

IF ROCKLAND WERE A SHOE STORE



Vote Yes for Zoning Reform in Rockland

by Nathan Davis

Readers of The Buzz and listeners of Rockland Metro, for years you have read and heard a rotating cast (including me) bemoan the deficiencies of our zoning laws here in Rockland. We have written and said that these laws favor those with the means to own big houses on big lots and disfavor those without such means. If you live in Rockland, then on this Election Day, November 2, you'll have the opportunity to do something about it! Our local ballot will offer you the following referendum question, which you can answer yes or no: "Do you support amending Rockland's zoning regulations to allow smaller, more efficient, more affordable dwellings?" This is an advisory referendum, which means that its result will guide the City Council (of which I am a member) in forming our future zoning policy but does not itself carry force of law.

As a practical matter, this referendum question is about reducing counterproductive regulation and thereby letting people build dwellings (houses, apartments, condos, whatever) in a manner that suits their needs and budgets better than our current laws allow. Some examples: In our Residential A zone, the minimum required first floor area of a house is 750 sqft, but in our downtown zone, the minimum required floor area per dwelling unit is 200 sqft. What possible public interest is there in allowing people to live in small dwellings downtown but not in small houses in Residential A? In our Residential B zone, which includes some of the densest neighborhoods in Rockland, the minimum required street frontage of a lot is 80 feet, which is much larger than the actual street frontage of many existing lots. Think about that: Our current zoning regulations imply that many existing lots in Rockland don't conform to whatever suburban ideal these regulations are trying to enforce. To the occupiers of homes on these lots, these regulations say: You don't belong here. Rockland has made a great show over the past few years of being a welcoming and diverse community, but in our failure to ensure that the people who work here can also live here, we've failed to live up to the principles we espouse.

If you're reading this, you probably know that housing prices in Midcoast Maine are rising ever further out of reach of many local people. The most obvious path to alleviating this problem is to allow people to build more housing. This necessarily means reforming our archaic zoning laws. We're not alone in this predicament: communities (and even entire states, like California) are starting to come to grips with the fact that many zoning laws adopted decades ago are simply not appropriate to the needs of our time and must be reformed.

I want Rockland to be a place that welcomes working people, where I walk by my neighbors' homes, and where they walk by mine. One might object that this is a personal preference and a value judgment, and that I shouldn't dictate where or how people live... and that's exactly the point! Why are we so restrictive in dictating the sizes and layouts of the places where people live? Indeed, we seem to have already made a value judgment: that splendid car-dependent suburban isolation is our ideal. But that's not my ideal, and I don't think it's the ideal of most Rockland voters. Further, I don't think it's an ideal that we should enforce through municipal laws.

Zoning is an issue that scrambles ideological lines in interesting ways, perhaps in a manner similar to how the food sovereignty debate a few years ago (and now Question 3 on the state ballot) put some progressives and conservatives on the same side. In both cases, in my view, expanding individual liberty (traditionally a conservative cause) will likely lead to positive social outcomes (traditionally a cause for, well, everybody, but often associated with progressives). That's not always the case - there is obviously plenty of government regulation that leads to good outcomes. But I think it would be tough to make a cogent argument that the restriction and intricacy of Rockland's zoning laws are a net benefit for the community. (If anyone wants to, please write a rebuttal next week!)

So let's get started changing the laws. Please join me in voting yes for zoning reform in Rockland!



This is Tami~Lyn from the Wednesday Program **Totally Tami~Lyn The Lady Of The 80's & Whatever I Want!!!!** It has been one heck of an amazing almost year for me here at WRFR and I have truly have had the time of my life!!! Radio Hosting has been so good for me not only due to the Covid 19 coming and not being able to do anything but has been a HUGE healing process for me with the death of my younger brother!!! So I thank EVERYONE who has been a part of keeping WRFR going. I have fell in LOVE and have falling hard for our radio station and ALL who bring such diversity and talent to it!!!

Tami-Lyn is organizing a WRFR Rock A Thon to help raise money for our WRFR!!! The Rock A Thon will happen November 7th - 13th and we will begin accepting donations and requests October 31st via the website. This is not a boring pledge drive. This is meant to be fun for the programmers and listeners. Participation is voluntary, of course, but I do hope you join us!

Steve Carroll to Interview Pinny Beebe Center on the Metro Show

Former State representative Pinny Beebe-Center will join me on next week's Metro show (Wednesday 5 to 6 PM). We will be talking about the upcoming election on Tuesday November 2nd. There are a variety of issues facing voters when they travel to the polls next week. Pinny is running for the State Senate seat currently held by Sen. David Miramant. Dave will be completing his fourth and final term in the Senate. Pinny served three terms in the Maine house and served as Knox County commissioner between 2002 and 2010. For many years she worked for the Maine Dept. of Education and the Maine Dept. of transportation. With so many issues facing voters, it should be an interesting Discussion. You may call our on-air number 593-0013 to ask questions. Join us Wednesday over WRFR-FM 93.3 or live on Maine Coast TV channel 7. Your host for this weeks show... Steve Carroll

Halloween Fun on WRFR

Here's a little blurb... from D.J. Chuckee

"Rotary Time ®, Tuesdays 3-4 pm & Saturdays 7-8 pm will be taking a slow, creaky tour of the shadows, with a bit of shaking, rattling, and rolling!"

WRFR News Coordination from Kirk Genrtalen

Well, my son and I do a 3 minute and a 5 minutes section of news (and a quick day in history thing) crammed between music every week on our show. 'Human interest' might be category for us . We usually have 'animal news' , 'headlines you might have missed' , and 'world records' as our main focus, but we do branch out and have covered the gorilla pruners in camden and the rubber duck thing in belfast. And usually it is us making fun on whatever the story is about. Real important stuff in other words!



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Halloween Show
with Liz McLeod and the
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Sunday, October 31
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The Buzz is composed and printed by the Fellows of The Old School at the WRFR studios, 20 Gay Street, Rockland. Email: wrfr93.3@gmail.com

WEEK EIGHTY-FOUR

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

By Phyllis Merriam

Strange Encounters of the Covid Kind:

The day I got my Pfizer booster jab, I was in a very long Hannaford's checkout line, when the unmasked woman in front of me commented, "There aren't enough check-out people because they got vaccinated and their immune systems are failing." I said, "Excuse me?" She responded, "Yeah, I bet you got vaccinated, too. You just wait. Your immune system will fail too - down to nothing!" I did not respond. This was my first in-person encounter with an anti-Vaxxer-conspiracy-theorist.

The same day, our doorbell rang and I opened the door to find the young woman running for the one open Rockland city council seat held by a councilor running for re-election. I asked why she wasn't wearing a mask and she told me she'd left it in her car. Given that she was mask-less and campaigning door-to-door, I asked if she was fully vaccinated. She responded, "I had Covid, so I have to wait to be vaccinated." Say What!! So, here we have an unvaccinated person hoping to hold public office all the while being willing to expose the public to Covid during the biggest public health crisis in over a hundred years.

Yesterday a pleasant addition to our household occurred when we adopted an orange and white domestic shorthaired neutered young adult male cat from the Pope Memorial Animal Shelter. It was hard to select from so many cats needing their forever homes. He was brought in full of fleas, trapped in a havahart by an animal control officer. No one knows his history of being on the lam. He touched our hearts by following us around the shelter. We ruminated about a suitable name for him and came up with "Mango" or "Spencer." Spencer won out. He's smart, clean, and playful and follows us around everywhere seeking constant affection, so easily given to him.

Waiting at a red light at the intersections of Broadway and Limerock, my peripheral vision caught an image. I looked to my right and there was a full-sized stuffed toy cheetah sitting in a window of a house being fully rehabbed. Since the cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world, maybe the homeowners are hoping their rehab will be as swift.

We've been having some lovely fall weather and I came across an appropriate quote:

"As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see." -Vincent van Gogh

Social media platforms continue to intentionally spread false information about Covid and vaccines. Propaganda is most successful with people who have few or no critical thinking skills. Propaganda can also influence people filled with fear, especially fear of the unknown or something beyond their control. While the vaccines can protect people from serious Covid effects like hospitalizations, ventilators or death, maybe anti-Vaxxers can persuade themselves they live in another dimension? One where only Democrats get Covid? Or are they confused by science? Veterinarian Ivermectin for animal parasites to "protect" from Covid is science but Covid vaccines aren't? There are people who believe if Covid patients maintain positive attitudes and lifestyles they will survive. The pre-Covid world as we knew it no longer exists and will never return because in some ways we've all been changed to greater or lesser degrees. In the meantime, the Delta variant is glomming onto the unvaccinated who are hosts for Covid and its next mutation.