



Peaks Island Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 6:15 p.m.

Hybrid ZOOM/in-person meeting in the Community Center

NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting
April 24, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: 6:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Peter McLaughlin, Scott Mohler, Garry Fox, Shelagh Reiser, Jerzy Sylvester

Absent: Jess Burton, Fred Somers

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 6 in person, ? on zoom

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Fox made the motion to accept the February 28, 2024 meeting minutes. Mohler seconded. Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Patnaude said that the compost project received \$3,500, admin fees in March were \$300, and \$109.95 was used to buy car ferry tickets for the health center. The current balance as of March 24, 2024 is \$3,293.45.

Mohler made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Fox seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

• Executive Committee –

FY2025 Budget - City has approved PIC \$45,00 budget for FY2025.

Emergency planning for Peaks Island – Discussions about emergency planning for Peaks Island have stalled for about 18 months. McLaughlin reached out to Caity Hager, Portland Emergency Management Coordinator, who said that other planning took priority. But there is a plan to re-start the discussion in about a year. McLaughlin said that islanders continue to be concerned about the number of fire hydrants on Peaks Island, and the area of Peaks Island that has no fire hydrant coverage.

FEMA – Patnaude said that the Governor has officially declared the storms on January 10th and January 13th as a disaster. The President has signed off on that declaration. FEMA will now establish a disaster relief center inside Cumberland County. They will review both public property and private property affected by the storms. Then FEMA will coordinate with the city to make repairs. This is a long process. No further details at this time.

McLaughlin said that FEMA sent an email to PIC about how property owners can apply for FEMA disaster relief funds. He will post that information on the PIC website and NextDoor.

- **Anti-racism Committee**

No update.

- **Environmental and Sustainability**

McLaughlin said that the City has launched a new program called Electrify Everything open to all residents of the City. Eligible homeowners and renters can get up to \$250 rebate for certain energy efficiency and weatherization projects. Find out more at portlandmaine.gov/Electrify to learn about additional federal, state, and local rebates and incentives. Questions? Contact sustainabilityoffice@portlandmaine.gov.

- **Ferry Service**

No update.

- **Housing – ReCode Zoning survey**

Laura Glendening said the Housing and Zoning Committee would like another PIC person to join the ReCode Zoning meetings on Thursdays. The committee is hoping that the Island Institute fellow will help with community housing models. The committee is waiting for the city to issue the next draft of the ReCode plan.

- **Island Assessment** – McLaughlin said that the survey is closed and the committee is planning for a springtime workshop.

- **Jetport Flight Path**

No update.

- **Ordinance Review Committee**

City Manager's office said they are going to take PIC's recommendations forward to the City's Legislative and Nominating Committee who will bring it to the full City Council. The city lawyer has reviewed it and made the comment that appointments for PIC councilors who are filling a vacancy should go through the Legislative and Nominating Committee. Currently, appointments just go through PIC. McLaughlin has replied to the city lawyer that getting a PIC councilor appointee through the city's committee process would take too long and would leave PIC without enough councilors for months.

- **Paper Roads** – Fox reported that he spoke with John Giles, Portland's GIS manager, who provided maps of paper roads. Fox said there are more than paper roads to consider when discussing public access. There are also rights of way and other ways that the public uses land for access. The Paper Roads committee members are developing a set of questions at their upcoming meeting which they will ask Giles.

- **Parking**

No update.

- **Short Term Rental**

McLaughlin reported that there are 89 active short-term rentals on Peaks Island that are currently registered with the city. There may be more. There are almost no restrictions on short-term rentals on Peaks Island, although there are in the city of Portland. The only restriction on Peaks Island is that you can't create a STR in an ADU. The mainland limits non-owner occupied STRs to 300. Peaks Island only has 4 non-owner occupied STR's. The city has only required registration of STRs since 2018.

Reiser asked if the committee knows how many of the STRs on the island could be inhabited year-round, i.e. how many STRs have removed year-round housing from the market? Reiser also asked if the

committee has considered specifying the percentage of STRs versus year-round residential homes in order to preserve the character and viability of the community? McLaughlin said these are the kind of questions the committee is considering.

OLD BUSINESS

Review status of standing committees

McLaughlin asked if one of the councilors would be willing to join the Housing and Zoning Committee. Sylvester said he would join.

McLaughlin made a motion to discontinue the Ordinance Review Committee. Mohler seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

• Review of Budget Guidelines

McLaughlin asked if any councilors had recommendations to the budget process for next year.

McLaughlin reviewed existing criteria:

- 1) Degree to which the proposal meets the transportation needs of the community, or the degree to which the proposal meets desired or needed city services.
- 2) Degree to which the entire community is impacted, i.e. a proposal that benefits hundreds of people in the community will be scored higher than a proposal that benefits one or two dozen people.
- 3) Impact on the overall health of the applying nonprofit if PIC does not fund the proposal, i.e. if a nonprofit is in danger of closing or reducing important services if PIC does not fund or partially funds a proposal will get a higher score.

Patnaude reminded PIC councilors that the money was originally supposed to be dedicated to transportation needs. Over the years, PIC has appropriated more money to other charitable organizations.

Reiser observed that this year some arts-based organizations didn't get funded. Reiser proposed that the criteria could say that PIC could fund any organization at their discretion using remaining funds after transportation needs are met.

Sylvester said outside of transportation funding, PIC should fund organizations or programs that provide social infrastructure to the island.

Mohler said that discouraging organizations from applying because they only serve a few dozen people may prevent organizations from growing.

McLaughlin said that organizations like the food pantry and needs-based tickets only serve a small percentage of the community, but they are critical for those people.

Fox said the taxi is the same – not everyone uses it, but it is there for everyone when they need it.

McLaughlin asked for public comment on this discussion.

AM said with fares going up, PIC should allot more money to needs-based tickets. AM encouraged public to attend the CBL workshop on increasing boat fares.

AM said that solutions to the housing crisis on Peaks Island should be funded by PIC.

AM said that PIC should demand city services in addition to asking for \$45K budget. AM also said that organizations applying for a budget allocation should disclose where else they get funding from. AM also said that perhaps the taxi could take over the school bus runs and get reimbursed by the city – to reduce the school budget and to increase funding for the taxi. McLaughlin said that PIC and Patnaude advocate for island services all the time, including submitting Peaks Island projects to the annual Capital Improvement Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

AM asked how much of the CIP budget in the last 10 years has been spent on Peaks Island compared to all the taxes that had been collected from Peaks Island? AM also asked if an economic impact study had been done recently. McLaughlin said he didn't know when an economic impact study had been done and he didn't know how much money had been spent on Peaks Island capital improvement projects in the last 10 years.

AM asked why PIC is addressing short-term rentals? McLaughlin said that members of the community have been asking PIC to address short-term rentals as a problem that affects housing availability on Peaks Island and that changes the character of the community. McLaughlin said PIC has created a committee that does not have an specific agenda, but is willing to discuss the issue based on community request.

AM asked if the lottery for the Ocean Gateway parking spots has to be at the end of April? McLaughlin said that PIC does not organize the lottery. Patnaude said the lottery is run by the City's parking division and it will be at the end of April or the beginning of May.

AM said PIC should involve the other islands in discussions about parking and STRs to increase our voice.

AM said the city should not view Peaks Island as just another neighborhood because we are a tourist destination with so much more foot traffic than any other neighborhood in the city, and so many more needs due to the number of people who come to Peaks Island.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 6:15 pm in the community room and on Zoom.

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

Meeting Adjournment: 7:28 p.m.