

## **CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE**

Standing Committee on Sustainability and Transportation

Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2), Chair

Councilor Belinda Ray (D1)

Councilor Jill Duson (At large)

Minutes January 16, 2019

**Members Present:** Councilor Thibodeau, Councilor Ray, Councilor Duson

**Staff Present:** Jon Jennings, Troy Moon, Ashley Krulik

Meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM. Councilor Ray moves to approve the minutes from September and October. Councilor Duson, seconded. All those in favor 3-0.

Tentative date for February meeting: February 27.

### **Franklin Street Project**

Chris Branch presented - reviewed Jeremiah Bartlett memo

- First study in 2005
- Phase 1 study 2009
- Phase 2 study 2015 - focus on removing median

Current plan proposes focusing on section from I-295 to Somerset Street to remedy safety, congestion and traffic issues

- Many complaints from bicycles trying to get through intersection
- Offset lanes on Marginal Way are causing issues

Plan includes:

- Add double lane going onto 295 northbound
- Replacing traffic signal system
- Lane realignments
- Bike ped improvements
- Sewer upgrades

In CIP for construction in 2020, dependent on Back Cove construction. Will likely start in 2021.

In 2-4 weeks will have a better understanding of schedules

Cost:

- \$200,000 in 2019
- \$200,000 in 2020
- \$2 million over two years to pay for construction
- Latest total number is \$3.8 million
  - Ramps and signal will be paid for by the DOT (\$1.2-\$1.4 million)

Possible impact fees to offset cost or use TIF money

Councilor Ray comments/questions:

- Confirmed that the previous plans/studies have not scrapped, just not being completed at this time.
- Concerned about cost - why can't we split the cost for the asphalt with DOT? Mr. Branch responded that the DOT gives out a certain number of money each year, it would take 4-5 years to receive any money. We don't want to wait that long to start that project. We are using MPI program to get up to \$500,000 for some of the work. City Manager Jon Jennings added that he and Mr. Branch will be meeting with the new DOT commissioner this Friday to discuss the project.
- These improvements will benefit people from other communities - making a case for getting more funding.
- We need to make sure this project focuses on multi-modal transportation and not just improving the experience for cars.
- What is the contingency? Mr. Branch responded, 20%.
- How long is investment expected to last, given that there may be future changes to I-295? Mr. Branch responded that the structural integrity will last for a very long time. DOT has no plans to ground I-295. 90,000 cars per day on 295 during the summer - too much traffic to make it into a boulevard.
- Do you have any idea if we will be able to get DOT money for the second section? Mr. Branch responded yes, but it will take 4 years. PACTS may have some regional funds to use in Portland. Morrill's Corner is the other high priority intersection.

Councilor Thibodeau comments/questions:

- Concerned about cost - can we tie together with other projects to reduce cost? Mr. Branch responded that it would take too long and delay this project.
- \$1.4 million being paid by DOT - if the City decided not to pay to pave the strip between Marginal Way and Somerset, what would DOT do? Mr. Branch responded that DOT would likely not move forward with project.
- Pedestrian crossing - how will it be improved? Mr. Branch defers to Jeremiah Bartlett on those specifics. Invite Jeremiah to next meeting to speak to changes.
- Initial Franklin Street plan called for the elimination of the median. Without removing the median during this project, how will that impact the future plan? Mr. Branch responded that it will not majorly impact future plans.
- How is this project making this intersection more resilient to flooding? - Mr. Branch responded raising grades somewhat at Somerset Street. Separately from this project, areas of Somerset Street will be raised and tidal gates will be added.

City Manager Jon Jennings comments:

- Different projects get different funding from DOT. DOT has stepped up to the plate to help us with Congress Square. DOT has put millions of dollars into Portland in the past few years.

Councilor Duson

- Will any green infrastructure (catch basins, rain gardens, etc) be included as part of this project? Mr. Branch responded that we are not at that point in the design yet.

### **Additional Updates from Chris Branch/Public Works**

#### Recycling carts -

- 16 months into initiative
- Recycling tonnage has slightly decreased, could be due to negative publicity.
- Takes about 2 hours longer to collect carts than bins.
- New split packer truck allows staff to pick-up trash and recycling at the same time.
- Automatic cart truck coming in at the end of February. Requesting another automatic arm truck in CIP for end of summer. Routes will be changed once automatic trucks are implemented.
- Overall feels that the program is going well
- High employee turnover - hard job
- Councilor Thibodeau - asked about resident complaint that the plastic is shattering on her cart. Mr. Branch responded that a staff member will be going out to investigate cart.

#### Ocean Avenue Landfill

- Design plans to be completed next month
- DEP to review - 2-3 weeks
- Next step will be to bid out project and have improvements complete by the end of this year
- Well testing will be completed seasonally - no significant changes
  - Add data to website

#### Sidewalk Snow Removal

- Have issued some citations
- Haven't received any complaints
- Councilor Thibodeau requested that we keep a tally of the number of citations
- Councilor Duson asked if we can add where to get sand and salt on citation - Mr. Branch responded that it isn't currently on citation but is on website

### **Sustainability Program Updates**

#### Presented by Troy Moon

- Reference memo issues with meeting agenda
- Ashley Krulik joined team as Sustainability Associate
- Ocean Ave solar is up and running
- Energy benchmarking
  - Had several conversations with CMP about data requests
  - Submitted account numbers for municipal buildings to CMP this week
  - Reached out to PUC staff to get more information on the privacy rules, if they recommend action next step will be to get together with Corporation Council

- Councilor Duson asked if we are doing energy benchmarking for City and School buildings - Mr. Moon responded, yes.
- Councilor Ray asked if CMP is looking into setting aggregation threshold to protect privacy. Mr. Moon responded that we haven't gotten that far into the conversations yet.
- Councilor Thibodeau suggests possibly going around CMP to PUC to request changes needed to collect data if CMP continues to be difficult to work with. Mr. Moon responded that we should give it another month of conversations with CMP before going around them.
- LED Streetlights
  - All cobra heads are finished
  - Controls are installed
  - A technician will be on Peak's Island next week to solve residents' concerns
  - Phase 2 - decorative lighting - beginning in spring
  - City Manager Jon Jennings updates - spending \$4 million on Smart City projects in 2019
    - LED streetlights
    - Exploring public wifi utilizing fire call boxes throughout city
    - Tackling transportation issues
      - Intelligent traffic signals being implemented remaining part of Forest Ave
      - Focus on Commercial and Franklin Street issues - add planters to crosswalks to shorten distance and make them safer
      - 18 crosswalks on Commercial Street - possibly eliminate some
      - Utilize Hawk crosswalk system to better manage pedestrian and vehicular traffic
      - Working with turnpike authority to develop large park and ride systems, then use AV shuttles to get downtown
      - Implementation of more EV chargers - converting two police cars to hybrids this year. If test goes well, entire police fleet will be converted to hybrid.
- Intelligent traffic controls
  - Installing 6 more intersections along Forest Ave
  - Fixing issues at Morrill's Corner
  - Exploring pilot to allow Metro busses to receive transit priority through Forest Ave. corridor
- Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
  - Have begun meeting with the consultants to kickoff project - Linnean Solutions
  - First stakeholder group meeting scheduled
  - Working on public engagement plan and community-wide greenhouse gas emission data now
  - Councilor Thibodeau confirmed that we do have meeting minutes from first meeting that CAAP was discussed to committee with public comment

- Pesticide Ordinance
  - Postcard designed to educate residents
  - Focus on outreach to commercial sector
    - Letter to MELNA
    - Round Table discussion with applicators January 29
    - Speaking at MELNA annual meeting in February
    - Hosting seminar at Maine Flower Show
    - Taking calls from applicators with questions
  - Have gotten applicants for all the PMAC positions
- Sustainability social media strategy up and running

### **E-Card Program Expansion**

- Suggest providing e-cards to condo units that don't participate in City services
  - ~2,000 units would be eligible
  - Do not anticipate a significant increase in material
  - Councilor Thibodeau asked if these buildings are eligible for recycling - Mr. Moon responded that they are not eligible because the buildings are so large and would require multiple pick-ups per week.
  - Councilor Dusen moves to approve expansion, Councilor Ray seconded (good service to provide to tax paying residents). All in favor 3-0.

### **Endorsement of Energy Priorities**

- Resolve for municipal energy priorities
  - Goal is to advance clean energy policies, focusing on:
    - Renewable solar energy rules
    - Higher performance buildings - improve building codes (currently using 2007 codes), allow cities to adopt stretch codes
    - Energy data
  - Councilor Dusen comments/questions:
    - Is green building code included? Mr. Moon responded that this resolve is focused on the statewide code, not specific City codes.
    - Does "municipal buildings" in paragraph 2 include schools? Mr. Moon responded that he believes that schools are included in the definition of municipal buildings.
  - Councilor Ray comments/questions:
    - What other municipality councils have adopted? Mr. Moon responded that South Portland already adopted and outreach is ongoing to other municipalities.
  - Public comment:
    - Alan Armstrong - PCAT - in favor of resolution, suggest wording change in second to last paragraph - change to "interest in mitigating climate change and adapting to its worst impact"

- Councilor Ray - supports suggested wording edit.
- Councilor Ray move to approve and pass on to full council, Councilor Thibodeau seconded. All in favor 3-0.
- Councilor Ray moves to make wording amendment, Councilor Thibodeau seconded. All in favor 3-0.
- Councilor Duseon: Goal is for municipal entities to set example and inspire similar action in the private sector.
- House Climate Sign On Letter
  - Sign letter to commit municipalities to upholding Paris Accords and urge bold climate action. Letter to be sent to Speaker Pelosi
  - Councilor Thibodeau - add City of Portland resolution to be 100% renewable by 2040 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050
  - Councilor Ray moves to approve and recommend letter for signing by full council. Add City of Portland resolution to be 100% renewable by 2040 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 and CC delegation. All in favor 3-0.

## **Work plan and priorities for the year**

### **Sustainability Office Priorities:**

- Build on momentum of solar bills to improve solar legislature
- Advocate for better building codes

### **Transportation and Sustainability Committee Member Priorities:**

- Solar in historic zones - discuss during March 29 meeting
- Large scale fossil fuel ban - based on Portland, OR model
  - Ordinance is currently with staff
  - Discuss during February meeting
- City's financial commitment to Metro - discuss in March/April
  - What can Portland do to increase bus frequency?
  - Could not happen this year due to budget
  - If we can move busses more quickly through Portland, cost would be affected
  - Invite Greg Jordan from Metro to speak at March/April meeting
- Oversight of climate action and adaptation plan
- Explore time limited parking in residential zones with guest passes
- City Green building code compliance - ensure it's being enforced and tighten up loopholes
  - Share information from Jesse Thompson with Corporation Council
  - Draft memo responding to Thompson's concern for February meeting
  - Review language to require that the four elementary school renovations follow City's green building code - Councilor Duseon has requested list of LEED elements in renovations. Learn what needs to be incorporated to meet LEED silver standards and look at cost differential. Be transparent about decision.
  - Invite Corporation Council to February meeting
  - Invite Jeff Levine to weigh in on what certifications should be referenced for energy efficiency

- Invite School Department
- Solar feasibility study - look at schools and parking garages
  - Determine what is feasible financially
  - Dependent on improvements in solar policy
  - Review square footage available
  - Use new roof space being created through school renovations for solar - March
- Single use plastics
  - Just straws or single use plastics overall?
  - Look into precedents in other cities to determine next steps
  - Discuss in April or May
- Fertilizer Ordinance
- Use CAAP to guide future work plans
- Public Comment:
  - Judy Berg, Sheridan Street - uses Franklin Ave frequently and has not experienced difficulty at Marginal Way intersection, views it as a lovely entryway to Portland - please don't worsen the experience through improvement.
  - Tiqa Douglas - Munjoy Street - PCAT - building codes - believes that Portland green building code is defunct and out of date, recommends that the state adopt a more current MUBEC code or have Portland adopt an even more current MUBEC code - in the future when we sell property we require high energy efficiency as a condition of sale
  - Alan Armstrong - PCAT -
    - Advocate for community choice aggregation
    - Solarizing programs to allow residents to bulk purchase solar panels
    - Real estate tax assessment on solar panels - create policy to not assess solar as part of real estate value - currently there is a bill in Augusta prohibiting taxation of distributing energy facilities
  - Cathy Ramsdell - Sylvia Rd - FOCB
    - Recommends adding fertilizer ordinance to work plan
      - Combat algae blooms that lead to shellfish closures and degradation in water quality

#### 2019 Priorities (summarized):

1. Large scale fossil fuel ban
2. Time limited parking in residential zones
3. Green building code
4. Single use plastics
5. Fertilizer ordinance
6. Solar feasibility study

Timing to discuss priorities:

February:

- Large Scale fossil fuel ban
- Green building code - with a focus on the code as it applies to schools

March:

- Solar feasibility study and solar in historic districts
- City's financial commitment to Metro - invite Greg Jordan

April

- Single use plastics

Next Steps:

- Large scale fossil fuel ban
- Definition of City-owned buildings relating to school construction

### **Sustainability and Transportation Committee Next Meeting Times**

Wednesday, February 27

Wednesday, March 20

Motion was made by Councilor Duson to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 pm. Motion was seconded by Councilor Ray. All in favor. 3-0.