



Rockland Buzz

From Each To All

Issue 186, October 16, 2020, Rockland, Maine



The Old School Fellowship Education

The Five City Council Candidates Write the Buzz

Ian Emmott

I'm 37 years old, married, father of one, and a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard. I was raised in a single-parent household by my mother who worked for over 30 years in customer service. She raised my brother and I to love the country that welcomed our family from Albania and Greece. I am 3rd generation American and thankful every day I live in the greatest country in the world.

Before joining the military at nineteen I worked as a laborer, dishwasher, landscaper and a mechanic. In the service I was a diesel mechanic when there was a problem, and search and rescue when there was a bigger problem. After the military I was a marine mechanic until I entered college, and after classes I worked on and off in a friends autobody shop fixing up old cars to sell online for income. I attended college on the Montgomery GI Bill because I did not have the money myself.

Now in my 30's I have worked the last five years at the department of veterans affairs with disabled veterans ensuring they receive the benefits they have earned from service to our nation. Since 2018 I have been a member of the Rockland Historical Society Board of Directors preserving and promoting our city's history.

I have offered affordable housing in this city since 2006, and have always offered my units under market value. There has been much discussion about affordable housing, and I have put my money where my mouth is because I do not believe in squeezing every last dollar out of a tenant for profit. I want to bring this perspective to the Council because I do not believe in squeezing every last dollar out of taxpayers either.

Since losing the election last year I still have not stopped thinking about ways we can help our seniors. With the new long-term care facility being considered on Old County Road the City will have an additional \$300,000 in taxes. It would be possible to create a TIF around this new development and fund an elder tax relief and reimbursement program. This proposal would be legal if we administer it through public assistance office. The state would still need to approve this proposal but I believe we have a good shot at getting it done and its fiscally responsible. The issue with the tax deferral program is that it can be a budgeting nightmare for the city if there is a second mortgage taken out after the tax deferral. Even worse, there is a lien placed on your home with interest, and I know I would not like that. Thank you for taking the time to read my profile and please consider me when you cast your ballot.

Sarah Austin

We need to respond as a community to the challenges that will come our way thoughtfully, with practical and compassionate actions. Elected officials won't always know the perfect answer, but we can make our best efforts to serve the short- and long-term good, with the best data we can gather, and input from the community.

If elected to City Council, I know I'll have to consider a wide range of matters, but there are specific issues that I care deeply about and aim to make real progress on. Foremost is housing -it's the fundamental basis for a community. Rockland has many housing challenges: rising prices for home sales and corresponding rising rents, high property taxes, lack of affordable workforce housing options, growing demand for vacation homes and short-term rental units, and old housing stock that can be costly to operate and maintain. As a result, Rockland has many residents without adequate housing, and some without ANY housing. Knox County Homeless Coalition documented that the top reason for homelessness in their 900+ folks served in 2019 is lack of affordable options.

The new comprehensive plan can help identify available areas best suited for newly built homes or apartments, and assess how we can sensibly expedite the development process. Let's review our permitting and regulatory processes to see how we can safely add flexibility for a variety of solutions. We should also consider the benefits and costs of creating a local Housing Authority to help address long-term planning and marshal resources tailored to Rockland's needs.

There isn't one silver bullet solution, but we shouldn't throw up our hands. Housing costs will NOT go down without creating more housing somehow. Pricing out residents who otherwise wish to live here is bad for the fabric of our community. We must prioritize flexibility. Historically, within Rockland and around the country, a single family home has been just one option someone might choose for shelter through their life. Let's think expansively about varied options, such as multi-use buildings with upper floor residences, cohousing, well-kept roominghouses, intergenerational family living, houseboats, barn conversions, new apartments in infill areas, off-grid homes, age-in-place friendly homes, and assisted living and nursing / memorycare for seniors. A shortage of workforce housing also hurts employers who can't find enough employees to operate at their best capacity. Our economic and social resilience depends on maintaining a diverse population, and we have real opportunities to make that possible via housing solutions.

It boils down to the basic human need for a dignified place to live, safe and warm. I bet most of you reading have that safety right now. I challenge you to think generously, and to work with me to find EVERY way we can make a difference in ensuring Rockland has the breadth of housing it needs to remain a diverse and vibrant community.

Adam Lachman

As your City Councilor, I'll bring new approaches to solve the challenges we face. That begins by listening to you. This election is about you, Rockland and our future.

Rockland has incredible opportunity that starts with us, the people of Rockland, through the diversity of our voices and industries that give our city its character and vibrancy.

I have lived in Midcoast much of my life, many years here in Rockland. I owned and built small businesses and currently work as a senior aide to Senator King, since 2013, helping improve the lives and economic prospects for all Mainers. During this pandemic, I work to stabilize Maine's economy and build a strong foundation for future prosperity as a member of the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee.

Through these experiences, I understand the importance of leadership and having a plan to address our issues. Local leadership has never mattered more and the challenges we face as a community are testing us at every moment. This moment calls for new leadership at a local level.

As I listen to you, I hear your love for Rockland and your concerns. Concerns about working families and seniors struggling to get by, the lack of affordable and workforce housing, and taxes being too high. I also hear concerns about the dialogue between the City Council and the public, and the common refrain "no one is listening".

Rockland's best days are ahead, and we will continue to be an example

for communities everywhere- people are watching what we do on Main Street and how we address economic and environmental sustainability. In order to realize this vision, we need to listen and bring new, innovative ideas to the table.

It is our duty to create opportunities for all Rockland residents. We must improve our infrastructure and support smart growth to reduce our tax burden, especially for those facing affordability challenges. We must protect our environment and increase access to affordable and workforce housing.

Rockland's history is the story of economic resilience and opportunity, and a story of recovery. Our city is home to an incredible diversity of people and businesses that have powered our economy for generations - a thriving home of entrepreneurship and ingenuity. Take for example the growth of Loyal Biscuit, the success of manufacturers like Steel Pro and Fisher, historic maritime trades on our working waterfront, and our nationally recognized cultural and food establishments that attract visitors from near and far.

We need to build on this work to support their investments and ideas - not ignore it and saddle it with concrete barriers and difficulty.

Rockland faces many challenges; businesses struggling to thrive in this new economy and threats to social and economic opportunity. Are these challenges going to manage the city or will we manage those challenges? Rockland can be anything it wants to be, so long as we commit to working together to reimagine our future. I ask you to vote for me, vote for Rockland and vote for our future.

Louise Maclellan Ruf

Cargo the Mayor of the Boardwalk Died October 14, 2020

Born April 23, 2009 Cargo P. Cargo of SoRo. We scheduled the appointment to put him down October 14, 2020. Minor health problems began in August. Two weeks ago, he went blind. The lack of sight was a non-issue, for him and for us. He maneuvered the maze of the house like a seeing eye dog. He trotted the boardwalk as if he owned it. Brilliant he was. He lived and died as a well-loved scruffy mutt. When we took him to the vet, he was ready. We were not.

During his 11 years he was dubbed the Mayor of the Boardwalk. Ambassador of the South End and a Boat Yard Dog. Fans of Cargo are everywhere. Anyone walking the boardwalk could not miss the one ear up one ear down scruffy mix. That trotting gait. People would stop and ask me what kind of dog he is? Convinced he was an unusual breed. My response, "he is a 100% mixed breed. He was in a kill shelter in Tennessee and made his way to a rescue in Maine. From day one he made people laugh. He was an independent stoic sensitive guy. The love of our lives.

Cargo behaved the opposite of the humans. Unaware of these troubling times. There was no pandemic. No political woes. No housing shortages. No haves or have nots. No hate. He played with little dogs. He swam with big ones. Mutt or pedigreed Cargo accepted all dogs and humans as they were. He didn't die on every hill. He preferred to be happy over being right. He didn't care to know if you were a Republican, Democrat or Independent. He didn't bother to ask if you had a higher power or were atheists. He accepted what was. In many ways Cargo introduced me to Rockland. The world is a different walk when you have a dog at your side. People are kinder. Children inquisitive. The world is calmer. There are no agendas. Just the greeting and checking in on how one's day is going. Gossip shared. Family updates. Friends made. All because of a little black rescue dog named Cargo.

Cargo's passing was peaceful. We loved every moment with him, including the energy of him dying. We held him. We cried. We will cry again. Loss of a pet is expected but we never are prepared for the moment. I will remember what Cargo has taught me. Judgment is best left to others. You don't have to have a dog in every race. You only need a small pack to live a happy life. Slow and steady gets you to home.

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your land
May the rain fall soft upon your face until we meet again

WEEK THIRTY-ONE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

I always find autumn to be a bittersweet time of year. Fall days are briefer and cooler as the axis of our home planet Earth turns and one season merges with the next. Some leaves turn into golden glory while others shrivel on their branches as the continuing drought robs moisture. One maple is divided in half bare branches and half bright yellow leaves. The Big Maple briefly had golden leaves until they quickly turned a dull brown - so appropriate for this endless, sad season of covid.

My Prep For The Covid-Winter: The most important prep is a plan and an attitude adjustment:

Covid will not last forever. However, it remains an invisible threat for an indefinite time. To defend against it, we all need physical and psychological harm reduction tactics. Eight months on, most have been reasonably successful; winter will be the arbiter of our efforts. Get outside for physical activity at least 3 days/week to minimize exposure to re-circulated indoor air to reduce covid risks and boost spirits. Keep extremities and core warm while enjoying winter outdoors. Maintain at least 6' from others; wear double-layered cotton masks with a coffee filter insert; wash hands frequently. Do things that can provide a sense of fun, like dancing in the living room to all kinds of music; sketching my surroundings; trying new recipes; regularly take some home cooked food to someone who could use cheering up; donate to the AIO food bank; avoid the same-old-sweatpants-look by dressing up each day; de-clutter items in which others may find pleasure by giving them away; keep a diary that would be interesting to read in years to come; try something daring, like using the owner's manual to successfully deep clean the interior parts on our dishwasher; maintain phone contact with relatives and friends; Make cards for friends and relatives to show how much you miss and love them; choose books to read aloud to each other; using what's already available, make the home a cozy sanctuary for the humble but happy hermits we choose to be during covid winter

Donnie Wannie, Pudding and Pie

Donnie Wannie, Pudding and Pie
Grabbed the girls and made them cry
When Viet boys came out to play
Donnie Wannie ran away

by Robert Spencer

Ryan Smith

I want to thank Joe Stienberger and The Buzz for providing this opportunity to express some of my background and views as a city council candidate. My 7th great grandfather was a revolutionary war hero and the first permanent settler of Swan's Island. My immediate and extended family relocated to Rockland in 1983. I graduated Summa Cumme Laude from Rockland District High School in 1995. I researched and wrote reports on both the Rockland transfer station and sewer plant for my senior environmental chemistry class. I also started a school wide paper recycling program. I have no advanced degrees but have several years of university courses focusing on community health and environmental education. I have been a deckhand on lobster and gill netting boats, worked in various aspects of the building trades, have done sales and marketing for seaweed companies, and have managed the produce department at the local food cooperative. I am currently a personal trainer focusing on rehabilitative and functional fitness and have a sizeable garden where I subsistence farm and practice food sovereignty. I have no targeted facebook page or political signs, but I am on the ballot. I decided to run because I am a concerned citizen, and I want to participate in shaping our future. I am bringing three focal points to the table: affordable housing, environment, and economy.... Of course these are all interrelated.

There is something so inherently livable about our little city of Rockland. It's compact, convenient, a bit gritty, yet undeniably picturesque. It has seen the rise and fall of a series of natural resource based economies from lumber and lime to farming and fishing. It's latest economic reimagining has been as an art mecca and non-profit hub. And now that the pandemic has changed the way we work, Rockland, along with the rest of Maine, has become a very attractive target for digital nomads and others from not tethered to a physical place of employment. I am for the free movement of people. I am concerned though that this remain a

viable place to live for its long time residents. Housing is such a complex issue to unpack though....there isn't one thing you can point a finger to and say that's the problem. I have fielded concerns from older residents who fear they will no longer be able to afford their property tax bill. Often these residents live alone in 2 or 3 bedroom homes while younger people are commuting into Rockland substantial distances because there is no housing that works with their budget. Generational resource distribution is out of whack. I support intelligent, aesthetic inbuilding. I think those who own multiple homes, who keep their cars registered in other states to avoid excise tax, and those profiting from rental and air bb economies should carry a larger tax burden. I would like to see some sort of incentivized volunteerism that could provide property tax relief for citizens who do not have the means to pay the entirety of their bill. These are just ideas...

Climate change is real. We should be on the right side of history. Our parks should be full of carbon sequestering drought tolerant perennials and I would like to support the transfer station's continued production of compost through their brush and leaves pick ups. I would like to find a way to incentivize citizens to make maximum use of their personal greenspace. Whether that be replacing lawns with perennial plantings or a veggie garden to supplement their groceries, it would make Rockland a more vibrant place. I also support a more holistic approach to managing the Lindsey brook watershed, so that it can hold and channel overflow during heavy rain events.

On the economy, I think we should consider the new dynamic with the coronavirus and support start up home businesses. If someone can just log into Zoom and work for a company based in another state, then why do we make it so hard for the people here to launch something themselves. I want to get away from us depending on service industry jobs and look towards more craft and high tech manufacturing. We need to produce products that the world (or at least our local economy) wants and needs. I have far more questions than answers, but I am willing to listen and to think outside the box to help us move forward into prosperity. Thank you for your time and consideration!

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