

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

Standing Committee on Energy and Sustainability

Councilor Jon Hinck (A/L), Chair

Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2), Vice Chair

Councilor Ed Suslovic (D3)

Minutes

June 15, 2016

Members Present: Councilor Hinck, Councilor Suslovic, Councilor Thibodeau

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Jeremiah Bartlett, Kathi Earley, Jean Frasier, Tuck O'Brien, William Needelman

1. Review and approve minutes from May 18, 2016

Councilor Hinck requested that the minutes clarify that he is interested in learning more about a pay as you throw option using multiple sized carts.

2. Portland Food Council

Ben Tettlebaum of the Conservation Law Foundation presented draft bylaws and a draft Council resolution for the City Council to support creation of the Portland Food Council. He presented some background on food councils in other jurisdictions. In Maine, every major municipality in Maine except Portland has one. No Maine food council has a direct connection with the local government. The food council would look at food security, urban agriculture, food waste, fisheries and aquaculture. The goal would be to help the City take advantage of opportunities for a sustainable food system. Examples of policies and initiatives to be address would be looking to have 50% of food served in schools be locally sourced, promoting roof top growing, and expanding processing opportunities for greater Portland farmers. Successful food councils have strong connection with local government.

Councilor Thibodeau asked about funding for food councils. Mr. Tettlebaum mentioned that many councils work with volunteer funding and from philanthropic donations. Cities don't always fund them. Councilor Thibodeau also thought the City Council should appoint all members as that is how it normally works with Council created entities.

Councilor Suslovic agreed with Councilor Thibodeau's points about the City Council establishing the Food Council. He also suggested that there should be greater involvement from GPCOG – maybe call it the Greater Portland Food Council to incorporate other entities doing great work.

Councilor Hinck asked whether a Portland Food Council would be able to work on improving the healthy options at the concession stand at the Portland Expo. Mr. Tettlebaum indicated there could be opportunities to work on this issue by working on

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greater procurement of local foods. Councilor Hinck requested clarification about how Food Council members would be nominated and created. Councilor Hinck indicated he would be supportive of moving forward if we can address the questions around how the Food Council members would be appointed

Public Comment in favor of the Food Council by Jim Hanna (Cumberland County Food Security Council), Mary Scott (Portland Food Co-op), Susan Nelson, Daniel Wallace (Coastal Enterprises).

Councilor Suslovic reiterated that there should be involvement by GPCOG in order to have a regional perspective. He requested that this issue come back with revisions on how Food Council members are appointed. He also thought an option would be for the City to be a member of the Food Council.

Councilor Hinck requested that Mr. Tettlebaum consider the issues raised by committee members and return at a future meeting. He indicated the Committee is interested in the concept.

3. Bayside Transportation Master Plan

Jeremiah Bartlett provided an overview of the Bayside Transportation Master Plan that covers the area bounded by I-295, Cumberland Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Forest Avenue. The emphasis is on complete streets and connectivity. There were three public work shops and an open house to discuss the plan with the public. There would be an emphasis on building on projects already in the works.

Councilor Hinck asked how the experience with Spring Street influenced this plan. Mr. Bartlett indicated that the Bayside plan has a much higher level of specificity to it than the Spring St. plan did. This is to take mystery out of the process.

Public Comment: David Holbrook raised issues about Spring St. and better lighting at cross walks.

Councilor Suslovic indicated that he would find it difficult to support the Bayside study if it doesn't address sea level rise, especially since the Bayside area already has impacts. William Needelman reported that there is a separate project to look at adaptation in Bayside. Councilor Suslovic added this is not adequate. The report itself should include discussion since Bayside is ground zero of sea level rise in Portland. Councilor Suslovic also added that he is concerned about adding more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure if we are unable to take care of the existing infrastructure.

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Councilor Suslovic asked about the possibility of public takings. Jeremiah Bartlett indicated that connecting Pearl Street could result in a taking. Councilor Suslovic also asked about takings for the Franklin Street plan. Mr. Bartlett indicated that there would be some around Oxford St. Given the number of questions raised, Councilor Suslovic would welcome a council workshop.

Councilor Thibodeau emphasized the need to make sure pedestrian signals work and are effective. He also raised concerns about the Bayside Trail crossing Franklin Street. He feels a bridge over Franklin would be better. Mr. Bartlett mentioned that the Franklin Street study would improve the crossing but added that there was a lot of push back about the bridge from the bike/ped community. Councilor Thibodeau thinks having the bridge would advertise our commitment to good infrastructure.

Councilor Hinck asked about the net loss or gain of parking. Jeremiah Bartlett said it would be basically neutral. Councilor Hinck also expressed desire to see some reference to sea level rise in the plan.

Councilor Suslovic suggested further discussion on the study at a Council workshop and then for it to come back to Energy and Sustainability.

4. West Commercial Street Multi-Modal Transportation Study

William Needelman gave a presentation about the West Commercial Street corridor running from the Veteran's Bridge to High Street. The goal is to complement marine industry and to address any conflicts with bike/ped infrastructure. The study looked to build on the recent improvements implemented by the Maine Port Authority at the International Marine Terminal to update the roadway to meet the growing demands of industrial uses and mixed-use developments. There was robust public engagement that improved the recommendations. The costs referenced a quite high but they reflect paving that is being done now. Staff will need to go back to revise these. In other cases changes would not happen until streets have repairs or rebuilds. Key recommendations include implementing the West Commercial Street trail on the land side. Funding is partially in place for this. There is also a recommendation for a bike lane on the water side. Some people believe this would enhance bike safety while others feel the truck activity would make a bike land imprudent. It would include a center turn lane and improved cross walks. Mr. Needleman indicated that there would be a Council workshop on this plan

Public Comment: Alan Armstrong, suggested a two way bike lane on the land side of Commercial Street. Angelo Ciocca (Nova Seafood) doesn't think there should be a bike lane on the water

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side of Commercial Street for safety reasons. He also thinks a two way bike path on the land side would be prudent. He otherwise thinks the plan is great.

Mr. Needelman confirmed the proposed land side path would accommodate two way bike traffic as designed.

Councilor Suslovic thanked Mr. Needelman for bringing the interested parties together and reaching widespread agreement with the plan. He is very comfortable asking cyclists to use the shared use path on the land side.

Councilor Hinck asked about the implications of sea level rise for this plan. Mr. Needelman replied that this area is higher than Bayside and the Eastern Waterfront. Storm water runoff is a larger concern.

Councilors discussed the need for a workshop. Councilor Hinck felt that if there is a transportation focused workshop anticipated this item could be discussed but it should not take long given the level of comfort with the plan by committee members.

5. Zoning for Solar

Jean Frasier discussed amendments to the zoning codes that would facility solar projects in Portland. Currently none of the existing zones allow solar energy. The desire is to invite solar development while making sure the scale is appropriate for specific parts of the city. Larger facilities would receive higher levels of review. There does not seem to be a lot of precedent for this in other communities. She has looked at the work being done in South Portland.

Councilor Suslovic requested some clarification about what would be allowed. Ms. Frasier indicated that solar would generally be allowed but there would be more review for larger areas. Councilor Suslovic agreed with this approach while retaining sensitivity around specific sites.

Public Comment: Allen Armstrong, in favor of finding ways to encourage solar installations where appropriate. David Holbrook is also in favor of finding ways to encourage solar but cautions to look at possible drawbacks.

Councilor Hinck indicated that he is a little uncomfortable with the number of places solar would not be allowed, cemeteries for example. He does not want to preclude options that might be viable. He also wants to look at solar in historic districts.

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Tuck O'Brien indicated that the goal is to facilitate solar as broadly as possible. The goal of the proposed ordinance is to do the best projects first and set more contentious locations aside for the moment.

Councilor Suslovic supported the proposed restrictions, which he feels are limited and appropriate. These could be looked at in the future if need be.

Councilor Thibodeau also supported the concepts as proposed.

Councilor Hinck generally agrees with the proposals and feels they should move forward. He will continue to push to be more expansive.

6. Reports

- o Work continues on building benchmarking. The City will work with Rapport software to improve reporting on Portland's sustainability efforts.
- o Mr. Moon reported that amending the zoning code is necessary to advance any solar projects in Portland.
- o He also indicated that the Ocean Avenue Landfill project would be ready for further discussion at the next meeting.

7. Other business

Councilors looked at the schedule for the October meeting due to a possible conflict with Councilor Thibodeau's schedule. They decided to keep the current date of October 19 provisionally and review this if necessary.

Councilor Suslovic asked about the agenda for the next meeting and requested that solid waste be covered. Councilors also suggested food for the meetings.

8. Adjourn