

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

Standing Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2), Chair
Councilor Belinda Ray (D1)
Councilor Jill Duson (A/L)

Minutes October 18, 2017

Councilors Present: Councilor Thibodeau, Councilor Ray, Councilor Duson

Staff Present: Jon Jennings, Troy Moon, Mike Murray, John Peverada, Jeff Levine, Bill Needelman, Chris Branch, Jean Frazier, Kevin Dennault, Ben Pearson

Review and approve minutes: Staff member out sick, meeting minutes from last week not available.

Sustainability Updates:

Ocean Ave Landfill: HE Sargent has begun work on re-grading the cap. Our consulting engineer is meeting regularly with the DEP during the project. The fence company has installed a permanent fence in areas of the perimeter road that are adjacent to wet areas.

Streetlights: Council approved the project on Monday. Good press and lots of excitement in the community. We are preparing to get the project started. We need to close the deal with CMP to purchase the lights and sign the contract with Ten Connected Solutions. The City Manager indicated that he will be heading up a team of staff looking at which smart city technologies to deploy as part of the program. With the rapidly changing technologies he wants to be sure we are very strategic in our approach.

Recycling Carts: Carts are largely delivered and people are using them. We haven't seen an increase in recycling rates but it has only been one month. We'll continue to monitor. The City Manager feels the cart program has gone very well and has been a good undertaking. The vast majority of feedback has been very positive. He thanks staff for their efforts. Councilor Thibodeau agrees. Councilor Ray also agrees and has seen a noticeable reduction in trash blowing around.

Councilor Thibodeau asked that we remind people to remove carts of the sidewalk after they are emptied.

Councilor Duson asks to confirm that leaf collection is happening this year.

Recommendation to expand parking opportunities:

The City Manager introduced the proposal to increase opportunities for on street parking by suspending the City services parking restrictions between June – September and eliminating the odd/even parking restrictions off the peninsula. This is responding to complaints from residents who have to move cars when there's no service. Staff recommends keeping the restriction for City Services from October – May in to facilitate leaf collection, snow removal and spring sweeping. Service obligations require weekly street sweeping in the Portland Downtown so we can't change the restrictions there.

There are only 3 areas where odd/even is enforced off peninsula.. Changing this will not impact sweeping service. The recommendation is to eliminate odd/even parking entirely and make it unrestricted unless posted for service. This proposal doesn't change restrictions for time limited parking or special restriction such as around Hadlock Field.

Councilor Thibodeau asked whether the proposal would lead staff reductions.

The City Manager responded that no staff reductions are being considered. We may be able to look at different approaches to enforcement, such as on Sundays.

Councilor Thibodeau said that the 12:01 start time confuses people and asked whether staff considered going back to 11:30.

The City Manager responded that we can look at it that if there is confusion but would need to talk to staff about why 12:01 was chosen.

Councilor Ray asked whether the proposal would require sign removal?

Mike Murray responded that staff can put a sticker on existing signs to indicate effective dates.

Councilor Ray asked whether people are able to park against the flow of traffic during snow storms, especially on hills where it can be difficult to get started.

John Peverada responded that we only enforce parking against the flow parking on busy streets or if there is a complaint.

Councilor Ray asked how will we notice people about the elimination of Odd/Even restrictions.

Mike Murray responded that we have a mailing list for affected residents.

Councilor Thibodeau asked that we notice a public hearing for next meeting.

Proposal to Increase Tow Fees:

Mike Murray explained that tow operators have requested that the City increase fees for towing. The rates have not been adjusted in many years. Staff from the City Manager's office, Parking Control, and

Public Safety met with operators on Sept. 28 to discuss this thoroughly. The language in the proposed ordinance we worked out between the staff and the tow operators. Questions:

Councilor Thibodeau asked where Portland's rates are in comparison to other cities?

Mike responded that smaller communities have higher fees because they do fewer tows. The Police Department thought we should be comparable to South Portland because the operators do business in both communities and most of the impound lots are in South Portland.

Councilor Thibodeau asked whether we had considered phasing in the new rates.

Mike indicated that we had not.

John Peverada added that in the past we were supposed to have incremental changes regularly but that never happened. Changed fee would be comparable to neighboring communities.

Councilor Duson asked what costs have increased for the operators?

Mike responded that the tow operators indicate that insurance has increased, as well as costs for renting impound lots, and purchasing fuel and equipment. Costs for getting the impound lots up to code is also expensive.

Have on for public hearing next meeting.

Councilor Ray asked what qualifies as a non-accident tow?

John Peverada responded that the City can tow any illegally parked car for any reason. Usually focus on no parking zones, scoff tows, abandoned, in front of hydrant, etc.

Councilor Duson asked whether the provision requiring operators to allow vehicle owners to retrieve personal items new.

Mike indicated that it is new to City code but it reflects existing state law.

Councilor Thibodeau requested that the committee hold a public hearing on this issue during the next meeting.

Report on Bayside Adapts

Bill Needelman and Troy Moon presented the report on the Bayside Adapts project. The effort included a stakeholder process called the Bayside Adapts Working Group (BAWG) tasked with identifying guiding principles for future resiliency efforts, an analysis of data required to implement future resiliency projects, and a design challenge (the Bayside Adapts Design Challenge) that asked design teams to imagine what a future climate resilient Bayside might look like. The report noted that the City has much of the data required to begin serious planning for more water from rising seas and increased storm water but that much of it needs to be integrated into the GIS mapping system. There also needs to be additional modeling to better understand how storm water interacts with the existing infrastructure.

The report was notable in that it provided guidance for the level of sea level rise the City should be prepared to manage by 2050 and 2100. (3.4 feet by 2050 and 10.8 feet by 2100) The winner of the design challenge, Aceto Landscape Design, described their concept for a future resilient Bayside. Staff indicated that the report would inform ongoing work. Planning Director Jeff Levine suggested that it would provide useful information for the reworking of the land use ordinance. Ben Pearson of Public Works indicated they would collaborate with Planning on the development of standards to reduce the impact of runoff from development and redevelopment.