

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

Minutes May 10, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Pelletier, Councilor Rodríguez

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Emma Perry

Guests: William Boornazian (City Water Resources Division Manager), Doug Roncarati (City Stormwater Program Manager), Michael Goldman (City Corporation Counsel), Mike Murray (Acting Director of Public Works), James Woidt (Hydrologist and Water Resources Engineer at Streamworks), Grace Nicols (Representative of the UMaine Law School Energy and Environmental Law Society student organization)

Meeting was called to order.

March 22 Minutes

Councilor Zarro makes a motion to approve the March 22nd, 2023 meeting minutes. Councilor Pelletier moves the motion. March 22 minutes passed unanimously, 2-0.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon and Erin Ferrell

Benchmarking reports were due by May 1 for all single-tenant buildings 20,000 square feet or more. The Office is using a benchmarking implementation platform, BEAM, to better evaluate benchmarking reports for compliance and accuracy. We've received over 100 reports so far with more expected by the end of the month. We are seeing improvements in report completeness using the BEAM platform already. Anyone with questions or looking for assistance with submitting their report should refer to portlandmaine.gov/energybenchmarking.

The office launched the Electrify Everything! e-bike incentive "Electrify Bikes!" at our Earth Day Celebration. Electrify Bikes! will help income-eligible Portland residents purchase an electric bicycle or electric cargo bicycle that can provide a reliable, practical transportation option that does not rely on fossil fuels and supports goals identified in One Climate Future to reduce vehicle miles traveled in automobiles and to reduce carbon emissions from transportation. We began taking applications for incentives on Monday, April 24th at 8:30 AM, and by Wednesday, the 26th at 12 PM we had reached our \$150,000 anticipated spending limit. 76 individuals have received incentives and we placed 13 participants on a waitlist in case some incentive certificates may expire or are not used in full.

Garbage to Garden officially took over as Portland's official composting partner. We recruited offices and departments throughout City Hall to collect and compost their food scraps, visited the new Homeless Service Center to facilitate collection at the site, and look forward to increasing residential participation in the community composting program or curbside service.

Weekly drop-off site maintenance continues and we recently updated all the QR codes on the signs. Garbage to Garden was also a fantastic help in managing all waste collection at the Earth Day celebration.

The neighborhood charging hubs at East End Elementary School and at Deering Oaks are finally online and operational! Troy is working hard with EVGo to identify more sites to place the rest of the L2 and DCFC chargers. After presenting to the Housing and Economic Development Department, we are looking into the feasibility of the parking lot on Marginal Way by Miss Portland Diner.

The Office launched an educational campaign "[Mow Tall Until Fall](#)" in support of sustainable landcare practices. We look forward to hosting educational webinars with partners such as Wild Seed Project, Maine Audubon, and ME-DACF throughout the summer, as well as in-person tabling at the Portland Farmer's Market and Wayside Pop-Up Summer Picnics.

The Sustainability Office is so excited to announce that amongst the neighborhood applications received, Libbytown and Parkside neighborhoods were selected to join Portland's Sustainable Neighborhoods Program.

Councilor Comment on Sustainability Update

Councilor Zarro asks if the EVGo chargers potentially going at Miss Portland Diner would be L2 or fast chargers. *They will be a bank of L2 chargers. We have also been considering installing at the Back Cove parking lot.*

Councilor Rodríguez asks Director Moon if Garbage to Garden will still be tracking data on compost collection rates in the City? *Yes, and hopefully we will be able to set targets for increasing participation in food scrap recovery in the City - we look forward to working together with them to do that.*

Councilor Pelletier shares that, as a Councilor in District 2, she is very excited that Libbytown and Parkside were selected for the Sustainable Neighborhoods Program.

Stroudwater Dam Presentation

Presented by Mike Murray, William Boornazia, and James Woidt

The Stroudwater Dam is a masonry dam constructed at the mouth of the Stroudwater River in 1849. Its original purpose was to power a grist mill that once operated at the site. While it has no functional purpose, it creates an impoundment some area residents use for recreation and that many value for aesthetic reasons.

Streamworks did an assessment included in the packet.

Staff in Public Works have reviewed the recommendations contained in the Streamworks report and the developed cost estimates for completing the work, which are included in the back up material. They note that funds available for dam repairs in existing CIP accounts are likely insufficient to complete the repairs recommended by Streamworks. In addition, maintaining the

dam in satisfactory condition will require Public Works to request annual allocations of funds to perform routine maintenance and to address damage that may occur to the dam in the future. Before any further funds are used to start recommended repairs and the need for ongoing future funding, we seek guidance from the Sustainability Committee about whether they recommend pursuing significant repairs or whether the Committee recommends exploring options to relieve the City of the costs associated with owning the dam. As noted in the deed, if the City does not wish to maintain the dam, title to the dam would revert to the Leavitts or their heirs. Corporation Counsel will be available at the meeting to discuss what such a process might entail.

Public Comment on Stroudwater Dam Presentation

Multiple residents requested staff do more research into the environmental impact of actions in maintaining or dam removal, the aesthetic and recreational value of the dam, and the significance of the historic landmark. Residents noted the importance of further opportunities for community input and discussion on the topic.

Councilor Comment on Stroudwater Dam Presentation

Councilors ask for staff to look into all options available and revisit in a later Committee meeting.

Metro Presentation

Presented by Greg Jordan and Mike Tremblay

The Metro presented on the status of Metro performance including ridership which has not recouped to pre-pandemic levels. This is a national trend which is causing fiscal cliffs. Strategies to improve ridership include: Improve route directness and frequency with bus network redesigns. Center the mobility needs of historically disadvantaged communities. Emphasize high all day service levels, and longer operating hours (peaks have flattened). Serve major destinations and connect the modes (bus, rail, ferry, trails). Speed up transit with projects like Bus Rapid Transit, Transit Signal Priority, Priority Bus Lanes. Simplify transit for riders with smart fare payment, pass programs, intuitive trip planning tools, easy transfers between routes, effective communications, and steps to present a single (bus) transit system. Implement first mile-last mile strategies (microtransit, bus stop accessibility, connections to trails). Operate a safe and secure system and make sure the public knows this. Mix land uses, increase affordable/multi-family housing, price and supply parking at levels that shift incentives, complete streets, increase pop/emp densities in core and along major corridors(s).

GPCOG/PACTS is working on a more seamless and simple regional transit network and greater integration of public facing elements of the transit network. Proposed changes in Portland are included in the packet.

Councilor Comment on the Metro Presentation

Councilor Zarro notes that there is a possibility of creating a transportation area (shuttle, metro stop Route 8) for islanders and supports city staff working with Metro on that recommendation.

Councilor Pelletier notes more changes to Route 8 in district 2. Routes are constantly being evaluated.

Councilor Rodriguez clarifies that funding requested from the state is to give the Metro more room to continue operating while ridership is recovering from the pandemic. The Metro is hoping for more equity prioritized in allocating funding. Greg notes that the range for the electric buses

proved themselves in the winter months but is not sufficient to run for the entire day - hopes for technology to advance and batteries to allow for longer ranges.

Resolution Supporting a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty

Presented by Grace Nichols

Representatives from the University of Maine Law Schools student organization, the Energy and Environmental Law Society, have requested the the City of Portland's City Council pass a resolution in support of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty sponsored by the the small island nations of Vanuatu and Tuvalu, which face the prospect of complete inundation by rising sea levels due to climate change caused by the continued burning of fossil fuels. Adopting the resolution aligns with the City of Portland's existing climate goals including the adoption of One Climate Future, Resolve 7-16/17 committing the City to run on 100% clean energy by 2040, Resolve 10-16/17 committing to the goals established by the Paris Climate Agreement, and Resolution 8-19/20 declaring a climate emergency and prioritizing actions to eliminate the use of fossil fuels by 2030.

Public Comment on Resolution Supporting a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty

Bill Weber shares his agreement with the resolution's adoption but does not want this Council to lose focus on the actionable items that must be addressed soon to meet the climate action plan's near term goals.

Jamie Dogleshe is a student at Maine Law, here to support the adoption of this resolution. They share their frustration with meaningful action or noticeable change in action towards reducing fossil fuel use or and global warming. Municipal action and grassroots action must occur to provide a livable future.

Will Shabo is a Portland resolution, here in full support of the adoption of this resolution.

Lee is a another student at Maine Law, here to support the adoption of this resolution. Showing support for this treaty is how we can show support for global climate action.

Tom is a Portland resident and big supporter of the METRO, but shares his frustration with single occupancy vehicles dominating the roadways. He shares his support for this treaty as it will reduce fossil fuel use, and while a treaty would not change anything Portland is doing currently, it would signal to the world the direction that we intend to and need to take.

Maggie echoes that we must step up our action in the building and transportation sectors to reduce the City's carbon footprint.

Councilor Comment on the Resolution Supporting a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty

Councilor Zarro appreciates Grace Nicols for bringing this resolution to us and encourages residents and attendees to bring future topics to Council. This Committee and the One Climate Future team is very intentional about taking action and taking steps to tackle the goal of

reducing carbon emissions generated in this City. We support this resolution, but we are also careful of taking deliberate actions to proceed in that battle.

Councilor Pelletier shares appreciation for the efforts of this group and public attendees as well. Councilor Pelletier is also willing to support this resolution and is grateful to do this work, with the Council, that helps us align with our City's goals.

Councilor Rodríguez is also supportive of this resolution and bringing it to full Council.

Motion to recommend the Resolution Supporting a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty to City Council

Councilor Zarro makes a motion to move the Resolution Supporting a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty to Portland City Council. Councilor Rodríguez seconds the motion. Passes unanimously, with agreement from Councilor Pelletier.

Motion to Adjournment

Moved by Councilor Rodríguez, all adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned