



Peaks Island Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 23, 2023, 6:15 p.m.

Hybrid ZOOM/in-person meeting in the Community Center

NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting–Sept. 27, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: 6:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Fred Somers, Scott Mohler, Natasha Markov-Riss, Peter McLaughlin

Absent: Jerzy Sylvester, Rhonda Berg, Jess Burton

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 9

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Somers made the motion to accept the June 24, 2023 meeting minutes. McLaughlin seconded. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously. (NOTE – there was no Peaks Island Council meeting in July 2023.)

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Patnaude said that the current balance is \$44,856.30. The only expenditure during July was for needs-based tickets in the amount of \$143.70. ***McLaughlin made a motion to approve the budget. Mohler seconded. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report passed unanimously.***

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

- **Parking**

No update.

- **Golf Cart**

No update.

- **Ferry Service**

Somers said that CBL board has been looking at how to reduce the \$4million deficit between operating revenue and expenses. Most of that will be covered by federal grants but the board would like to find other ways to close the gap in operating expenses and revenue. They are considering re-structuring fares to capture more revenue from summer visitors, re-considering the frequency of down the bay trips, and raising fares across the board. Somers said there has not been a fare increase for 17 years.

The new ferry is on schedule for a June 2024 delivery, followed by inspections by Coast Guard and test runs that could take 4-5 months.

A special CBL committee has been formed to look at the congestion on "Cheap Wednesdays."

Car reservations is still an item under consideration, but no progress has been made.

- **Anti-racism Committee – update**

No update.

- **Environmental and Sustainability**

Committee is working with the Department of Public Works and the city's Parks and Recreation Department to move the skate park to the ball field.

Markov-Riss said the Island Compost project is gaining momentum with increasing amounts of donated compost each week.

- **Housing – ReCode Zoning survey**

Markov-Riss said ReCode committee members from the city's planning department came to talk to islanders. Laura Glendenning, chair of the Peaks Island Council's Housing Committee, said the Issues that the Peaks Island Housing Committee would like to be looked at include reducing the size of a buildable lot, reducing the set-back requirements, and increasing the allowable percent coverage of a lot. Community members asked about developing single family homes into multi-family homes, and how tiny-house cottage communities are permitted in other places.

McLaughlin asked Glendenning to alert PIC when the Housing Committee meetings are held so that PIC can publicize and invite the public to attend.

- **Jetport Flight Path**

No update.

- **Voter Education Committee**

McLaughlin said that four seats are opening on the Peaks Island Council. Two candidates have taken out papers to run. Nominating papers must be returned by August 28th. Write-in candidates can register with the city by September 8th. If there is not a full slate of councilors elected, then PIC will use the appointment process that has been used in the past to begin 2024 with a full roster of councilors.

The Voter Education Committee will set up candidate forums for Peaks Island ballot races – mayor, schoolboard at-large seat, Peaks Island Council.

McLaughlin said the Portland Democrats asked for a contribution to fund their mayoral forum, but McLaughlin recommended that PIC not support them. Other councilors agreed.

- **Communication and outreach committee**

No update.

- **Executive Committee**

Somers said the city has approved funding for two new toilets on the island. The City identified possible sites for the toilets as: Trott Littlejohn Park, the trailhead to Battery Steele, the CMP property near Centennial Beach, the ballfield. The only site that will proceed this year is at Trott Littlejohn Park. The trailhead to Battery Steele will not move forward because Peaks Island Land Preserve objected to installing a toilet there and the city did not want to enter a legal battle over installing the toilet. The second toilet that the city purchased will be installed

on the mainland. In order for a second toilet to be installed on Peaks Island next year, the city must put the request for funding an additional restroom in the FY2025 budget.

The Peaks Island assessment report will be presented by report author, Steve Mohler. The report is available at the library and on the PIC Google drive.

McLaughlin said that at the September meeting PIC would invite the public to submit ideas for Peaks Island capital improvement projects.

NEW BUSINESS

McLaughlin brought forward two motions on behalf of the Housing and Zoning Committee.

McLaughlin made a motion to request Home Start redesign of 18 Central Avenue project into three units with a single 1-bedroom, a single 2-bedroom, and a single 3-bedroom unit. (NOTE – current project plans include two 2-bedroom units and one 3-bedroom unit.)

Somers asked if this motion is going to create a problem for Home Start seeking a variance on the property.

Markov-Riss said that although there is a need for 1-bedroom units, there are rental requirements of larger apartments to make the project financially viable for Home Start. Markov-Riss said she does not think PIC should stand in the way of Home Start at this point.

McLaughlin said that this proposal to change the project comes too late for Home Start to accommodate.

Mohler said that the project fulfills a need for rental housing on the island as it stands and requiring a 1-bedroom unit at this point is not necessary.

Public comment:

Betsey Remage-Healey, Home Start board member, said that the original design was four units which included a 1-bedroom unit. The city would not allow a 4-unit building. Financial viability of the project requires the larger units to make the rents pay the cost of the property, cost of operation, cost of construction.

Randy Schaeffer, Home Start board member, said that Home Start is raising \$125,000 in community donations to support the project. If more money could be raised, the rents could go lower.

AM said they are in favor of the project as it stands to avoid any additional delays.

AM said that PIC should get clarity about housing needs. What size apartments are required? McLaughlin said that is a good idea for future discussions.

McLaughlin moved to retract his original motion and postpone to a date uncertain. Somers seconded. Motion to postpone passed unanimously.

McLaughlin moved that PIC request Home Start to appoint a renter or an affordable housing resident to their board. Mohler seconded it.

Somers made a motion to change the motion to read:

PIC request Home Start to consider appointing a renter or an affordable housing resident to their board. McLaughlin seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

Somers brought forward a motion:

Somers moved that PIC support Home Start's request for a zoning variance from the City in order to build a structure that occupies more of the lot than current zoning restrictions allow. McLaughlin seconded.

Remage-Healey noted that the new Home Start building is on the same footprint as the existing structure. When the existing structure was built in 1968, the city granted a zoning variance for that building so they should allow a zoning variance for the current building. Support from the PIC by email will help ensure the variance.

Schaeffer thanked the council for recognizing the need for affordable housing on the island.

Motion passed unanimously.

McLaughlin said that in trying to figure out how PIC should address the situation when up to four PIC councilors term out simultaneously, a bigger problem emerged. McLaughlin said the entire ordinance that sets up the Peaks Island Council needs to be reviewed and changes put forward. The ordinance does not reflect how the PIC actually operates. McLaughlin said a committee should undertake this task, with public workshops for public input. McLaughlin said he would be willing to chair or co-chair the committee.

McLaughlin made a motion to establish an Ordinance Review Committee. Markov-Riss seconded it.

AM asked if the city will be made aware of this effort. McLaughlin said they would alert the city.

Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 6:15 pm in the community room and on Zoom.

Somers made motion to adjourn. Mohler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjournment: 7:23 p.m.