

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

Approved Minutes October 19, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Rodríguez, Councilor Pelletier
Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Katie Tims

Meeting was called to order.

September 13 Minutes

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

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

On September 29th, we said goodbye to our Resilience Corp Fellow, Emma Perry. She was instrumental in the success of our Electrify Bikes! Program, organizing summer-long landcare events and webinars, and helping the office with everything in between. We have submitted an application to GPCOG for a new Fellow.

We were awarded a Community Resilience Partnership grant from the latest round of Community Action Grant funding proposals. More information provided in the meeting.

On October 12th and 13th, the Portland Sustainability Office hosted the New England Municipal Sustainability (NEMS) Network fall meeting. It was a great opportunity to collaborate, in person, with other municipal sustainability professionals and support each other in this work.

The City and a consultant, VHB, are looking at the possibility of converting State St. and High St. from one way to two way traffic. The project team had a kickoff meeting last month, and VHB has started doing an existing conditions evaluation. We expect more information on that next month, with fine-tuning of the alternatives analysis to follow. Our goal is to complete this analysis by the end of the winter.

On October 14th, Troy Moon presented at the Islesboro Energy Conference. The conference theme was "Sustainability that Works. Person to Person. A Step at a Time" and brought Islesboro residents and off-islanders together to explore and discuss practical solutions as Maine communities face the challenges of climate change.

We hosted our annual Drive Electric Maine event on Sunday, September 24th. We had many EV owners participate and it was exciting to engage those interested in test driving or learning about new models and the incentives available for them.

Outreach events include Parking Day, Educational tours of Ocean Ave Solar Array for King Middle School students, and Troy Moon was a panelist at the 8th Annual Interdisciplinary Preventive Medicine Faculty Development Conference hosted at Maine Medical Center, Internal Open House for City Staff, and Coffee and Climate focused on climate communications.

Katie and Emma spent time distributing door hangers to spread awareness of the Community Composting Program. We are currently targeting the Back Cove neighborhood, due to the recently-opened drop site, and look forward to hitting more neighborhoods where drop-site participation could be elevated.

Informational presentation regarding a proposal to rename Marginal Way in honor of Senator George Mitchell

Presented by Harold Pachios

Background on the achievements and legacy of Senator George Mitchell. His commitment to this state, in his public service, being the basis for proposing the renaming.

Councilor Comment on Informational presentation regarding a proposal to rename Marginal Way in honor of Senator George Mitchell

Councilor Zarro asks about the procedure that would take place if the Committee decides to move forward. *There would need to be approval of the full council and a public meeting. Staff would need to inventory how many addresses would need to be changed due to the name change and they would be included in the public outreach process. Public Works, Maine DOT, and Emergency Management would need to be involved.*

Councilor Rodriguez says it would be good to get recommendations for if the decision was to rename a park or other location instead of Marginal Way.

Councilor Pelletier requests more public engagement if the committee moves forward with the request.

Annual Report for Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure

Presented by Erin Ferrell

Energy benchmarking is the process of measuring a building's energy and water use over time. On November 7, 2016, the City of Portland adopted an energy benchmarking ordinance that requires covered properties to annually report water and energy usage. Jurisdictions all over the country have implemented energy benchmarking and transparency policies as foundational tools to support building decarbonization. Energy Benchmarking ordinances encourage the efficient use of energy and water and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By taking inventory of energy usage each year and comparing buildings of similar size and use, owners can identify underperforming areas that can be improved.

The Sustainability Office received 163 Energy and Water Use Benchmarking Reports for calendar year 2022. There were 39 municipal buildings and 125 commercial/residential buildings reported. Of the commercial/residential buildings, 108 reported enough energy and water data to designate Building Energy Use Intensity (EUIs) for the buildings. No EUI can result from missing data, having gaps in the dates data is entered, or if the building is part of a larger campus that shares meters between buildings. Data quality improved drastically during the 2022 reporting period. Only 3 reports were missing crucial data required by the ordinance. This is compared to roughly 40 reports during the 2021 reporting period.

Looking to the Future

- *Multi-tenant buildings:* As the ordinance states, multi-tenant buildings 20,000 square feet or more are required to report energy and water use metrics once the utility is able to provide whole-building energy usage data in a convenient online format. Central Maine Power is currently working on this platform, with hopes to launch in 2024. The

Sustainability Office anticipates multi-tenant buildings will be required to report starting in 2025.

- *Contact with building owners:* There are around 600 buildings covered under the ordinance in the City of Portland. The Office has had difficulty reaching the building owners of these buildings as Assessor's Office information is the basis for benchmarking contact. In December 2022, the Office requested contact information for building owners and those who would be responsible for completing the reporting required. The Office currently has contact information for 360 covered buildings (62%).

Councilor Comment on Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Report

Councilor Pelletier asks if there are workarounds to try and get in touch with the correct person associated with the building. *Our notices have to go to the address listed in the assessors database, but we have been requesting contact information through those notices and building our contact base.*

Councilor Rodriguez asked a clarifying question about the number of covered buildings under the ordinance. *We know the number of buildings that need to report, but we do not know the number of buildings that are single-tenant and currently required. We have an estimate and are narrowing in on the accurate number.*

Councilor Zarro asked when CMP anticipates releasing the data access platform. *We keep seeing test platforms, but we hope to see the final product come out in 2024.*

Informational presentation regarding the Community Resilience Grant awarded by the Governor's Office for Policy, Innovation, and the Future.

Presented by Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, and Katie Tims

Our Office was awarded \$45,200 in Round 3 of the Community Action Grants administered by the Governor's Office for Policy, Innovation, and the Future through the Community Resilience Partnership. Our proposal includes a strategy for a robust energy efficiency campaign to connect residents and commercial building owners with resources that can be used to improve energy efficiency, electrify, and weatherize buildings in Portland which currently account for more than 60% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. Outreach to low income and marginalized communities will be a priority with program materials translated into the six most commonly spoken languages other than English and City funded energy efficiency incentives for low and moderate income residents.

We will build on our successful Electrify Everything! model to match participants with technical information, rebates, and financing from program partners (including Efficiency Maine) as well as information about Federal tax deductions for home electrification. We will use \$75,000 appropriated by the Portland City Council to provide low and middle income residents with rebates for items such as induction cooktops to replace gas stoves, energy conservation tools such as clothes drying racks, and "do it yourself" weatherization kits. To ensure our programs reach underserved members of the community including low income residents, BIPOC, and immigrants we will translate program materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, and French. We will use paid advertising in publications read by the immigrant community, and work with local organizations that support immigrant communities to share information about our program with their constituents.

We will also be updating our community-wide greenhouse gas inventory to provide the community with current information about greenhouse gas emissions in Portland. To ensure we

are able to keep our inventory current moving forward the consultant will provide staff in the Sustainability Office with professional training so we can do future inventories internally.

Councilor Comment on Community Resilience Grant presentation

Broad Councilor support for the update on the grant, and other Sustainability Office updates.

Status update regarding the City of Portland's solar consortium projects

The City collaborated with other organizations as part of a buying club for solar credits, the original program included 23 Solar projects and seven hydro projects around the CMP service territory. Since then 6 hydro projects and 8 solar projects have become operational. There are 7 more solar projects in process, completion expected by mid-2024. Other projects are facing challenges and may not reach completion.

We anticipate saving approximately \$1,134,600 annually if all of the online and in progress projects are successfully completed. Anticipated value of RECs generated annually upon program completion: \$392,000.

Councilor Comment on Portland's solar consortium projects

Do the projects that may fail, are there other projects in the pipeline? *We do keep looking and throughout the project, others have failed but we were able to replace them.*

Can you talk more about the Renewable Energy Credits? *For all the electricity we generate we also retain RECs which can be retired or sold. Upon program completion, we could sell the RECs and invest that money into other clean energy projects.*

Motion to Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Zarro. Second by Councilor Rodríguez. Potentials schedule another date before 2024. All adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned