



Stroudwater Village Association Board of Trustees  
<stroudwatervillageassociation@gmail.com>

## 1945 Congress Street: Elks re-Zoning in Stroudwater

Eugenia O'Brien <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

Fri, Aug 21, 2015 at 10:29 PM

To: hcd@portlandmaine.gov

Cc: Stroudwater Village Association of Trustees <stroudwatervillageassociation@gmail.com>

August 21, 2015

Dear Planning Board and City Council Members,

I wish to express dismay, even horror, regarding the proposed changes to the current zoning which would impact 1945 Congress Street (Elks site) in Stroudwater.

My concerns come from a long history of attentiveness to this '**Gateway Area**' to the city, which was so named by the city and airport representatives as part of the big push for the massive expansion at the Portland International Jetport.

'**Forever Green**' was the other term tossed around regarding both sides of Congress Street as an entrance into the historic center of Stroudwater, which was to be preserved as 'open vista'. Homes along outer Congress Street past the Elks/UNUM entrance have long ago been turned into businesses while Portland continues its need for residential housing. Instead, we should be reversing this trend back to family homes and directing new business construction to sites already zoned for those purposes.

This concentrated large scale construction will also negatively impact the migratory patterns of the wild life that currently have access to the open field setting and Stroudwater River. A long-time Portland resident, my home is located on this fresh water source and we have a parade of foxes, turkey, fisher cats, coyotes and deer through our yard. The songbirds, water birds and fowl are a separate issue, as Cornell Ornithologists and other scientists work to educate how to preserve habitat that nourishes what we seem hellbent on destroying. The bees and butterflies continue to return to the milkweed and field flowers while animals enjoy scrub cover and wild berries which will be irreparably altered by this degree of construction with its quantity of impervious ground cover and resultant contamination by parking lot run off. The animal sculptures at the jetport become a mockery of what WAS in the neighborhood if we do not protect this part of Portland's very real charm.

Please think long and hard before approving this construction. This does not fit the site of residential homes or neighborhood feel and mars the Forever Green and Gateway Area stance the city espoused previously. It would irreparably harm the entrance to Historic Stroudwater with commercial buildings. The city should not backtrack on its promises to its citizens and honor the words and commitment previously made.

Sincerely,

Eugenia O'Brien

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PS - We can't keep encroaching on animal habitat and be surprised when there are repercussions we have self-created. Leave this space open, green, and the wild habitat that creates that buffer to the fresh water source upon which nature relies. Additionally, we have bears, moose, cows and chickens out here - and we choose to be here and pay high taxes for that reason.