

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

Standing Committee on Transportation, Sustainability and Energy

Councilor Jon Hinck (A/L), Chair

Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2), Vice Chair

Councilor Ed Suslovic (D3)

January 21, 2016

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Attending: Councilor Hinck, Councilor Thibodeau, Councilor Suslovic

Other Councilors Attending: Mayor Strimling

Staff Attending: Troy Moon, Adam Lee, Ethan Owens, Jeff Tarling, Jean Frasier

Councilor Hinck called the meeting to order. All present introduce themselves.

1. Pesticide Use on City Property

Troy Moon described current practices regarding the use of pesticides on City owned property including parks, open spaces, Riverside Golf Course, athletic facilities and rights of way. He emphasized that staff are judicious in use of pesticides and only use them when necessary. When situations require, staff use best management practices as described by the Maine Board of Pesticide Control. He then introduced Attorney Adam Lee to discuss the ordinance proposed by staff to govern use of pesticides on City owned property.

Mr. Lee explained that the draft draws on examples from other communities. He also noted that the Maine Legislature is currently reviewing a bill that would limit the ability of municipalities to regulate pesticides. Mr. Moon clarified that under the draft ordinance, no chemical pesticides would be allowed on parks, open spaces, cemeteries, or community gardens. Use in other spaces would need to adhere to the Maine Board of Pesticide Control's BMPs.

Ethan Owens explained that City athletic fields are heavily used and require great effort by staff to maintain in playable condition. He noted that they use limited chemical inputs but occasionally use a "weed and feed" type product. They do use organic fertilizers, which do spread weeds, which are not suitable for athletic facilities.

Councilor Thibodeau disclosed that his law firm has been retained to represent individuals on a side of the pesticide issue. He doesn't believe this inhibits his ability to participate in discussions and is working with Corporation Counsel to determine whether he should abstain from any votes on this issue.

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After further discussion, Councilor Hinck requests that staff provide the following information:

- the amount of chemical treatment used on the golf course on annual basis;
- this same information for athletic fields, streets and sidewalks, and playgrounds;
- A summary of the difference between the Ogunquit ordinance and the staff proposed ordinance
- that we identify City use of Round Up and neonicotinoid pesticides.

He would like staff to invite someone from Ogunquit to describe how their ordinance has affected maintenance of municipal property.

Councilor Suslovic requests an update on South Portland's work on pesticides and draft ordinance language if possible. He would also like someone from Water Resources to discuss how pesticide use (City and public) impacts the water quality of waterways.

Councilor Hinck indicates that the Committee should be prepared to discuss and vote on an ordinance regulating the use of pesticides on City property.

2. Work Plan

Councilor Hinck took the work plan out of order on the agenda and asked member of the public for suggestions regarding the committee work plan. Items suggested include:

Mary Anne Mitchell, Peaks Island: Anti-idling, enforce the existing ordinance and educate the public about the environmental impact of idling. More care about litter, especially plastic, that could blow into the ocean, perhaps more trash cans.

Allen and Allissa Armstrong, Sierra Club: More solar energy, look for ways to achieve goal of 25% of homes and business having solar power available. Encourage Portland to achieve about 20 MW 2021 by putting solar panels on appropriate spaces, facilitate community solar projects, and work on solarize Freeport type project.

Sam Saltonstall, Peaks Island: Bring energy efficiency and renewable energy to Portland. Benchmark City buildings to document energy performance and make upgrades as necessary. Increase training of City maintenance staff in order to better take care of buildings. Make sure they are trained on new technology and equipment. Learn from other cities that have implemented such approaches. Emphasize energy efficiency. Many energy efficiency efforts are low cost. Look at financing methods that pay for efficiencies through energy savings.

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Timmi Sellers, Peaks Island: Improve communication between entities such as Casco Bay Lines and the City to ensure maintenance and cleaning of spaces bordering their property.

Ian Jacob, State Street: Regarding long term goals – for solid waste, be sure to include commercial and industrial. Focus on efficiency of the whole City fleet as appropriate, set goals for specific types of vehicles. Supports LED street lighting, would like to make sure lighting upgrades enhance pedestrian level lighting. Regarding transit, be sure that bus stops are shoveled and accessible. Regarding pesticides, be sure to include Jetport usage. Look at eliminating parking minimums for developments.

John Thibodeau, Clinton Street: Supports a strong pesticide ordinance. Recommends demonstrating organic methods on an athletic field. Suggests doing a cost analysis for managing the golf course and athletic fields organically. Take a look at the Audubon certification. Explain the ordinance in lay terms so people can readily understand it.

Avery Kamila, Myrtle Street: Leads Portland Protectors, supports a strong pesticide ordinance. Does not support use of Round Up for maintenance. Would like to eliminate as many synthetic pesticides as possible.

Sarah Lakeman, NRCM: Offers NRCM's support to help achieve sustainability goals. Find ways to recognize and celebrate good work in Portland. Suggests adding long term goal for increasing locally grown food, supports Portland Food Council. Suggests looking for community participation on sub-committees that address goals. In solid waste, supports bigger recycling bins with covers and public space recycling bins.

Jeff Edelstein, Greater Portland Sustainability Council: Mostly concerned with energy. Supports development of a regional energy plan. Encourages efforts to make sure buildings are efficient. Has interns available to help do research. Would like to see Maine be the first carbon neutral state.

Jim Cohen: would like to see the committee work closely with stakeholders to get good input. Recommends think about integrated pest management as an approach for dealing with pesticides. Suggests looking at experiences from other communities who have adopted an all organic approach to landscape maintenance.

Councilor Hinck says it will be important to refine the list and prioritize items.

Councilor Suslovic says it will be useful to get feedback on the efficacy of policies that have already been enacted: plastic bag/foam packaging, anti-idling ordinance, no smoking in public parks. Suggests that we should take action to enforce or support ordinances or repeal them. Would like to

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see the Jetport master plan come to the Energy and Sustainability Committee before it goes to Council. Would like to see if there is an opportunity to build on gains from previous work done with Ameresco. Supports the suggestion of a task force to review pesticide ordinance so stakeholders can work out issues and come up with effective public policy, efforts to address packaging and the storm water fee are good recent examples of how this could work.

Councilor Thibodeau: Supports looking at ways to increase Metro ridership and improving maintenance of bus shelters. Regarding pesticides, would like to get input from landscapers. Regarding solar, would like to see the City work towards being carbon neutral, cites efforts by Steve Woods in Falmouth with Irridescent House that supplies energy to grid.

Councilor Hinck: Believes we should look at efforts to adapt to climate change in addition to mitigation. Mentions that we should look at the State law regarding disclosure of energy performance to tenants. A member of the public suggested looking at whether the parks are adequately funded.

Councilor Hinck and Councilor Suslovic support work to modernize the solid waste collection system.

Councilor Hinck feels solar/renewable energy goals have broad community support and challenges interested parties to support the committee's work on this by identifying ways to achieve them.

3. Update on Solar Power initiative

Mr. Moon informed the committee that the City of Portland and the City of South Portland have requested a joint proposal for solar development on their municipal landfills. Staff is awaiting this document. He added that community members and staff visited the Peaks Island landfill to explore its suitability for a community solar project. Jean Frasier described an ongoing effort in the Planning Department to determine how existing zoning language addresses renewable energy production. Staff will be making recommendations for amendments in the code to support the kinds of efforts discussed in the meeting today.

4. Conclusion

Mr. Moon reviewed elements on the draft work plan and updated the committee members on the City's efforts to date. Following the review Councilor Hinck requests that staff prepare a memo for the committee that categorizes potential goals as follows:

- Items staff can address without Council action

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- Items staff can take care of but that would require Council action or financial appropriation
- Items that are possibly interesting ideas but would require additional policy input from the Council

Councilor Thibodeau suggests adding discussion of long term vs. short term opportunities to the memo.

Councilor Suslovic would like to see the committee review progress on ongoing City initiatives that are relevant to the committee. He cites compliance with plans regarding storm water and efforts to address sea level rise. Councilor Hinck agrees with this suggestion.

Chairman Hinck confirms that the next meeting of the Committee will be February 18 at 5:30.

Councilor Suslovic moved adjournment, seconded by Councilor Thibodeau. All in favor.