

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)

Councilors Present: Councilor Hinck, Councilor Thibodeau, Councilor Suslovic

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Mike Murray, Bill Needelman

Councilor Hinck called the meeting to order.

Review and Approve Minutes from April 27, 2016

Motion made to approve the minutes by Councilor Suslovic, seconded by Councilor Thibodeau. All vote in favor.

Solid Waste Program Improvements

Mr. Moon and Mr. Murray reviewed a number of scenarios for improvement to the solid waste program. These included in house collection using recycling carts and trash carts, privatized collection using recycling carts and trash carts, in house collection using recycling carts and maintaining bagged waste collection, privatized waste recycling collection using recycling carts and maintaining bagged waste collection, and a hybrid system with privatized collection of recycling and trash off the peninsula using carts and continuing current practices on peninsula. They also discussed a modified version of the scenarios using recycling carts and bagged trash that would allow residents to use a trash cart as long as they pre-paid for collection using an online payment system.

The staff recommendation is for an in house collection of recycling program that uses carts while retaining the existing bag program. Key reasons for this include the cost of carts, capital costs, reduced impact on winter operations, and the opportunity to gain experience using carts in dense neighborhoods before expanding to trash carts. Adding recycling carts also addresses the issue of litter blowing from the small, open top recycling bins. The staff recommendation is based on semi-automated side loading trucks that can load from both sides. This is because of the great operational flexibility offered by these vehicles.

Staff also elaborated on the scenario using trash bags and trash carts. This idea is based on the program in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Residents would be able to use a cart and would be charged only when they set it out for collection. They would establish an account and pre-load it with funds. The collection truck would have an onboard computer that would deduct the appropriate charge from the resident's account when it empties the cart. If the

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account did not have enough of a balance to cover the cost, the tipper would not operate. Staff will continue to look at this option.

Councilor Suslovic requested information on current costs.

Councilor Thibodeau indicated that he prefers the option for bags only with recycling carts. He also would be interested to know how Portland's program performance compares to other cities.

Councilor Hinck asked about various pay as you throw methods, specifically about weight based programs. Mr. Moon indicated that weight based programs have not been widely adopted even though several cities have conducted pilot programs.

Councilor Hinck indicated that he likes the hybrid system that offers residents the option of using a cart for trash if they wish.

Councilor Suslovic said he prefers a system that keeps it simple. He also supports pay as you throw. He wants to make sure the program is as efficient as possible in order to add organic waste collection at some point. He believes a fully automated collection program would be efficient by reducing vehicles and staff.

Councilor Thibodeau asked if it would be more cost effective to have a cart based trash program as well as a cart program for recycling. He also indicated that cart based recycling is the primary goal to reduce litter.

Councilor Suslovic indicated that the trend locally and nationally has been toward privatization and automation, partly because it removes the capital expense. He sees automation as the most efficient method of collection.

Councilor Hinck indicated that he sees consensus on the committee for cart based recycling and including pay as you throw. The program could be in bags or in carts. He noted that South Portland has a lower recycling rate than Portland. He likes the idea of a truck being able collect both trash and recycling. He would like further information about composting and how it could be successful.

Councilor Suslovic suggested that organic waste could be collected if there were a system that collected organic waste every week but alternates trash and recycling. This would be

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possible because if people take advantage of the organics program they would not have much trash to collect.

Sea Level Rise

Bill Needelman provided a summary of the City's efforts to date regarding sea level rise and resiliency. He indicated that the City has partnered with a number of outside groups including the Portland Society for Architecture, the Urban Land Institute, the New England Environmental Finance Center, the Department of Homeland Security, and the State of Maine. Efforts have concentrated on the Waterfront and Bayside. Some City infrastructure has incorporated features the heighten resilience, such as Ocean Gateway. He added that that we have tide gauge data that shows 7.5 inches of sea level rise during the past 100 years. Recently, this has been accelerating. Information from these past efforts will inform work on the updated comprehensive plan. The City's next efforts will focus on Bayside with an effort called Bayside Adapts. We will be working with the New England Environmental Finance Center to conduct a data gap analysis and a public outreach effort.

Councilor Hinck asked whether the City should take policy action to require private development to take actions to better prepare them for sea level rise. Mr. Needelman indicated that this discussion would occur during the upcoming Bayside process.

Councilor Hinck asked whether a tide gate at the edge of Back Cove would make sense. Mr. Needelman indicated it could be one possibility. Berming could be another. Finding ways to direct water out of the neighborhood could be another.

Councilor Suslovic wondered about picking a certain sea level rise scenario and planning for it through public engagement process. Mr. Needelman indicated that we would be fleshing this out in the Bayside initiative. Councilor Suslovic suggested that the private sector may drive the conversation through requirements for financing and insurance. Mr. Needelman responded that this is true but there is also a need for an area wide approach.

Councilor Suslovic asked what the Council needs to do to keep this effort moving forward. Mr. Needelman responded that we will be using the Bayside TIF to begin fleshing out needs. We will also need oversight, policy guidance, and political leadership from the Council.

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National League of Cities Resiliency Grant

Mr. Moon thanked Councilor Hinck for his efforts to secure this grant. He added that he has had preliminary discussions with the NLC about using this grant to build on work proposed for Bayside. The committee members agreed this would be a good approach.

Pesticides and Fertilizer

Mr. Moon reported that staff amended the draft plan limiting the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers on City owned property as requested by the committee. This included a commitment to achieve Audubon International certification by July, 2018 and establishing a baseline of pesticide use in order to gauge improvements. Council Hinck requested clarification about City use of Round Up. Mr. Moon replied that the City would only use Round Up in exceptional circumstances such as addressing noxious weeds or public health situations. Councilor Hinck also requested clarification regarding neonicotinoids. Mr. Moon reported that the City would not be using them. The committee felt the plan is a good interim approach pending broader policy recommended by the Pesticide and Fertilizer Task Force. The Councilors requested ongoing updates on progress.

Reports

2030 District -- Mr. Moon reported that the 2030 District is awaiting news regarding a grant. They are not quite ready to move forward at this time.

Harbor Dredging and Disposal – Mr. Needelman reported on plans to dredge around the piers in Portland Harbor. The dredge material is not suitable for disposal at sea. A working group of stakeholders has been reviewing locations for a Contained Aquatic Disposal site. The stakeholders include pier owners, state and federal agencies, the Harbor Commission, and members of the lobster fishery. The Harbor Commission has received a Brownfield Grant from the EPA to support this work. The Maine Department of Transportation is also offering \$250,000 to support design and permitting.

Councilor Suslovic asked whether the CAD cell is for one-time use or for ongoing use. Mr. Needelman indicated that it would be for a single use but it would need to be open long enough to support the multiple pier owners who will need it.

Councilor Suslovic asked about concerns about the preferred location raised by the Lobsterman's Union. Mr. Needelman indicated that the location is off Fort Allen and is not

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fished very aggressively. However, the Lobsterman's Union remains concerned. The stakeholders will continue to work together to find an appropriate location.

Councilor Hinck asked about whether the large ships entering the harbor participate in the cost. Mr. Needelman indicated the large terminals where they tie up have a maintenance dredge program and cover their own costs. They won't be part of the CAD cell.

Public Comment

Tiqa Douglas asked a question about the solar landfill development. Mr. Moon indicated there would be an upcoming meeting between staff from Portland and South Portland to discuss the project.

Rachel Bouvier offered comment supporting pay as you throw bags. She is an economist and feels that the bag program offers the best incentive for residents to reduce waste and recycle. She also questioned whether flooding in Bayside would require Portland taxpayers to foot costs for improper development. Councilor Thibodeau responded that FEMA is requiring more and more properties to have flood insurance. Private lenders are also requiring flood insurance before issuing mortgages. He added that he is concerned about costs for protecting and maintaining public infrastructure.

Councilor Thibodeau asked Mr. Moon to look into the issue of existing mortgage holders in areas that are now classified as flood prone.

Adjourn.