



PO Box 43, Hallowell, ME 04347
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November 3, 2019

Hallowell City Council
1 Winthrop Street

Dear Members of the City Council,

The issue of snow removal was discussed at the October 30th meeting of the Vision Hallowell board. As a Maine Downtown Affiliate community, we work towards accomplishing our mission to improve and promote Hallowell guided by the Main Street Four-Point Approach. Keeping our new sidewalks safe and accessible through the winter months is relevant under all four.

DESIGN - stresses the importance of design quality and expedite improvements downtown. Vision Hallowell is proud of our redesigned street and sidewalks and basic maintenance should be a top priority.

PROMOTION - we are working to create a positive public image of our downtown to build community pride and to attract investors, developers and new businesses.

ECONOMIC - in recent years people have avoided coming to downtown Hallowell because of slippery and impassable sidewalks. This negatively impacts the local economy.

ORGANIZATION - establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in our downtown.

Therefore the Vision Hallowell Board of Directors requests that city leadership complete the ordinances relating to snow removal and to resolving this issue snow and ice on buildings adjacent to public sidewalks and communicate this information to building owners and tenants as soon as possible so that everyone is aware of their respective responsibilities.

Respectfully,

Deb Fahy

Secretary

Vision Hallowell Board of Directors: Jamie Houghton, President; John Bastej, Vice President; Cary Colwell, Treasurer; Deb Fahy, Secretary. Members at large: Susan Farnsworth, Julie Horn, Lynn Irish, Matt Radasch

Mission: Vision Hallowell's mission is to enhance and promote the economic vitality and cultural assets of Hallowell's historic downtown.



November 5 , 2019

Hallowell City Council
1 Winthrop St
Hallowell ME 04347

Dear Hallowell City Councilors,

I write to you on behalf of several members of the Hallowell Area Board of Trade who have expressed to me their disappointment with the City's lack of a snow removal policy. The first potential "plowable" snow is predicted for the end of this week, and, despite some lengthy conversations, it remains unclear what the preferred course of action business owners and landlords should take.

During the reconstruction of Water St last year, DOT reminded us that their policy is not to push snow into the road. They provided no alternative, just the prohibition.

We are asking the City to clarify the City's role and responsibility in clean up as well as the landlord's during snow events. We are asking not only for what NOT to do, but also what TO do. We request a proactive "Snow Plan" that helps us work together as a community to keep the streets clean and the sidewalks both safe and inviting.

I emailed the City Manager and Mayor back in February (attached below) after a rather significant storm left the sidewalks on Water St impassable for two full days. As it was the end of the season, the issue became less pressing and none of us followed up. It is now time.

Please understand that HABOT members have repeatedly assured me that they are happy to do "our part". We need to know what "our part" is.

Respectfully,
Jamie Houghton, President of the Hallowell Area Board of Trade

Dear Nate and Mark,

I write to you on behalf of several members of the Board of Trade, myself included.

At last night's meeting (February 14), several members raised concerns about the state of the sidewalks on Water Street. We would like clarification from the city about what the snowstorm protocol is for this year. We are happy to do our parts, but we need to know what the overall plan is so that we can work together to guarantee the safety of our citizens and customers as well as not lose business in our downtown due to poor accessibility.

As you know, we got close to 9" Tuesday night February 12. At the time of our HABOT meeting at 6 p.m. on the 14th, the City crews had neither come through with the sidewalk plow, nor removed the piles of snow from Water Street. Piles of snow occupied parking spaces, piles of snow on sidewalks prevent safe passage to businesses and to City Hall, piles of snow blocked access to crosswalks, and large snowbanks on the curb required drivers to walk in the street a fair distance before they could navigate onto the sidewalk. Many businesses did not have reasonable access to customers for two full days this week after the storm that largely ended Wednesday morning.

Most of us had been under the impression--from the discussion among Council members at the Council's December meeting-- that the City crew would be making a pass with the sidewalk plow on the Water Street downtown sidewalks immediately after it stopped snowing, and within 12 hours of the end of the snow, businesses would be expected to shovel to the curb as much as possible, and then large scale snow removal would follow, hopefully within 24 hours of the end of the snow.

In the course of planning the Water Street construction project, there were many discussions about the impact to Hallowell businesses of lost customers due to days when access is cut off or restricted. The impact is the same, of course, whether the cause is accumulated snow or construction. Following after a year of construction, this is really an unacceptable situation for Water Street businesses. We would like to find a resolution that will avoid this from reoccurring this winter.

HABOT members have a general perception that the Hallowell Public Works works very hard, but is short of the staffing needed during a major snow event to get the work done quickly enough. We understand there may not be justification for another full time person, but if that is so, we wonder if the City could sub-contract for snow removal and side walk plowing.. We noted, for example, that the Rail Trail Committee has subcontracted for plowing of the rail trail.

Thank you for your attention to this. Please let me know how we can assist with finding a speedy resolution for this issue.

Jamie Houghton, HABOT President