

**STATEMENT from the Stroudwater Village Association regarding the proposed rezoning of 1945 Congress Street (Elks Club Property), December 2015. [stroudwatervillageassociation@gmail.com](mailto:stroudwatervillageassociation@gmail.com)**

This statement should be considered in addition to our prior letters to the Planning Board and City Council from January 2015, May 2015, July 2015, September 2015 and October 2015.

**As we have expressed throughout this process, the Stroudwater Village Association remains opposed to one-off rezoning of the parcel at 1945 Congress Street, or for that matter any other individual parcel in the neighborhood area, until a comprehensive visioning process for the area is undertaken.**

**We request that any rezoning vote be tabled until such a process takes place.**

**If the Council elects not to table this vote, we request the Council vote NO and reject this rezoning.**

1. The SVA and our members remain surprised by and uncomfortable with the idea of rezoning single parcels ahead of proper planning for the area. This planning should include content from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan rewrite, the Jetport Master Plan (due for publication in 2016) and input from residents and existing commercial enterprises. Recent “domino effect” activity on nearby parcels has only reinforced the need for clear rules of engagement. Some examples opposed by residents include Verizon Wireless’ conditional use application at 1877 Congress Street – for which the SVA received no formal notice – as well as “me too” requests from nearby neighbors for residential-to-commercial rezoning of individual house lots. We are of course also carefully watching developments with the large Camelot Farm parcel. Put simply, given all the uncertainty, we should undertake a wider discussion before making individual changes.
2. There are numerous concerns about this specific proposal from residents, which we will not restate here as they are well-documented. It’s true that some good-faith attempts have been made by the applicants and area residents to find common ground with each other, and there may even be emerging opportunities for some consensus – but the current proposal does not reflect those possibilities. To proceed with a rezoning before there is a clear path to consensus is disingenuous to all parties, and may require the city to “undo” the rezoning later in 2016 if things fall apart. We think it would be better to continue to attempt to bring the parties together to seek consensus – but to do so requires time.
3. Finally, given the widely-reported shortage of housing in Portland, it makes no sense that we would be taking residential acreage OUT of circulation at this time. Reasonable adults can disagree about the viability of different types and densities of housing on the site, but everyone agrees that we need more housing in our area, so we should more completely examine housing opportunities on this (and similar) parcels. This is especially relevant since there is currently empty office space available in the immediate area.

To restate, **the SVA requests that any rezoning vote be tabled until a neighborhood-wide visioning process takes place. If the Council elects not to table this vote, we request the Council vote NO and reject this rezoning.**