



Peaks Island Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 6:15 p.m.

Hybrid ZOOM/in-person meeting in the Community Center

**NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting
February 28, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: 6:24 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Peter McLaughlin, Jess Burton, Fred Somers, Jerzy Sylvester, Garry Fox, Sheilagh Reiser

Absent: Scott Mohler

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 20 in person, 16 on zoom

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Somers made the motion to accept the December 20, 2023 meeting minutes. Sylvester seconded. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

McLaughlin announced that Scott Mohler is absent because Baby Sofia Mohler has been born. Yay!!!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Patnaude said that the current balance as of January 24, 2024 is \$7,468.90. Expenditures during November included \$200.00 for recording meeting minutes in November and December.

Somers made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

- **Parking**

No update.

- **Golf Cart**

No update.

- **Ferry Service**

Ferry delivery will be in August 2024.

- **Anti-racism Committee – update**

No update.

- **Environmental and Sustainability**

PEAT and Friends of Trott Littlejohn Park and the city's Deputy Director of Parks will be meeting February 1, 2024 at 1:00pm to discuss possible future uses of the Peaks Island ball field.

- **Housing – ReCode Zoning survey**

ReCode recommendations have been sent to the City's ReCode Portland Committee.

The City adopted amendments to the Land Use Code in response to LD2003, an act aimed at creating new opportunities for housing. The memo outlining the amendments is available to read on the [PIC drive](#).

The PIC ReCode committee will meet with City Planning Board next Friday.

- **Jetport Flight Path**

No update.

- **Voter Education Committee**

No update.

- **Communication and outreach committee**

No update.

- **Ordinance Review Committee**

No update.

- **Executive Committee**

CIP submission – Somers said the PIC submitted a letter to City Manager, Danielle West, detailing island needs for the city's Capital Improvement Plan (five-year plan) including sidewalks, roads, public restroom capacity, EV charging station, and park improvements. The committee will follow up with the City Manager.

Ryefield Street - McLaughlin said that the city was notified that the Ryefield Street issue was a concern of many islanders. City responded and included a memo from the city's lawyers. Community members familiar with the situation said that there was not any new information provided by the city. McLaughlin said that the city made it clear that they are not going to investigate the situation any further. A petition was submitted to Mayor Dion and city councilors with over 300 signatures. AM said the city has stopped plowing the road at the end of Ryefield Street which is putting homes at the end of the street at fire risk.

Storm Damage - Somers attended a meeting with Maine Island Coalition in Augusta. Islands reported on storm damage and met with Maine agency and State representatives, including our representative, Charles Skold.

Individuals are asked to submit their storm damage using this form:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/9d30851ba5e448fbb099592ed09e31cc>

Businesses are asked to submit their storm damage using this form:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/f72826c1e40d4420ad89934b553c0e82>

PIC annual work calendar – McLaughlin reviewed the calendar of meetings for the PIC during 2024.

Orientation for new councilors – Patenaude will provide an orientation for the new councilors.

OLD BUSINESS

FY 2025 budget process (public comment)

McLaughlin outlined the new criteria for applying to the PIC for a budget allocation.

1st criteria: The degree to which the application addresses the transportation needs of the community. The Council will also give weight to proposals that facilitate the provision of needed or desired city services (e.g., composting project).

2nd criteria: The degree to which the entire community is impacted.

3rd criteria: The impact on the overall health of the applying entity if PIC does not fund the proposal.

Somers said that the transportation items in the budget are:

- Needs-based tickets
- School-age tickets
- Taxi

After funding these items, there will be about \$7,500 left in funds for other budget allocations.

Somers recommended that this year's budget include purchase and subscription for the Webcam on Welch Street. Somers said it is roughly \$4,500 to purchase the webcam and \$2,500/year for a subscription.

McLaughlin noted that the webcam was recommended by the city's planning department, and if it goes into the budget they would like the city to assume the yearly cost of maintaining it.

Fox asked for more information about the webcam. Patnaude said it would look down Welch Street so that people could see if there was a car ferry line and it would also look down Island Avenue.

AM said that with the new car ferry holding more cars, the car ferry line will be even longer.

AM said the taxi should always have to participate in the budget allocation process like all island organizations.

AM said they do not support the webcam.

NEW BUSINESS

• Storm recovery update (public comment)

Patnaude gave an update about damage to Peaks Island in the two recent storms. The Cumberland County assessors are helping Portland with their FEMA applications. The FEMA applications have been submitted and the FEMA inspection team is coming out on Friday.

Patnaude applied for 1.7 miles of the back shore road to be repaved. Ocean Spray Road has been lost and Picnic Point Road has been lost. The seawall has also been destroyed.

The back shore road has been temporarily repaired and can be driven on. It will eventually be repaved, that project will take a few weeks.

AM asked if Patnaude can ask FEMA about other measures that can be taken to protect the back shore.

Patnaude said FEMA will only fund us to repair the island to the state it was in before the storm. They will not fund improvements. FEMA will only pay 75% of reconstruction costs, the city will pay 10%, and the state will pay 15%.

AM asked where EPA falls within the process. Patnaude said the project will have to get permits and there is a possibility that the work could be rejected but if we are replacing previously existing structures it should be OK.

McLaughlin added that improvements to protect the backshore will be considered but not during this FEMA process. That will be a separate, although connected, discussion.

AM asked about Picnic Point. Patnaude said that a temporary road will be installed so that the houses at Picnic Point will be accessible. Ocean Spray Road will be repaired later because the road provides access to summer cottages, and no one is living there now.

McLaughlin introduced another FEMA grant application with a pending deadline. The Maine Islands Collaborative Resilience Building Project is putting together a FEMA BRIC grant application to fund studies for improvements to island infrastructure so that islands will be more resilient against future storms. The City of Portland will not be part of the application, only 16 year-round islands are part of the grant. This means the BRIC grant application will not interfere with the FEMA application that the city is applying for. The deadline for applying for the BRIC grant is Friday.

McLaughlin moved that the PIC provide a letter of support for the Maine Islands Collaborative Resilience Building Project grant. Somers seconded.

Reiser asked if the Friday deadline is because of the storm. McLaughlin said no.

AM said they support PIC joining the Maine Islands Collaborative grant application.

Motion passed unanimously.

Timmi Sellers said that PEAT is interested in bringing a variety of experts out to the island to discuss how we will manage our “new normal.” PEAT asks Peaks Island Council to co-sponsor the meeting and help promote it to the community.

McLaughlin moved that the PIC committee co-sponsor the PEAT forum. Sylvester seconded.

Burton asked if the recommendations from Mohr and Seredin recommendations about climate change. Sellers said yes.

Motion passed unanimously.

● Review of PIC committees (public comment)

McLaughlin reviewed sections of the by-laws that discuss committees.

McLaughlin said PIC needs to identify a councilor who can join the Housing and Zoning Committee and a councilor who can join the Parking Committee. McLaughlin said there are some committees that have not met in a long time and PIC should consider sunseting those committees.

Burton asked why some committees had to be phased out. Somers said that as ad-hoc committees, they should only exist for a finite time. Burton does not support removal of the Anti-Racism committee.

AM said that PIC should add a paper roads committee.

AM said that PIC should get rid of the Golf Cart committee and the Anti-Racism committee. They also support the creation of a paper roads committee.

Reiser asked about the Short-term Rentals Committee. McLaughlin said that is another issue that has a lot of community interest.

McLaughlin moved to sunset (for now) the Golf Cart Committee and create a Short-Term Rental Committee chaired by Jerzey Sylvester and create a Paper Roads Committee chaired by Garry Fox. McLaughlin further moved to confirm Jess Burton as the chair of the Anti-Racism Committee. Seconded by Sylvester.

Motion passed unanimously.

● Peaks Island assessment next steps (public comment)

Somers said that he and Burton met with Seredin and Mohr to follow up on next steps of their Peaks Island assessment. They plan to conduct a community survey. They plan to hold a community workshop in the spring. Funding has been secured for both steps. Further update at next meeting.

AM noted that the Seredin and Mohr assessment has maps with paper roads on it that shows that Ryefield and Bluff are both paper roads. Addressing that issue should be part of next steps.

- **Homestart Island Fellow letter of support (public comment)**

Homestart is submitting an application for an Island Institute fellow. Homestart has asked PIC to provide a letter of support.

Sylvester made a motion to submit a letter of support for an Island Institute fellow on Homestart's behalf. McLaughlin seconded.

AM asked if the fellow could also help at the school.

AM asked if the fellow could also help with the Housing and Zoning Committee.

Betsey Remage-Healey (via Zoom) said that Homestart looks forward to collaborating with the PIC Housing and Zoning Committee.

Motion passed unanimously. McLaughlin said he would write the letter.

PUBLIC COMMENT

AM said that since a lot of the short-term rentals on Peaks only have seasonal water, the issue should be handled differently than it would be on the mainland.

AM asked if PIC could give an official congratulations to the public works department to thank them for all the work they have done in the past week.

AM asked for signs that will direct people to the bathroom at Trott Littlejohn Park. McLaughlin said that Patnaude has committed to installing signs and he will follow up before summer.

AM asked that PIC alert islanders about when PIC meets with city councilors so that islanders can propose concerns for discussion with the city. McLaughlin said he will try to let people know when they are meeting. It is not a predictable schedule. He added that they will be meeting in the next few weeks.

AM thanked McLaughlin for sending a letter to the city about the paper roads issue. They have a petition that 300 people have signed, and the city is now aware of the issue. There will be people filing a Statement of Interest and that will mean there is more time to look at the issue before the road is vacated. AM asked PIC to not spread the word that the Ryefield paper road issue is a "done deal."

AM asked if there has been any recognition of Will Crosby for his work on island-wide composting. McLaughlin said yes.

AM asked if there has been any movement towards creating a year-round no-parking zone in front of Down Front. McLaughlin said that the Parking Committee will look into that.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 6:15 pm in the community room and on Zoom.

Fox made motion to adjourn. Sylvester seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjournment: 8:26 p.m.