

Chamber Lifetime Achievement Award Speech

**Mark McAuliffe, Apothecary by Design
Portland Community Chamber Board
member**

Thank you for this unexpected and humbling award. When Chris Hall called to let me know of this first time award from the Chamber my initial thought was am I that old to get a lifetime achievement award? Is it really over for me now? More on that in a few minutes

I have many people to thank and my apologies if I forget to mention a deserving person or group

First my thanks to Chris Hall, the Portland Regional Chamber, the Portland Community Chamber and the Chamber staff. I am truly accepting this award on behalf of a significant number of Chamber members who have helped transform the Chamber over the past few years. Chris Hall first came to the

Chamber from the Maine Chamber of Commerce in 2007 and was instrumental in helping me and others produce a number of documents and reports that were part of the Chamber's transformation. I am thrilled Chris is now leading the Chamber

I also want to thank Portland Community Chamber Board members who have worked very hard on making the Chamber an important part of the fabric of Portland. Particularly my thanks to:

1. Chip Harris
2. Chris O'Neil
3. Jack Lufkin
4. Past and present Chamber Presidents including:
 - a. Ron Ward
 - b. Mike Bourque
 - c. Bill Becker
5. Chamber committee members who helped produce:
 - a. The original Looking out for Portland report
 - b. The White Paper

c. The study of Powers for a new Mayor for Portland

Second my thanks to Bangor Savings not only for being the award sponsor, but more importantly, for being a fantastic partner to Apothecary by Design. They have supported us (along with FAME) from the inception of our business in 2008 and helped us through many start up business challenges. Thanks Laura Huddy, Terry Trickey, Susan Snowden and the entire Bangor team for your continued support and belief in us

Thanks also to HD Smith, Apothecary by Design's wholesaler who has also been a major supporter of our business. Bill Griffin and Fred Fasulo my thanks to you and the entire HD Smith team

I also want to thank my partners at ABD for supporting me and my work for the Chamber.

Thanks also to my sister Cathy and brother in law Jay for coming; it was Cathy who pushed me to get involved with the Chamber when I first started working in Portland in 1994.

Finally thanks to the many friends and business associates of mine and ABD that are here today

The Chamber has made remarkable changes over the past decade and it is a story that has not received much attention or recognition. When I joined the Chamber in 1995 and for more than a decade after that, the Chamber focused on networking, community charitable contributions and member support. However in terms of it's role in actively participating in the fabric of Portland's economic development and business climate it was more a Chamber of No than Yes. The Chamber would often get involved in key issues only when they were up for a final vote by the City Council. Far too late to make meaningful contributions or changes to the outcome.

This began to change when Chip Harris became Portland Community Chamber President in 2005. Chip challenged us all to help transform the Chamber to become a

stronger voice in our community and move us from a Chamber of No to a Chamber of Yes.

1. Yes to participating in the process of city leadership and vision
2. Yes to encouraging all constituents in the city, residents, businesses and political leaders to get involved together.
3. Yes to recommending solutions not just identifying problems

Once we accepted this new role the key question was how do we do this successfully? Chip led the Chamber to start this transformation by hiring of a liaison for the Chamber to work with the City council and City staff on key issues. Chris O'Neil was hired and has done an outstanding job doing just that.

Our next challenge was get engaged but in what areas? One that was right in front of us was the State Pier development proposal. The failure of that process to come to fruition led us to work on longer-term issues.

I was Vice President under Chip and felt a significant responsibility to take his challenge and turn it into substantive long-term actions. I remember when I joined the Chamber asking basic questions like where is our community in relation to last year? The past 5 years? In relationship with communities similar to ours. I discovered there were no good answers. So we worked on producing the report "Looking out for Portland and the Region" which compared Portland and the Portland region to 26 regions around the country and State that were similar to Portland. The report was released in 2007 and had some significant findings. Examples included:

1. Portland has great assets:
 - a. More leisure services
 - b. Better access to health insurance
 - c. Less crime
 - d. Higher incomes
 - e. Lower poverty
 - f. Higher educational attainment

2. The Portland Region makes up 43% of the entire State's GDP and 42% of the State's jobs compared to an average of 12% of the benchmark cities/regions
3. Recent trends for the city were troubling in terms of Job growth, economic growth and private sector growth

Based on the report we set out to determine a set of recommendations to help address these concerns. A panel of business leaders was created who after many months of work produced what was called the White paper. It had three major recommendations:

1. Improve Portland's site planning and development rules
2. Create a regional economic development authority
3. Consider at a minimum a two year Mayor position and ideally an elected Mayor for Portland to provide greater leadership for the city

The Chamber then worked with the city and recommended changes to the site planning rules. This has been implemented

The Regional and Portland Chamber worked with surrounding cities and towns to create a Regional Economic Development authority, which is now in place and has the challenge to hopefully transform our approach to regional economic development

The Portland Chamber also established another committee, which studied what powers should an elected Mayor have. We teamed up with the League of Young voters in supporting a Charter Commission to review an elected mayor for Portland. Portland voters ultimately supported creation of a charter commission. The final report of the Charter Commission incorporated most of our committee's recommendations. Finally the commission's recommendations were approved by the residents of Portland. We are thrilled to now have an elected Mayor in Portland. We are also grateful that Mayor Brennan made the decision to run for Mayor

and was elected. Mr. Mayor you are doing a great job of providing leadership across all areas of the city. Ensuring that all voices are heard and participate in the City's future is not easy. From the Chamber's perspective you are managing this balancing act very well. Thank you for your leadership in helping all parts of the city work to go from No to Yes.

So what happens when a city and region start working together on going from No to Yes?

Play video The link is

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Dr9w wWIhY>

Portland and the Portland Region is a great place! Whether you are from Portland, South Portland, Scarborough, Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Westbrook or other surrounding town's and cities you all have an important role in helping make this a great place to live and work.

In closing I want to go back to the idea of a lifetime achievement award. How should I view this?

The life calculator helps me with this kind of question. Pull out your smart phone and go to your calculator. Enter your current age, for me it is 56. Then answer this question: At what age do you think you will live to and still be independent and able to live on your own? For me that answer is 86. Divide your age (56) by this number (86). The resulting number is the percent of your independent life you have already lived. In my case $56/86 = 65\%$. Now depending on your age that can be a bit depressing. But hold on. Multiply that % times 12. In my case $.65 \times 12 = 7.8$. I am in the late July of my life. Still lots of time to have a great summer fall and early winter!

No matter what month your life is in the challenge for all of us is to begin or continue supporting in our own ways activities that will help continue to make this a great place

to live and work. I have every confidence
working together we will

I will close with a portion of Henry
Wadsworth Longfellow's poem about
Portland:

“Often I think of the beautiful town that is
seated by the Sea; often in thought go up and
down the pleasant streets of that dear old
town”

Thank you