and have the same capacity.

I do have a pretty good “view” of Eimskip and the activity on Commercial St. and approve of and enjoy the the activity and development. Continued building is certainly necessary. However, worthy development must contribute positively to Portland in all directions, and not come at an irretrievable cost.

Thank you for your efforts,

Peter Green
Summer St.

PC71

Google Groups

Regarding Height allowance for Americold

Daniel Bushman <danielrbushman@gmail.com> Jan 18, 2017 9:11 PM

Posted in group: **Planning Board**

To whom it may concern;

My partner and I recently moved to Portland so I suppose that makes us a part of the onslaught of new Mainers. I very much love living on the West End, and as a product of this large movement to make Portland home, a great generator of income for the city among other things, rent continues to rise. My partner and I are paying alomost $2 dollars per sq ft for our apartment. It is not glamorous, nor does it reside in a glamorous neighborhood. Though we are satisfied with this living space now, our satisfaction is primarily due to our view of the water. I am petitioning simply on behalf of fairness that if a building is constructed to block my view, then I would expect rent to be reduced to much more agreeable cost.

The question as I see it is: "Do we wish to maximize the value of our residential neighborhoods, or do we wish to maximize the value of our industrial zones?" The choice is not mine to make, but if I were on the board I would advocate for residential zoning being top priority. Case in point for those of us new Mainers hoping to stick around for a long while, build families and start businesses.

Sincerely,
Daniel Bushman

PC72

Portland Maine Yes. Google's good here.

Jennifer Munson <jmy@portlandmaine.gov>

Waterfront Rezoning

1 message

Jeffrey Musk <jmusk82@gmail.com> Thu, Jan 19, 2017 at 1:17 PM
To: planningboard@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my strong support in favor of rezoning Portland's western waterfront zone to allow the construction of a cold storage facility in excess of the existing 45-foot height limitation. I believe that the benefits of increased maritime activity on Portland's historic waterfront far outweigh any adverse impact the construction of a facility with a height comparable to existing waterfront structures may have.

As a resident of the West End, I understand that homeowners with harbor facing properties may take issue with vistas being limited by new construction. I, however, feel that the potential economic impact of constructing and operating a modern warehouse facility, as well as the services provided by local businesses to vessels calling at the Port of Portland, must be taken into account.

The Port of Portland is one of Maine's three primary deep-water commercial ports. Allowing continued investment in Portland harbor helps our farmers, fishermen, and manufacturers by providing access to intermodal transportation solutions here in Maine while encouraging railway, truck and ocean carriers to move more freight into, and out of the state.

Having spent the early part of my career as a seafarer onboard cargo ships I have seen first-hand large scale commercial activity at modern ports around the world. I would like nothing more than for the Port of Portland to take every opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, global trade.

Jeffrey Musk

(Letter attached)

Mobile - (207) 239 9494
Mailing - Pine St., Portland, ME 04102

Waterfront Rezoning JAN 17.pdf
23K

January 19, 2017

Planning Board

City of Portland
389 Congress St., 4th Floor
Portland, ME 04101

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my strong support in favor of rezoning Portland's western waterfront zone to allow the construction of a cold storage facility in excess of the existing 45-foot height limitation. I believe that the benefits of increased maritime activity on Portland's historic waterfront far outweigh any adverse impact the construction of a facility with a height comparable to existing waterfront structures may have.

As a resident of the West End, I understand that homeowners with harbor facing properties may take issue with vistas being limited by new construction. I, however, feel that the potential economic impact of constructing and operating a modern warehouse facility, as well as the services provided by local businesses to vessels calling at the Port of Portland, must be taken into account.

The Port of Portland is one of Maine's three primary deep-water commercial ports. Allowing continued investment in Portland harbor helps our farmers, fishermen, and manufacturers by providing access to intermodal transportation solutions here in Maine while encouraging railway, truck and ocean carriers to move more freight into, and out of the state.

Having spent the early part of my career as a seafarer onboard cargo ships I have seen first-hand large scale commercial activity at modern ports around the world. I would like nothing more than for the Port of Portland to take every opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, global trade.

Jeffrey Musk