**Minutes**

**Remote Housing and Economic  Development Committee**

**May 17, 2022**

NOTE:  This meeting was held via Zoom and can be viewed at this link:

https://www.portlandmaine.gov/129/Agendas-Minutes

These Minutes provide a record of those in attendance, general discussion taking place, and motions made.

A remote meeting of the Housing and Economic Development Committee (HEDC) of the Portland City Council was held on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.  Present from the Committee were Chair Councilor Pious Ali, and members Councilors Tae Chong, Roberto Rodriguez, and Andrew Zarro.  Present from the City staff were Interim Housing and Economic Development Department Director Mary Davis, Associate Corporation Counsel Michael Goldman, Permitting and Inspections Director Jessica Hanscombe, Parks and Facilities Director Ethan Hipple, Assistant City Manager Anne McGuire, and Principal Adm. Officer Lori Paulette.

**Item #1:  Review and vote on May 3, 2022, draft meeting Minutes.**

On motion made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Councilor Rodriquez, the Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to accept the Minutes.

**Item #2:  Public Hearing/Vote:  Executive Session – Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 406(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A, the Committee will go into executive session to provide staff guidance and direction on the following:**

a. **Negotiations for the sale of the remaining Thames Street City-owned property; and,**

b. **Negotiations for amendment the Sea Dogs Lease at Hadlock Field**

Councilor Chong made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 13119-A to review and discuss these two items; Councilor Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Chair Councilor Ali opened the meeting for public comment.

Mr. Blumenthal asked if this includes the item regarding Redlon Woods, and Chair Councilor Ali responded that it was not; it will be for Thames Street and the Hadlock Field Lease negotiations.

Seeing no further public comment, Chair Councilor Ali closed the public comment session.

A vote was then taken on the motion and it passed at approximately 5:39 p.m. At approximately 6:15 p.m., the Committee came out of executive session.

**Item #3: Outdoor Dining Follow-Up**

Ms. Libner noted that staff looked at year-long dining versus the current program duration from April 15 to November 1st. Staff noted costs for safety over the winter at $200,000+, as well as the low demand during the Winter months. A majority of those restaurants using parklets did not use them in January and February. An alternative was discussed by staff to extend the parklet season two weeks on either side.

Councilor Chong said that he would like to move forward with expanding the season, either throughout the Winter or extending on either side of the current season, and was curious how Montreal and Quebec were handling the program.

Councilor Zarro agreed that January through March people are not eating out for the most part, so is less concerned about that timeframe. He would like to see it expanded on both ends, perhaps 4/1 to 12/1 or 12/30. Also, an update on what is working and not from both businesses and staff perspective would be helpful

Councilor Rodriguez questioned costs and barriers for outdoor dining throughout the year.

Ms. Hanscombe said that during the Winter, barriers have to surround the entire area, while during the current season, two barriers are required. Councilor Rodriguez said that he would like to move forward with extending the season on either side.

Ms. Libner noted she would need to get Public Works' thoughts to go to 12/1 or 12/30, as the Department indicated that 11/15 was good date to end the season.

Chair Councilor Ali also agreed that it would be good to hear from businesses and staff on the challenges they have incurred in year-long outdoor dining.

Councilor Zarro added that he would reach out to his Committee colleagues regarding possible amendments to outdoor dining and get back to Ms. Libner once he has that information.

**Item 4: Presentation of Public Restroom Plan for Downtown Portland**

Ms. Libner shared her screen and went through the attached presentation for the Summer 2022 Pilot Program, noting that a public forum was held last month regarding the Pilot. She described the criteria used to find locations on City property in the downtown, which property is very limited, and the design of the facility. Three locations were highlighted – Pearl Street, Monument Square area, and at Ocean Gateway. The City has a goal of having these in place for 7/1/2022, but with the supply chain issues, that may be difficult. There will be signage on them if there are operational issues, and also noted that they are easily relocated. The plan is for them to be year-round.

Councilor Zarro noted that this Pilot Program should move forward, and questioned maintenance and possible mistreatment of them.

Ms. Libner said that is the question and maintaining with existing staff will determine if it will be successful, including wear and tear.

Councilor Rodriguez asked if any alternative sites have been found, and Ms. Libner said that they have not as of yet for various reasons based on criteria and property restrictions.

Chair Councilor Ali thanked staff for getting to this point and for the update.

**<u>Item #5: Public Hearing and Review and vote to Recommend to the City Council Purchase and Sale Agreements for Land Bank Commission's purchase of Redlon Woods Property. Executive Session: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A, the Committee may go into executive session to provide staff guidance and direction on negotiations for this item.</u>**

Mr. Hipple described the two areas of purchase of property in the Redlon area from private landowners, as well as two City-owned parcels. The Land Bank Commission (LBC) approved of the two property purchases and moving the City-owned property into the LB. This would create 4.5 acres of open space in a "park poor" area of Portland. Mr. Hipple noted that his Department supports this, as well as Public Works and Planning. This is not taken lightly, particularly with the need for housing in Portland; however, this land does not have a viable use for affordable housing.

Patrizia Bailey, Chair of the LBC, noted that the LBC has been reaching out to area neighbors for over six years and described getting to the point of purchase and sale agreements with the Berrys and Coastal Oaks. She noted that Coastal Oaks decided that they could not construct three residential houses due to extensive work that would be needed. As for funding the acquisitions, Ms. Bailey noted that area neighbors raised $112,000 and then $112,000 is coming from the LBC.

Councilor Chong said that he would support this, noting the challenging topography and water runoff issues.

Councilor Zarro agreed, noting that affordable housing has been addressed and it is not viable.

Chair Councilor Ali opened the meeting for public comment.

Jess Teesdale of 55 Kenilworth Street noted her full support for getting this land into the

LB, and thanked Ms. Bailey and Mr. Hipple for their efforts. She invited all for a public walk through on June 11th.

Maura Price of 29 June Street urged the City to move forward with this acquisition, noting more than 70 neighbors contributed financially for this to happen.

Eli Tchinsky of 37 Bancroft Street noted that he grew up in this area and is supportive as well, noting a good trail system for the public.

George Rheault of Bayside advised the City to take a look at the book “Slums of Aspen” regarding environmental injustice. The Developer referred to was dragged through the coals by the City’s regulatory issues.

Chair Councilor Ali, seeing no further public comment, closed the public comment session.

A motion was made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez to forward this to the City Council for approval.

Councilor Zarro noted that he had a couple of questions that would require the Committee to go into executive session.

On motion made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Councilor Zarro, the Committee voted 4-0 to go into executive session at 7:40 p.m. pursuant to 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119-A to provide staff guidance and direction on negotiations for this item. At approximately 7:51 p.m., the Committee came out of executive session.

. A vote was then taken on the motion and it passed 4-0.

**Item #6: Communication: 2022 Workplan and Schedule – No Vote or Public Hearing Required**

Ms. Davis questioned the Committee if it would like to cancel the July 5 regular Committee meeting and have one meeting in July and one in August.

Consensus of the Committee was one meeting in July and no meeting in August.

On motion made by Councilor Chong, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez, the Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully, Lori Paulette