

January 8, 2009

City Manager's Neighborhood Groups Meeting

Mike Murray lead the meeting. Linda Cohen presented the current proposal going to the City Council for consolidating the voting sites from 16 locations to 11 for upcoming elections. Cliff and Diamond Island sites will be eliminated but Peaks Island will remain. About 35% of votes are now by absentee ballot. Linda will make a special trip to Cliff and the Diamonds to personally conduct absentee ballot voting days on the two islands. This plan is expected to be finalized in February and will save approximately \$6,000 to \$7,500 per election.

On the Maine State Pier project, additional community input will be requested in a series of meetings scheduled to be held during January and February. Input will be sought on what should be included on the pier in this project.

Joe Gray joined the meeting and gave an update on the budget. Revenues have been slightly lower than budgeted and the expenses of the Riverside Waste site have been well above budget mainly due to the collapse of the recycling market (far less fees for recycled materials than planned). The FY2009 budget (current year) has been cut by \$1.6 million to reflect this reality. No services have been cut but unfilled budgeted positions will not be filled to meet this budget reduction. New current year State budget cuts will be known very shortly so further budget adjustments are anticipated. It's expected next year's budgeting process will be more difficult than last year's. Lists of potential capital improvement projects with quick start up capabilities have been prepared for when the Federal Stimulus Package currently being worked on is finalized and passed by Congress.

There are currently six finalists for the Police Chief position with the next step in the hiring process expected by late January.