

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

Draft Minutes September 13, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Rodríguez

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Austin Smith, Eric Kennedy, Nicole Albert, Michael Goldman, Chris Maher, Kevin Kraft, Dr. Christine Maher, James Neal

Meeting was called to order.

July 12 Minutes

The July 12, 2023 meeting minutes were not included in the agenda packet and were not approved at the September 13 meeting.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

The City of Portland is working with MaineDOT to submit an application to fund construction of the transportation, streetscape and utility improvements being designed for the Libbytown Safety and Accessibility Project. The application will be submitted to the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grants Program - a program of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - at the end of September. The Sustainability Office also collaborated with colleagues in Economic Development, DPW, Planning, Water Resources, the City of South Portland and other outside partners to draft a Letter of Intent for NOAA's Climate Resilience Challenge. We proposed to create a design manual for living shoreline projects in Portland Harbor that would protect existing infrastructure and shorelines from rising seas.

We have been supporting efforts by a team of Peaks Island residents to establish a drop-off site on the island. On July 18th, they launched a drop-off site at Trott-Littlejohn Park on Peaks Island. These volunteers have taken the responsibility to transport the collected food scraps to the Garbage to Garden facility on Veranda Street. On September 8th, we also added another public drop-off site at our Parks, Recreation, and Facilities building at 212 Canco Road. With increased participation, we will be able to add more drop-off sites. We also held our last Summer Landcare Lunch & Learn webinar, though the series has ended recordings of each informational webinar can be found on our website. On September 9, the Sustainability Office held our annual Fall Landcare Event to educate residents about Portland's Landcare Ordinance and encourage residents to adopt organic and sustainable landcare practices that protect the health of Portland's waterways, residents, pets, and natural ecosystems.

Staff continue to do extensive community outreach and are organizing Portland's upcoming Park(ing) Day on September 15 with help from Portland Parks, Recreation, and Facilities,

Portland Downtown, and others. We also look forward to hosting Drive Electric Maine 2023 again on Sunday, September 24th from 12PM - 4PM at Back Cove Trail Parking Lot in Portland.

Councilor Comment on Sustainability Update

Councilor Zarro shares excitement that Peaks is spearheading their own compost project and notes that they do hear from island communities that they do want to be more engaged in composting. Do we have the opportunity to replicate this on the other islands? *Troy mentions that it is challenging. We established an agreement with Peaks Island residents for the project and these residents are transporting the compost themselves with the help of the ferry, and it may be very challenging to take the same approach on the other islands.*

Councilor Rodriguez is wondering if there is an update on how much compost the drop sites are collecting. *Troy adds that it is going well and that we can do an update at the next meeting.* Councilor Rodriguez and Troy agree that many residents may have the capacity for backyard composting.

Councilor Zarro shares appreciation for the work the Sustainability Office staff are doing with the Sustainable Neighborhoods Program in Libbytown. Many residents are sharing their appreciation and motivation for community engagement with the help of this program

Presentation by Maine DEP Regarding the Coal Pile on Cassidy Point

Presented by Eric Kenney of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection

There have been complaints, since August 2022, regarding coal dust emissions from the coal pile that Sprague manages at Merrill Terminal on Cassidy Point. The Maine DEP did a site compliance investigation in April 2022, and although this is not a licensed facility with Maine DEP as it is not a large enough source to need an air emissions license, the Maine DEP asked Sprague to provide an updated best-management practices plan to control fugitive dust. After another site inspection and investigation at nearby residential buildings in complaint, the Maine DEP set up an air quality/fine particulate emissions monitor at one of the residential buildings since mid-June. Data collected since this point does not indicate any major health impact for those in nearby residential buildings and all measure at levels below ambient air quality standards for particulate emissions.

Councilor Comment on Presentation Regarding the Coal Pile on Cassidy Point

Councilor Zarro asks if the amount of coal dust is observed during unloading and loading times. *No, I don't think we have observed during the few times of year the unloading or loading of barges, but we have observed the loading of rails or trucks and we do have standards for all of those situations. The monitor would catch if there were spikes in observed particulate emissions. We have also asked Sprague to keep a log of these movement events. We have not seen a correlation between emissions and these movement events, but we have seen a correlation with early morning traffic and with the Canadian wildfire smoke events.* Do we know the radius of impact for the coal dust that could be carried? *Fine particles, like the 2.5 micrometer and smaller ones, can travel all over the world and for miles.* Where does the coal go, when it leaves our waterfront? *That is more of a question for Sprague, but there aren't many*

facilities in Maine that burn coal. The only industrial facilities that I am aware of that still have licenses to burn coal are Sappi in Westbrook, ND Paper in Rumford, and Dragon Products in Thomaston. How do we incentivize the option to transition to renewable energy when appropriate and possible? We primarily have incentives for residential homes. The industrial and electricity generation sectors have made huge decreases in GHG emissions.

Councilor Rodriguez shares immense gratitude for the update. Follows by clarifying that the monitoring happens 24/7 and asks if the plan is to continue monitoring indefinitely. *No, we would like to see the monitor continue to operate for at least two months, and we do have a limited amount of monitors. Ideally, we see a long stretch of dry conditions and favorable wind patterns.*

Consideration of a Bird Safe Ordinance

Presented by Dr. Christine Maher, Tory Moon, Kevin Kraft, Austin Smith

Public comment on this item was taken on July 12. The ordinance was since amended to apply to commercial buildings only.

Councilor Comment on Bird Safe Ordinance

Councilor Zarro thanked Troy, staff, and Christine Maher. We heard from the community, and we were able to ask questions, I have no lasting questions. Councilor Rodríguez agrees that the residential exception was the main concern from the last council meeting, and since it was addressed and since the ordinance still includes the major buildings in this issue, feels that it does not weaken the intent and long-term impact of this ordinance.

Councilor Zarro opens the floor for public comment, for the amendment portion of the ordinance.

Public Comment on Bird Safe Ordinance

Grace Nichols shares support for the “common-sense” amendment and support for the ordinance overall.

Jonathan Cohen asks if all residential buildings are exempted. Also asks if we are looking to do something that curbs the number of bird deaths that result from cats. *Later confirmed by Kevin Kraft that all residential buildings, regardless of size are exempt.*

Maggy Wolfe shares an appreciation for the Council continuing to work on this ordinance and support for this ordinance.

Motion to recommend to full Council

Councilor Zarro recommends a motion to move the discussion to a full Council. So moved by Councilor Rodríguez. Councilor Zarro seconds, and it will be moved to full Council.

Considering Adoption of a C-PACE Financing Program in Portland

Presented by Troy Moon, Michael Goldman, James Neal

During the Sustainability and Transportation Committee’s meeting in May, the members held a workshop with James Neal of Efficiency Maine to learn about Maine’s Commercial Property

Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program, which was authorized by statute in 2020. C-PACE programs work by using a municipality's ability to place a lien on a property to catalyze private investment in energy efficiency and clean energy projects. This program is similar to those established in more than 30 states that have led to more than \$4 billion of investment in clean energy and energy efficiency projects and since our workshop in May, several Maine communities have adopted the C-PACE program including Westbrook, Cumberland, and Augusta.

Public Comment on Considering Adoption of a C-PACE Financing Program in Portland

Aemon Dundon shares support for this ordinance and notes that this is a great example of the work this committee can do to incentivize the behavior we want to see in the One Climate Future plan or Maine Won't Wait.

Suzy Kist endorses the adoption of the C-PACE program as it is a critical step on the way to reducing emissions from buildings to reach our climate goals.

Maggy Wolfe also shares support for C-PACE adoption and would like to see further measures and policies to help reduce local carbon emissions.

Grace Nichols echoes the sentiment of the previous two speakers.

Motion to recommend to full Council

Councilor Zarro recommends a motion to move the discussion to a full Council. So moved by Councilor Rodríguez. Councilor Zarro seconds, and it will be moved to full Council.

Proposed Changes to Chapter 28, Parking Regulations

Presented by John Peverada and Nicole Albert

These proposed changes include updating the definition of a "crosswalk", adding a definition for "electric vehicles", and updating the definition of "prolonged parking". These changes also include the addition of new codes to prohibit parking in a bike lane, for non-EVs parking in front of charging stations, and for cumulative parking duration for RVs and larger vehicles. We also look to impose a fine for those who tamper with or attempt to remove an immobilization device attached to a vehicle. We also look to remove 31 metered spaces that are underperforming. By making it a two-hour parking space, it will help increase local parking space.

Public Comment on Proposed Changes to Chapter 28, Parking Regulations

Winston Lumpkins is excited to see this change for the prohibition of parking in bike lanes and the attention on parking.

Motion to recommend to full Council

Councilor Zarro recommends a motion to move the discussion to a full Council. So moved by Councilor Rodríguez. Councilor Zarro seconds, and it will be moved to full Council.

Motion to Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Zarro. Second by Councilor Rodríguez. Find a new date for the October committee meeting. All adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned