

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Andrew Zarro (D4), Chair
Councilor Victoria Pelletier (D2)
Councilor Roberto Rodriguez (At-Large)

Minutes July 13, 2022

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Rodriguez, Councilor Pelletier

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Gene Pierotti, Kari Twaite

Meeting called to order.

June 8 Minutes

Councilor Rodriguez moves to approve the June 8th meeting minutes. Councilor Pelletier seconds the motion. June 8th minutes passed unanimously, 3-0.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

The Sustainability Office welcomed Resilience Corps member Courtney Crossgrove who will be working with the office a few hours each week until October. Hiring has begun for the Sustainability Associate position with 67 applications received. Erin was promoted to full-time on July 3rd.

2 new charging stations installed in Elm St Garage and 1 new station at Spring St Garage. Improving the charging experience has been a priority. Usage of the networked charging stations remains strong with over 400 charging sessions in June. We are working with CMP and EVgo on the necessary easements and permits to install DC fast chargers on Commercial St and the Spring/High parking lot.

Food scrap recycling drop off program now includes 8 locations. Each location has a scannable code that brings up the form with a few questions about the site.

As of the beginning of June, the Electrify Everything campaign spurred the installation of: 16 air source heat pumps, 10 Solar PV systems, 5 heat pump water heaters, 2 home EV chargers, 1 battery storage system (encouraged, but not technically part of the program). Our program goal was to spur at least 75 - 100 residents to take some action to electrify their home so we are on track - does not include sign ups for community solar. This version of the program ends in October. We've begun imagining what Electrify Everything 2.0 will look like.

The office attended the Maine Climate Council conference in Augusta with Troy presenting on Electrify Everything! And EV charging. Troy presented to the New England Municipal Sustainability Network on tree equity. Erin and Courtney joined Wayside Food Programs picnic to talk about the food scrap recycling program. The office is holding a tabling day in Post Office Park. Had two Coffee and Climate events since the last meeting. The next will be on En-roads in August.

Committee Comment on Sustainability Update

Councilor Zarro asks what happens if a non-EV parks in one of the EV charging stations? The parking division is able to ticket those drivers.

Councilor Rodriguez asks how many charging stations EVgo will be installing by March 2023? 12 level 2 chargers and 8 parking spots with fast chargers by March. We have 36 more level 2 chargers to come and we are working on staying on the timeline.

Councilor Pelletier asks if there is a possibility to expand compost drop sites to more locations in Parkside? This is a possibility with more usage and demand.

Amendment to Chapter 34 - Fertilizer Ordinance

Presented by Troy Moon

On March 23, 2022 the Pesticide Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) presented its annual report to the Sustainability and Transportation Committee as required by Chapter 34 of City Code. The report documented the activities of the committee during the prior year, presented information gleaned from the annual reports submitted to the Sustainability Office by licensed pesticide applicators, and made several recommendations for amendments to the ordinance in fulfillment of the PMAC's responsibility to "advise the Sustainability Director and the Sustainability and Transportation Committee about pesticide use and recommending changes to achieve full and successful implementation of the ordinance." (Chapter 34-6)

In summary, the draft ordinance:

Prohibits application of fertilizers within 75' of a water body or wetland or other environmentally sensitive area

Prohibits application of fertilizers on frozen ground, impervious, or saturated surfaces

Prohibits application of fertilizers when a heavy rain event is forecast or is occurring

Prohibits fertilizer applications when plants are not taking up nutrients, such as during summer dormancy or when the ground is partially or wholly frozen

Prohibits applications of phosphorus except when a soil test conducted within the last three years indicates a need for phosphorus, or phosphorus is being used for new development/re-establishment.

Prohibits the application of fertilizers using prills/pellets on impervious surfaces.

Public Comment on Amendment to Chapter 34

Ken Capron believes the amendment is ignoring wood preservatives that leach into the soils.

Ken sent the committee his comments and a fact sheet. Ken asks if the deep root fertilization of trees has to do with the trees ability to produce acorns. Recommends someone from Maine DEP and an outside chemist be on the PMAC.

Tor Herrington mentions young trees in their neighborhood do not grow successfully due to deep root fertilization. Recommends using cover crops in areas where topsoil is insufficient. Noted Rewild Maine work on invasive species removal and leaving the ground bare after – recommends amending the soil before planting.

Karen Snyder is chair of PMAC and appreciates the other two commenters. Karen would like to mention additions to the ordinance that PMAC members sent to the committee. Karen would like to change the positions in the LMAC to attract more members. Notes the PMAC would like to give more guidance.

Avery Yale Kamila agrees with Karen and is also a member of the PMAC. Avery notes the importance of taking care of our land and people in Portland. Avery notes her neighborhood has few trees or parks. Avery would like to broaden who can serve on the LMAC.

Councilor Comment on Amendment to Chapter 34

Troy notes that street trees are in a tough environment. There is some fertilization with compost and fertilizer used. Deep root fertilization happens in already established trees and is sometimes needed to get existing trees extra nutrients. Telephone poles are treated with preservatives to keep them from rotting but this may not be the appropriate ordinance to address this issue.

Councilor Zarro asks if changing the makeup of the PMAC has been discussed? It has not been discussed on a committee level but can be revisited. Councilor Zarro notes the public notification section in the new ordinance and how it will be enforced. The office will create a toolkit and communicate it to the stores. We may make them signage and language they can post. We can prohibit the use but likely not the sale.

Councilor Pelletier recommends bringing the amendments to Chapter 34 to council in September.

Passage of Amendments to Chapter 34 with additional amendments from PMAC

Councilor Zarro motions to recommend to the council. Councilor Rodriguez seconds. The recommendation is approved 3-0.

Motion to Recommend to the Council Amendments to Chapter 34 as amended

Councilor Rodriguez motions to recommend to council. Councilor Zarro seconds. Recommendation approved 3-0.