Summer 7-1964

Munjoy Observer

Portland Renewal Authority

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BED Warns On Furnace Racketeers

Beware of fraudulent furnace inspectors warns the BED! Frank M. Sheldon, manager, Business Ethics Division, Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce, said to call him at the BED office 772-5861 if you have any doubt about a furnace inspector, siding, roofing or painting contractor.

"Another good check," said Sheldon "is to ask for references on jobs they have performed in your neighborhood, and then check the references. If they are legitimate salesmen, they will wait for an investigation."

These unscrupulous repairmen, Sheldon said, enter homes posing as inspectors or by offering to make a complete furnace inspection free, then reporting to the owner that the furnace is in dangerous condition and should be cleaned and repaired.

Homeowners should request identification and refuse to deal with firms that use high pressure techniques. Read that contract with great care!

Call the Business Ethics Division if you suspect that some contractor is trying to force sell. The unethical contractor makes the job of the fair and good contractor more difficult.

Ralph Romano Inc., was low bidder for repairs to streets, sidewalks and curbs in Contract I. Above, Mr. Romano supervises construction of new catchbasin on the corner of Beckett and Moody Street. In the background is the Marada Adams School and Library, constructed as part of the City's share of the cost of renewal in the Munjoy South Project.

Ralph Romano was low bidder for construction work on streets, sidewalks and curbs under Contract I with a bid of $88,814.30.

Romano began operations July 6 on Vesper Street, with the removal of curbs.

On June 18 a meeting was held at Marada Adams School to explain the engineering plans for the work on the following streets: Munjoy Street, Beckett and O'Brion Streets, Moody Street, Wilson Street, Vesper Street, Morning Street, Eastern Promenade (South Side of Congress to Fore Street), Congress Street (South Side), (Munjoy Street to the Eastern Promenade).

Approximately 40 residents from the area attended the meeting; also PRA board of Commissioners, representatives of the Munjoy South Association who provided refreshments, Howard U. Heller, Executive Director, and other staff personnel from PRA, Henry Willett, City Planning Department, and Robert Ballew and Jules LaVoie representing Edward C. Jordan Engineering Company.

Mr. Ballew reported that the contract calls for 4,000 feet of granite curbing to be relaid, 700 feet of new granite curb, 20 new catchbasins to replace stone slab ones, 3,200 feet of new concrete sidewalks and drives, 2,900 feet of new brick walks and drives, 8,697 feet of relaid brick walks and drives, and 3,200 tons of bituminous concrete surfacing, at least two inches thick, for all streets in the area.

Because the emphasis at this meeting was on the work to be performed under this contract, it appears that some residents did not understand that many of the good brick, as well as concrete sidewalks, will remain untouched. Although most of the walks require work, some are in excellent condition and it would be foolish and expensive to take these up and relay them.

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Summer Library Program Announced

Summer Story Hours, which have been very successful for the past two summers, resumed on Thursday June 18th at the Munjoy Branch of the Portland Public Library.

Every Thursday at 3:00 P.M. children from five to ten years of age are invited. Storytellers are Miss Mildred S. Smith, Miss Nancy Karlin and Miss Mildred A. Perkins, Branch Librarian.

A reading game for boys and girls in the fourth to sixth grades began June 22. This will continue for six weeks. Those who join will “Climb the Munjoy Hill Observatory with Books” reported Miss Perkins.

Demolition Under Way

The S. A. S. Equipment Company of New Jersey has demolished 15 structures in the past month.

The contract with S. A. S. called for demolition of 43 structures. They were low bidder with a bid of $31,200.

A number of these structures cannot be released because they are still occupied. As soon as the families are satisfactorily relocated these structures will also be demolished.

Progress on this contract has been hampered by serious breakdowns of equipment. As a result, cellar holes have not been filled according to schedule. The Board of Commissioners of the Renewal Authority is insistent that the contractor do a satisfactory job of filling and grading before additional structures are released for demolition.

Mr. Jack Atwood is in charge of S. A. S. demolition. If anyone wants any salvage from the demolition buildings he should contact Mr. Atwood, not PRA. PRA is not authorized to sell or to give away any of the salvage.

Parks Department Summer Recreation Program

The City of Portland’s Parks Department announced that the popular Fort Allen Park Outdoor Concerts started July 9.

The concerts will continue every Thursday night thru August 20. There is no admission charge.

Pool hours at the Kiwanis and East End Beach Pool are as follows:

Monday-Friday:
- 9:00 to 12:00 Noon — Lessons Only
- Closed 12:00 Noon to 2:00 P.M.
- For Lunch and Cleaning
- 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. —
  - General Swimming
  - NO NIGHT SWIMMING
- 5:00 to 6:00 P.M. — Closed for Supper
- 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. —
  - General Swimming
- Saturday:
- 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. —
  - General Swimming
  - NO NIGHT SWIMMING
- Sunday:
- 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. —
  - General Swimming
  - NO NIGHT SWIMMING

Mr. Fred Gleason, next door at 31-33 Waterville, is in charge of filling and grading completed by the owner Mr. Fred Gleason. Next door at 31-33 Waterville, PRA is demolishing a dilapidated building; this will further increase the value of their home.

"BERT and LES"

This column is devoted to answering your questions on rehabilitation and financing. Write “BERT and LES” Portland Renewal Authority, 200 Congress Street, Portland, Maine. PRA will print the most interesting questions in the Munjoy Observer; however, all questions will be answered. (Questions may also be telephoned in. Call — 774-6278).

R. S. Asks: My husband is convinced that we should install siding on our house. I think that it would be cheaper and better to paint. What do you recommend?

B. & L. — Answer: We are glad that you asked that question. Many people in the area have been having their homes finished with siding. In some cases this has been unnecessary and too expensive. Paint, properly applied, would have done a better job, and would be as good as any siding job. Now, we don’t mean to imply that all siding is bad; but siding is not the answer in every case. There are many grades of siding on the market. The price and quality vary. Like anything — You get what you pay for! For example, in a home we recently went to we suggested that the owner paint. If she had used siding the style of the building would have been destroyed, because the contractor would have had to remove the majority of the trim. Yes, it was somewhat “gingerbread” in appearance, but without this it was box-like and architecturally uninteresting.

We advised painting. Paint can be cheaper and better than siding if the wood and trim are in good shape. True, you will have to repaint in five years, but siding requires attention. If for any reason it is broken, or in the case of aluminum dented, you will have to repair this. Now, there is another side to the story that needs to be told. Siding, of good quality, used when necessary and advisable is an excellent way to increase the value of your home. Please remember that wood is a far better insulator than aluminum or any other siding material. We can’t answer your question without first seeing your home.

In the final analysis, however, you and your husband must decide what you would rather have. Before you decide, compare prices, judge the use of paint vs. siding, and all factors. Don’t sign the contract unless you are satisfied that this is the best deal for you. Whatever you do, don’t let any high-pressure salesman talk you into doing the job now because it is cheaper; “later”, he will say, “I will

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Area Improvements

The Rands of 23-25 Waterville Street have completed improvements on their property. In above photograph workmen complete siding improvements.

Mr. Louis Miller of 53-55 Atlantic Street is doing a very extensive job of rehabilitation to his home; new roofs, gutters, stairs, all new electrical, modernization inside and repair of steps. The family is doing most of the work themselves and should be congratulated for the work they are doing.

Nason’s Market at 44-46 St. Lawrence Street undergoes improvements. In addition to the new siding being installed above an apartment on the second floor was provided. Installation of this required an exterior fire escape, and other improvements.

B & L: (Continued from Page 2) have to charge much more”. This is nothing but sales talk. We advise caution in the use of siding on older buildings. But since we have said this much about siding, we should add that the best available paint should be used in any case. It will only cost a few dollars per gallon more for the best grade of paint. Cheap paint is as bad as cheap siding. Scraping old paint, and preparing the surface by priming are essential for a good job. One-coat paint jobs are a poor substitute for proper prime and good paint. Boards should be re-nailed when necessary, and all loose paint should be brushed off. Yes, it takes time; but if you don’t you are throwing your money away.

A. G. Asks: For the past two weeks there have been a dozen cars parked at the corner of St. Lawrence and Congress Streets. Why can’t these be removed? The lot is a mess, and the building looks like it has been through the war.

B. & L. — Answer: We had better turn this question over to RR.

RR replies: Socony Mobile owns this lot. We have talked with the property officer for Socony in Portland. He had a chain on this lot, and the windows boarded, in January. The place was vandalized. Now cars are parked about. Socony has contacted their attorney and the police department to see if anything can be done. We have reported this to the authorities. It is a shame to see the condition of the lot after Rev. Miller went to the trouble to have Socony clean it up last winter. We welcome your suggestions!

P. F. Asks: Some people apparently understood at the meeting at Marada Adams School regarding streets, sidewalks and curbs planned for Contract I area; i.e., Munjoy Street to the Eastern Promenade inclusive, that all the sidewalks would be relaid, or would be new. Will you set the record straight?

B. & L. Answer: This is not the case. The plan documents, and any reference to the area all indicated that some of the sidewalks were in good condition; therefore no work was necessary. The plan documents were reviewed at this meeting by Mr. Ballew of Jordan Engineering Co. and Mr. Heller of PRA, and both pointed to the fact that wherever the engineering survey indicated that the sidewalks were in good shape no work was scheduled. This also applies to the curbs. This does not mean that the work is to be second rate. The Board of Commissioners of PRA have specified a first rate job in Munjoy South, and the contract documents and specifications provide for the best attainable job within the budget provided by the City and Federal government.

"Easy Tiller"

It is just possible that someone might not know Philip T. O’Donnell of 50 Vesper Street, sage and entrepreneur of Driftland.

Nautical oddities predominate since O’Donnell is Portland’s Harbor Master. Mr. O’Donnell and Driftland are one and the same. A visit to 47 Munjoy Street is both an escape to the valuable historical past and an opening to the strong personality of O’Donnell.
**AREA IMPROVEMENTS ABOUND**

*Driftland* contains more than an array of curiosities carefully arranged and presenting a striking appearance as you enter. *Driftland* has been under construction for thirty years, and every timber and plank in it was collected from the sea or from dismantled buildings in Portland. It is a salvage of love. Off the record O'Donnell might be heard saying how much he has invested in *Driftland*, but only off the record! *Driftland* is more than a museum filled with curiosities — it has become famous. O'Donnell will show you articles written in newspapers and magazines around the country.

You feel at home the minute you step into the door and Phil greets you with a side-remark to his dog, prefaced with "Easy Tiller!" Phil gives you the history on everything on hand.

He rummages about and finds a peculiar piece then asks, "What do you think this is?" You can watch his eyes gleam as you search your mind for an answer for what is obviously the strangest looking piece of machinery or thing you have ever seen. After you have made a fool of yourself by absurd guesses Phil will jump in with the right answer. "No, that's the leg iron used on a slave ship;" or "the first washing machine ever built."

*Driftland* is the kind of building you would pass by, unless the door was open and Phil and his dog were outside.

If you go, ask Phil to show you the perfume bottle with the false stopper on top that was used to smuggle perfume into this country. "Easy Tiller," Phil says, "or you will be giving away all the secrets of Driftland."

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**Streets & Curb**

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Residents asked questions and reviewed the contract specifications in some detail. Several residents inquired as to changes in the proposed improvements in front of their homes. These are being reviewed by the Jordan Company and PRA, and residents will be informed if the changes they have suggested can be put into effect.

The plan document is in the Munjoy Office, and anyone who has any questions about the work can call the Munjoy Office 774-6278.

Resident Engineer at the site representing the Jordan Company is Mr. Jules LaVoie.

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Children pose in front of 36 St. Lawrence Street. The owners are working on improving their home.

Fifty Vesper Street has new siding installed; in addition a new roof and paint to trim have been completed since this photograph was taken.

Mr. Joseph Walsh is working from inside out on 56 Munjoy Street. New bathroom and kitchen improvements have been completed.

The Davis' at 28 Waterville Street add the finishing touches to improvements on their home. Above, workman installs combination storm windows and doors.

Mr. Eleuterio Guidi, owner of this three floor apartment building at 76 Monument Street completed improvements including siding installed above. Mr. Guidi is interested in buying adjacent property at 52-50 Kellogg Street when this land is available. PRA is to demolish the building shortly.
July 29, 1964

Dear Munjoy Resident:

It is pleasing to see progress both in private and public improvements in Munjoy South. I wish to personally thank you for bearing with the inconveniences involved. We know that a torn-up kitchen or a torn-up street is not much fun to live with. We just have to put up with it for the reward of a new kitchen or a new street.

The planning for the street, sidewalk and curb improvements has been most extensive. However, we realize that some details may need to be changed according to individual situations. If you would like to know what improvements are planned for on your street (we can even tell you where new trees are going to be placed) please call the Munjoy South Office at 774-6278. If for any reason you feel that the plan for work next to your house is not satisfactory, please let us know. The problems will be reviewed by the engineers and Renewal staff. It is possible to make changes if they are proposed in time.

Munjoy South work started on Vesper Street. A number of complaints came in long before the work was completed. This was helpful in reviewing problems and setting up standards for the work. We would like to point out, however, that no work has as yet been accepted as completed. This means that the Authority is unwilling to accept anything but a first rate job. In order to be accepted, work must be approved by the engineering firm hired by the Authority, by the Department of Public Works and by the Renewal Authority.

Just a minor note about new brick sidewalks. For the best set of the bricks it is advisable to leave sand on the walks after they have been relaid. This sand will work its way into the cracks and will make for a much better sidewalk. We are sorry that this does mean a bit of extra sweeping but we think the end product is worth it.

Sincerely,
Howard U. Heller
Executive Director