



# PORTLAND Regional Chamber

*A Partnership of Community Chambers*

Portland City Councilors  
389 Congress Street  
Portland, Maine 04101

August 24, 2009

Cumberland County Commissioners  
389 Congress Street  
142 Federal Street  
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: Cumberland County Civic Center

Dear Cumberland County Commissioners and Portland City Councilors;

I am writing to you today to urge you to facilitate timely action on proposed renovations to the Cumberland County Civic Center.

As many of you know, the Portland Regional Chamber has been a strong proponent of a vibrant Civic Center for more than a decade. Many of our members have volunteered in support of the Civic Center, and many more agree that the facility remains a central economic asset to both the City of Portland and the entire Portland region.

Almost 2 years ago Brian Petrovek of the Portland Pirates and Janet Marie Smith (working in conjunction with architectural firm DAIQ) presented a compelling vision of a renewed Civic Center to our monthly *Eggs & Issues* meeting. The renovations proposed by Ms. Smith caught the imagination of our members and suggested exciting revitalization strategies for the entire Civic Center area.

Two years later Chamber members are asking ‘what happened to the Civic Center renewal project?’

In our organization’s judgment Portland and the region are in need of an economic development victory. The Civic Center provides an important opportunity to show that

our City and our County can successfully champion an ambitious project that we have every reason to expect will bring us significant new jobs and investment.

Some suggest that the proposed renovations be scrapped in favor of building an entirely new facility. In our view that approach is not possible given the current limits on public finances, not to mention the political issues a green field development would create.

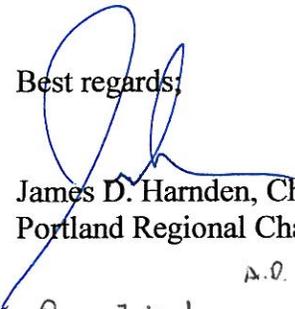
Instead we urge both the Portland City Council and the Cumberland County Commissioners to re-take control of the too-long delayed debate over renovation of the Civic Center by instructing all parties to move forward with renovation plans as quickly as practicable.

By doing so you will stimulate our regional economy, bring certainty to new investment opportunities, and most importantly show our community the leadership needed to create an exciting new chapter in the Civic Center's history.

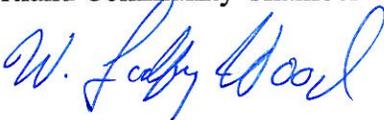
We keenly look forward to the outcomes of tonight's Joint Workshop, and we will do whatever we can to support your efforts to bring the Civic Center into the next century as a vital part of our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our organization's deep interest in the Civic Center's future with you. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me directly.

Best regards;

  
James D. Harnden, Chair  
Portland Regional Chamber

*Ron Ward*  
Ron Ward, President  
Portland Community Chamber

  
W. Godfrey Wood, CEO  
Portland Regional Chamber

Cc: Portland City Manager Joseph E. Gray  
Cumberland County Manager Peter Crichton