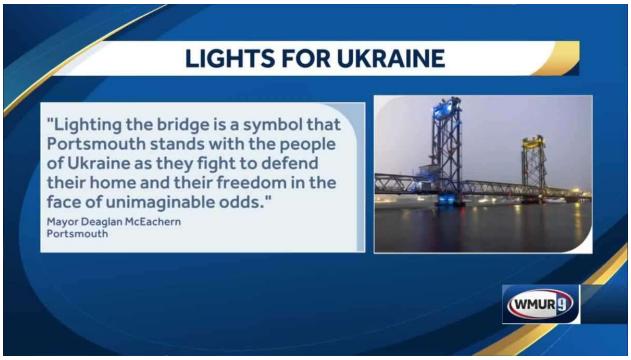
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

City Newsletter
Monday, February 28, 2022





SNOW LOADOUT PARKING BAN TUES NIGHT MAR 1 – Snow load-out parking ban starting TUES Mar 1 at 7:30 pm and ending WED Mar 2 by 8 am. Load out proceeds in phases, reaching parts of downtown at 9:30 pm and after midnight. See map for specific streets and times: https://tinyurl.com/4ycdt6vn
Resident Flat Rate at Hanover ($3) & Foundry ($5). **People taking advantage of these Flat Rates should enter the garages AFTER 5:30 pm on Tues.** Sign up for text and/or email notices in advance, when a snow parking ban is declared, and when it is lifted. Click here: https://tinyurl.com/2p8zrup7 Snow Phone Hotline: 603.766.7669
WHAT'S A SNOW LOADOUT? -- DPW shows you how it's done! Click here to see the video that shows why a parking ban is needed: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/stormwater

NH DHHS & CDC UPDATE GUIDANCE ON UNIVERSAL INDOOR MASK WEARING
On February 23, 2022, Governor Sununu announced that schools could no longer require mask-wearing. Portsmouth schools will drop mask wearing requirement, effective March 7, 2022. (Mask wearing is still required by Federal law on all forms of transportation, including school buses, in health care facilities and some other sites. Private businesses can still set their own policies.) State epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan followed up to say the decision to wear a mask or not wear a mask is now a personal choice, noting that NH DHHS has advised layers of protection since September 2021. Individuals are advised to consider the risk to themselves and to others, especially immunocompromised or otherwise vulnerable populations and those under age 5 who are not able to be vaccinated. Dr. Chan stressed that masks work and that the relaxation of mask requirements is being made because severe illness and hospitalization rates are trending downward. A change in course might still be needed if new variants emerge or infectiousness changes.

On February 25, 2022, CDC updated its mask guidance and created an online tool -- COVID-19 Community Levels -- to help communities and residents decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area. Take precautions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 based on the COVID-19 Community Level in your area.

The City Manager still strongly encourages the use of masks indoors in City facilities. Please note that masks are still required in the Portsmouth Public Library. The free N95 masks supplied by the Federal government are now available at the following local pharmacies:

- CVS, 674 Islington St. at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 800 Islington St., at checkout, not pharmacy
- Rite-Aid, 1303 Woodbury Ave., at pharmacy
- Walmart, 2460 Lafayette Rd., at doors and Service Desk

Celebrating Black History Month
Portsmouth is a Racial Justice Municipality. Read more about what that means, here: https://tinyurl.com/2p89mvy2

Questions about a City Department, program or issue? Suggestion? Email your comment to hotline@cityofportsmouth.com

and you'll receive an immediate response, or we'll find the right person who can answer your question.

INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF REPLACING THIRD PARTY INSPECTORS
City Inspections Department is suspending the interim use of third-party inspectors thanks to diligent work since the hiring of Portsmouth Chief Building Inspector Shanti Wolph. Since Wolph's arrival three months ago, the Inspections Department has completed 1,712 inspections and is now working with a full team of three Building Inspectors, two Plumbing/Mechanical Inspectors and an Electrical inspector to provide inspections in a timely and efficient manner. As a result, the policy allowing for third-party inspectors, which was adopted in 2021, is no longer needed. Applicants should use the ViewPoint portal for all permit applications and schedule inspection appointments as normal.

MIDDLE STREET BIKE LANES PUBLIC MEETING THURS MAR 10 AT 6:30 PM – In City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom. For the Zoom registration, click here. https://tinyurl.com/4e6a92s8



RUTH LEWIN GRIFFIN PLACE AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPLICATION SITE NOW OPEN!
The Portsmouth Housing Authority development, now under construction, features 48 one-bedroom apartments and 16 two-bedroom units. The units will be available to people who meet income requirements. Starting rent for the one-bedrooms units is $950 a month, while starting rent for the two-bedroom units is $1,200. To apply to rent one of the apartments, visit https://cityoftheopendoor.com/



ISLINGTON CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING PROGRAM SURVEY -- The Islington Creek Neighborhood Parking Program (NPP) pilot launched on August 4, 2021 and was extended beyond its original end date of February 4, 2022 to April 4, 2022 in order to collect and report feedback on the program, including the results of this survey of NPP pilot participants. To participate in the survey, click here. https://tinyurl.com/59uuf7hw



CITY NOW ACCEPTING OUTDOOR DINING APPLICATIONS FROM RESTAURANTS --
Businesses wanting to operate an outdoor cafe on public property in 2022 can apply immediately for approval by submitting an application through the City's online permitting portal. More information about standards and guidance on application submissions are available on the City's webpage.
The season is expected to be:
Mar 4 (weather permitting) – Use of sidewalks and public realm
Week of Apr 7 (weather permitting) – DPW starts placing barriers to allow use of travel lanes and parking spaces for outdoor dining.

PORTSMOUTH COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN TO ALL ELIGIBLE PORTSMOUTH RESIDENTS -- Scholarship application season is now underway, with a **deadline of March 11, 2022 at 3:30 pm for all applications** to be submitted. The Trustees of the Trust Funds who administer the funding for many scholarships take this opportunity to remind residents that while many of the scholarships are awarded only to graduating Portsmouth High School seniors, **some -- including the five Portsmouth Community Scholarships are open to any Portsmouth**

resident who is a graduating senior. Eligible Portsmouth students attending private schools and homeschool programs are eligible to apply, as well as Portsmouth residents attending Portsmouth High School.

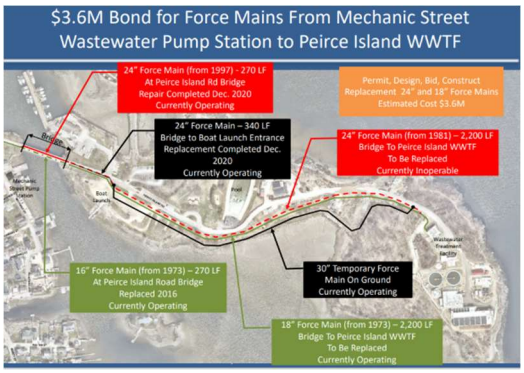
Scholarships are awarded based on specific criteria. The Portsmouth Community Scholarships include:

- Study in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- Study in the Arts
- Study in Career Technology (Trades)
- Study in Higher Education, generally
- In recognition of athletic accomplishment

All applicants should review the criteria in the 2022 Scholarship Booklet: https://tinyurl.com/2p89744j Mand follow the instructions for the online application process outlined here: https://tinyurl.com/2escyvz7



REC DEPT SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAM AND CAMP INFORMATION! -- Spring/Summer info NOW AVAILABLE on the Rec Dept webpage: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation Printed copies of the program guide also available at City Hall, the library and at all Recreation facilities. **SPRING PROGRAM REGISTRATION now open! Summer Program/Camp Registration now open for residents** and Mon Mar 7 for non-residents. **INDOOR POOL SPRING SWIM LESSON REGISTRATION now open for residents. Opened TODAY for non-residents.**



PEIRCE ISLAND ROAD WORK FOR SEWER FORCE MAINS PROJECT -- Work continues on the project to replace the force mains to the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/peirce-island-sewer-force-mains-project That work requires closing Peirce Island Road, parking and trail access beyond the Outdoor Pool, on a daily basis, 7 am to 4 pm. The public is advised that access is obstructed in the area past the pool.

AARP TAX PREP ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE AARP Tax Prep is drop-off only this year. Envelopes are available at the Senior Activity Center and Portsmouth Public Library, and drop-offs should be made at the Senior Center ONLY, February 1 – April 10, during the following times:

- Sundays, 11 am – 12 noon
- Tuesdays, 4-5 pm

For detailed instructions on what you need for filing, click here: https://tinyurl.com/2p87ee45 As the 2021 Tax Year filing period opens, the IRS is encouraging taxpayers to file electronically. They estimate that refunds on electronic filings without errors will be processed in 21 days, but caution the IRS still has a backlog of 6 million unprocessed returns.

NH DHHS REVISES HOURS FOR DAILY WALK-IN VACCINATION & BOOSTER CLINICS – Rochester, Spaulding Commons, 306 N. Main Street. NEW HOURS: Mon-Sat, 12 noon- 7pm, closed on Sundays. For additional local pharmacies and same-day sites, click here: https://tinyurl.com/kbvemrbk **NH Dept of Public Health expects to keep this fixed site in place through March 2022.**

NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – Unlike CDC, NH DHHS does NOT recommend a 5-day quarantine following international travel or for those who are exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine is recommended ONLY if the infected person is part of your household and all are unvaccinated.

FREE TEST KITS BY MAIL -- Order free at-home COVID-19 tests from the Federal government website: https://www.covidtests.gov/ which also offers 'how to test' instructions. **NH SOURCES FOR FREE AT-HOME TESTING KITS –** To order a free kit, visit: https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nh/

FREE COVID-19 TESTING SITE AT FOX RUN MALL IN NEWINGTON–Note: This site is closed when school is closed because of weather. Open 7 days a week, 9 am to 3 pm in the parking lot behind the JC Penney store. 48-hour results. For other free testing centers, click here: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/testing-faqs

BOOSTERS FOR HOMEBOUND INDIVIDUALS –Call On-Site Medical Services, the company contracted by NH to provide homebound boosters, at 603-338-9292 or book an appointment online at the On-Site Medical website: https://www.on-sitemedservices.com/

WEEKLY FREE LUNCH REMINDERS:

- **Middle Street Baptist Church –** Seacoast Community Lunch brown bag lunches from the parking lot (18 Court St..), 12 noon to 1 pm on Wednesdays. For more information call 603-436-2337 or email lunch@middle.st
- **St. John's Church --** Common Table bag lunch pickup in the St. John's parking lot (100 Chapel St.) Thurs, 12 noon to 1 pm.

GATHER COMMUNITY MARKET, FRIDAYS, 10 am – 1 pm – A FREE market for all. No paperwork. No ID. No one is ever turned away. Located at the NH National Guard building, 801 McGee Drive in Portsmouth.

GRANTS FOR ARTISTS! The NH Council on the Arts reminds artists of two grant programs currently accepting applications:
NH CARES Artist-Led Project Grants
Grants to individual artists for specific, definable projects that connect artists and organizations to local initiatives. This program will support employment opportunities for artists impacted by COVID-19 by building new structures and partnerships that will help to sustain New Hampshire's creative sector. **Deadline: March 4, 2022.**
Artist Entrepreneurial Grant

WORK FOR THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH! To review job postings and benefits, click here. *For example, one of the current job openings is: Water/Sewer Laborer.*
The City offers a generous compensation and benefits package that includes retirement, generous paid time off including vacation, holidays, medical & dental insurance, flexible spending account, professional development, career growth, longevity incentives, and more! For details and to apply, click here: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/hr/work

PORTSMOUTH NH 400 ACCEPTING OFFICIAL PROGRAM PARTNER APPLICATIONS – Organizations, groups and anymore planning a Portsmouth NH 400 celebration program, project or event is invited to submit an Official Program Partner Application.
https://tinyurl.com/mw5664bm
The goals of the Application Process are:

- To help Portsmouth NH 400 Management Team keep track of events, projects and programs (including any fund-raising efforts in 2022)
- To maintain a central calendar on the PortsmouthNH400.org website
- To connect organizations and artists who seem to be working on similar themes and ideas
- To coordinate fund-, fun- and friend-raising efforts
- To coordinate marketing efforts

Learn more, get involved, volunteer, donate! For more details, visit:
https://www.PortsmouthNH400.org

EMERGENCY RENTAL & UTILITIES ASSISTANCE – The **NH Emergency Rental Assistance Program** (NHERAP) provides funds to renters who cannot pay their rent and utilities during the pandemic. The program works with tenants and landlords. Program changes as of October 1, 2021:

- Households may qualify for assistance for past-due and future rent and utility payments for a period not to exceed 18 months.
- At least one person in the household must have qualified for unemployment benefits, had their income reduced, had significant costs, or had other financial hardship during the pandemic. Certain income requirements must be met.

WHAT THE PROGRAM COVERS

- Past-due rent including reasonable late and legal fees.

- Three months of future rent payments if needed for housing stability.
- Utilities, such as electricity, home heating costs, water, sewer, trash.
- Other housing-related costs such as internet and relocation expenses (including rental application fees, utility hook-up fees, and security deposits).
- Households may qualify for utility assistance even if they do not receive or need rental assistance.

For more information on whether you qualify and how to apply for emergency funds available to renters in NH, click here: https://www.capnh.org/covid19 The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has also launched a tool (click here: https://tinyurl.com/4hawaxf4) that allows renters and landlords to find rental assistance programs in their area. Applications are handled through NH Community Action Partnership (CAP).



RECENTLY UPDATED:

- **MASK FAQs,** click here:
- **VACCINATION FAQs**, click here: https://tinyurl.com/4smxnjf7
- **TESTING FAQs,** click here: https://tinyurl.com/57vhfbhx
- **COVID-19 TREATMENT FAQs,** click here

KIDS AND COVID FAQs, click here

POST-VACCINATION FAQs – For the latest information on breakthrough infections, boosters and vaccine effectiveness against the Omicron variant, click here: https://tinyurl.com/uurbmrse

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND – For more information on how the COVID-19 vaccines were developed, tested and approved, click here. https://tinyurl.com/3yhreymk

I LOST MY PROOF-OF-VACCINATION CARD. NOW WHAT? All vaccination records are kept on file in the CDC National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) system. NH DHHS advises that you can replace a lost vaccination card in either of two ways:

1. Download and complete the vaccination card replacement request form here: https://tinyurl.com/4pj4chcz Note that the completed form MUST BE NOTARIZED before sending it back to NH DHHS.

2. If your healthcare provider has access to the NHIIS, ask him/her to print out the record directly from NHIIS.

A NOTE ON COMMERCIAL TESTING CHARGES – If a commercial urgent care center says that COVID tests are not going to be covered by insurance, NH DHHS advises that **patients may request the urgent care center submit a bill to the carrier under the code Z20.828.** This covers suspected exposure to viral communicable disease. Their advice is based on this CDC guidance: "If the provider documents 'suspected,' 'possible,' 'probable,' or 'inconclusive' COVID-19, do not assign code U07.1. Assign a code(s) explaining the reason for encounter (such as fever) or Z20.828, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases." **Private health insurers are now required to cover up to eight home COVID-19 tests per month for people on their plans.** Under the new policy, Americans are able to either purchase home testing kits for free under their insurance or submit receipts for the tests for reimbursement, up to the monthly per-person limit.

For more information, visit City's page on COVID-19: https://tinyurl.com/2ywcu6ab

CITY HALL FACEBOOK PAGE:
Like and follow us to get news as it's posted:
https://www.facebook.com/CityHallPortsmouthNH

Want to know more about what's happening in the City? Click on the QR code or link below to sign up for the City Newsletter and/or individual email lists for projects. https://tinyurl.com/y2p67par