



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, April 16, 2019, 5:30pm, Council Chambers, City Hall

Committee Attendance:

Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3), Pious Ali (At-Large)

Councilors in Attendance: Spencer Thibodeaux (District 2)

City Staff: Jon Jennings, City Manager; Kristen Dow, Interim Director of Health and Human Services; Sara Fleurant, Director of the Oxford Street Shelter; Christine Grimando, City Planning Director; Lena Geraghty, Director of Innovation & Performance Management; Adam Harr, Executive Assistant.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements

- None.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

- Councilor Batson made a motion to approve the minutes, Councilor Ali seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Homeless Services Center

- The earliest first read could be on May 6th City Council Meeting; a first read introduces a topic and includes back-up materials.
 - The earliest possibly second read is May 20th; the Council can discuss, debate and potentially vote, including a public hearing.
- Emails today suggesting the vote should be delayed due to the odd timing.
 - The meeting is being taped and live streamed.
 - The public hearing for the vote on the HSC was at the last meeting.
- Process questions
 - Explained on Chair Ray's blog: <http://www.belindaray.me/blog>
- Councilor Batson requested some feedback on pedestrian safety near County Way; does city staff have that available?
 - Christine did not have that prepared for tonight but can prepare for future meetings.
- Chair Ray had asked if Greater Portland Health is able to give medication assisted treatment on site.
 - All three locations are able to have health services such as MAT on site based on the GPH partnership.

- How many people receiving homeless services or known to be a part of that community have died from drowning in the Old Port?
 - 9 that are known.
 - Commercial Street
 - Specifics are known, but anecdotally substance use was a likely factor.
 - Councilor Batson would like more specific information on the locations on commercial street where fatalities occurred.
 - City Manager Jennings has a map approximately where people have fallen in and drowned (not exclusive to the shelter).

Councilor Thibodeaux

- Angelo's Acre was talked about being built out to the Street.
 - Would the Front door be along the Commercial Street sidewalk:
 - Yes.
 - Camping in the adjacent Harbor View park:
 - There is some camping but no more than other parks
 - Concern of camping part of the consideration of this site.
 - There are areas hidden from the road due to topography.
 - Some brush has been cleared out to increase the visibility of the green space areas.
 - Has Social Services or Rob Parritt spoken to the local fishermen
 - No but Chair Ray has.
 - Modern Facility
 - Freezer Facility nearby
- Planning and Zoning
 - If the Council approved the Angelo's Acre site, would zoning changes need to be made?
 - No zoning changes would need to be made, just avoid building in the R6 zone up to the side walk.
 - To build in the R6 would require a zone change.
 - Does a parcel in multiple zones affect the build ability of the entire area?
 - Even if it is not in the R6 zone part of the parcel, does the R6 rules apply to the entirety of the zone?
 - If you are building in the B5b part of the zone, those rules would apply unless construction crept to into R6.
 - HSC PowerPoint shows the divide between R6 and B5b and it appears that the large center may fit entirely in B5b.
 - Memo on VRAP and the Coal ash information sent to the committee.
 - Phase 1 on County Way came back with the same info in the VRAP.
 - More information would come in a phase 2.

- Any agreement with the State would include removing mounds on site.
- Chair Ray explained a chart she made to help rank the choices:
 - o Initially though County Way would be first, Angelo's Acre would be second and Riverside would be Third.
 - o Qualifications Rankings
 - Transit:
 1. County Way
 2. Angelo's Acre: surprisingly mostly South Portland transit.
 3. Riverside
 - Pedestrian Safety
 1. Riverside: has sidewalks.
 2. Angelo's Acre: busy street and waterfront.
 3. County Way has water, busy roads, highway and an active train track.
 - Space for the facility
 1. Riverside
 2. County Way
 3. Angelo's Acre
 - Neighbor Buffer
 1. Riverside: one home would be impacted.
 2. Angelo's Acre: Natural buffer with the hill.
 3. County Way: abuts bunker brewery and homes
 - Provider Feedback
 1. Angelo's Acre/County Way
 2. Riverside
 - Concentration of Services: similar uses where least got the highest marks.
 1. Riverside
 2. Angelo's Acre
 3. County Way: Emergency Shelter, Supportive Housing, cognitive and medical services.
 - Chances of City Council and Planning Board Approval
 1. Riverside
 2. -
 3. Angelo's Acre/County Way
 - o Based on these rankings, Chair Ray prefers Riverside, followed by Angelo's Acre then County Way.
- Councilor Batson does not support County Way due to the campus feel of clustering services and safety concerns.
 - o Undecided on ranking between Angelo's Acre and Riverside
 - o OK with striking County Way and hearing further committee feedback.
- Councilor Ali agreed with striking County Way.
 - o It doesn't matter where we place the shelter, movement will not be restricted?

- Correct, and transit and access will be part of the design at any location.
- Proximity to food stores; Homeless Voices for Justice expressed concern that the HSC be located near food store.
 - Each are need stores that sell groceries and fresh produce.
- Councilor Thibodeaux spoke about Angelo's Acre and Cold Storage
 - Bill Needleman can speak to how Angelo's acre has been used.
 - Lay down area for different projects along the waterfront.
 - Concerned this use won't continue.
 - From an economic development standpoint, there is a concern.
 - Proximity to Harborview park and loitering
 - Traffic and the sharp turn.
 - Waterfront central zone needs parking and housing, not a services center.
 - Riverside is his top choice.
 - Hopes the committee puts forward one site and not a choice.
 - Angelo's Acre being so close to the street sets up a choice and struggle between off or on peninsula.
 - That decision should be made at committee and then recommended to the full council.
 - Concerns at the Baron Center are shared with Angelo's Acre.
 - Councilor Thibodeaux does not think he could support County Way or Angelo's Acre.
 - A new inward-facing facility with outdoor space excited him and he is concerned that these two sites would not allow that type of build.
- Chair Ray noted the committee does not want to forward County Way and asked the committee if they would like to forward two sites or one site of those remaining.
 - Councilor Ali and Councilor Batson favor recommending the remaining two sites: Angelo's Acre and Riverside.
 - Chair Ray believes Riverside is the clear front runner due to available space and the nature of the working water front and the incoming cold storage facility at Angelo's Acre.
 - Chair Ray clarified verbiage: The committee did not have a clear front runner.
- Counselor Thibodeaux suggested in forwarding the two sites that if the Council does not accept them, the Council is choosing Oxford Street.
 - The Committee will just present the options without making the above explicit in the recommendation.
- Councilor Batson asked if Angelo's Acre was two stories there could be open space?
 - It would be possible.

Councilor Batson Made a motion to recommend Angelo's Acre and Riverside to the full council and Councilor Ali Seconded.

Discussion:

- Councilor Ali asked Chair Ray about Metro: Would the Homeless Services Center benefit from the first and last mile program?
 - There is a para transit obligation that would travel to the center.
 - RTP is currently contracted by Metro
 - The first mile last mile may not benefit due to cost.
 - Metro passes are not the answer for everyone and City provided transportation would be integral.
- If Riverside gets chosen by the full City Council, is it possible for transportation information to be provided? (Transporting people to the nearest stop?)
 - Yes, adjustments to the plan will be made based on the location; City Manager Jennings is confident on the City's ability to implement a robust transportation plan that includes a dedicated shuttle.
- What information is needed such as the Planning information to provide to the full Council?
 - Planning information on the two sites included.
 - Sample from 2016 (DRAFT and not a complete site plan)
 - Information on all services to be included
 - Information from the providers
 - Survey
 - Letter from Homeless Voices for Justice.
- Can there be a site plan for a two-story facility?
 - There is a cost but staff can try to do it but it will take time.
 - The current schematic has all of the elements to help the Councilors and note that the likely division of the elements for two stories.
 - Councilor Ali would rather not slow the process.

The Committee voted and the motion passed unanimously.

The First Read will Occur on May 6th; the City Manager and Mayor will decided if the second Read will occur on May 20th; the Council may vote to postpone the second reading to the first June Meeting. There will be a Public Hearing.

The Committee thanked those who sent emails and explained they appreciate them and cannot answer all of them.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Next Steps

- The Committee will meet Tuesday April 23, 2019 to discuss the Sound ordinance.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:10PM