

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Standing Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2), Chair
Councilor Belinda Ray (D1)
Councilor Jill Duson (D3)

Agenda
June 17, 2020
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

1. Meeting Information

This meeting will be held as a Zoom webinar. When: Jun 17, 2020 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Topic: Sustainability and Transportation Committee -- Remote Meeting Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81440864421?pwd=VTBMWkR2TnBvdWE2N2pjNmM1MWxhdz09>
Password: 425828 Or iPhone one-tap : US: +13017158592,,81440864421#,1#,425828# or +13126266799,,81440864421#,1#,425828# Or Telephone: Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833 Webinar ID: 814 4086 4421 Password: 425828 International numbers available:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81440864421?pwd=VTBMWkR2TnBvdWE2N2pjNmM1MWxhdz09>

2. Review and approve minutes from May 20, 2020

a. Minutes

3. Sustainability Program Updates

a. June Updates

4. Presentation and Discussion

a. Report from Maine DEP and Maine CDC on Air Quality Monitoring.

Discussion only -- no public comment will be taken

b. Update on barriers for streets closed to support local business

Discussion only - no public comment on this item.

5. Other Business

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Standing Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Spencer Thibodeau (D2)
Chair Councilor Belinda Ray (D1)
Councilor Jill Duson (At large)

Draft Minutes May 20, 2020

Members Present: Councilor Thibodeau, Councilor Ray, Councilor Duson

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Lena Geraghty, Nell Donaldson, Bruce Hyman, Bill Needelman, John Peverada, Jennifer Thompson, Jeff Tarling

Meeting called to order at 5:34.

April Minutes

April meeting minutes approved by Councilor Ray and seconded by Council Duson. Passed unanimously, 3-0.

Sustainability updates

Straw ordinance went into effect on April 1, 2020. Food service establishments can only be provided by request. Haven't started enforcement due to the current pandemic situation but will begin education soon.

Have 30 reports for energy benchmarking. Will begin to do more outreach to others to encourage responses.

One issue around pesticide ordinance last month which occurred without proper signage. Educational materials went out to applicators to remind them of the pesticide ordinance.

Social consortium projects are beginning to be signed. The first credits should begin in the next few months. This will result in substantial savings for the City's electric bill.

No legislative updates.

Planned One Climate Future meetings were moved online. Met with staff from the Governor's Office of Innovation and the Future to discuss the plan and recommendations. The OCF plan is being presented to city staff for feedback.

Earth Day events in person were cancelled so produced videos to celebrate and share how organizations and people in Portland were participating.

Councilor Ray took the OCF survey #3. It's long but divided into 4 parts so you can do the parts you're interested in.

550 people have taken OCF survey #3 so far.

Councilor Thibodeau asked about the plan to present OCF to the Sustainability and Transportation committee. Troy said it could be presented in July with final adoption by the Council in the Fall.

Councilor Thibodeau got an email from an 8th grader at Waynflete about garbage carts, like the current recycling carts, so he would like to make sure that's back on the agenda.

Portland Transportation Center

Commissioner Bruce Van Note from MaineDOT presented updates on the Portland Transportation Center. Lot of energy and excitement about what to do with the PTC during his time at MaineDOT. Individual stakeholders play an important role in shaping the future of the PTC, but there are a lot of different opinions about how to move forward. MaineDOT is modality agnostic. They're interested in what works. The ground is in version 2.0 of PTC planning. There wasn't a clear outcome from the first round of the study. Commissioner began with the idea that collocation was the best option but now he's not sure. The group is still looking to wrap up the process this summer. They would like to solicit comments from stakeholders and the public. They are looking at ways to augment the existing facilities or how to separate facilities beneficially for all. Transit may look different in a post-covid-19 work but this conversation will need to continue so they are still working on the study.

Paul Godfrey from HNTB is a PTC project manager. Paul presented study versions 1.0 and 2.0 findings.

Version 1.0: four alternatives at three locations (existing location on Thompsons Point, new location along Fore River Parkway, new location along St. John Street). Conducted customer surveys and gathered stakeholder input (NNEPRA, MaineDOT, Mercy, Maine Medical, METRO, etc.). Determined potential affect to private landowners. No conclusive answer. Need for parking in all alternatives. Existing PTC is optimal for bus but could be improved for rail. Alternate locations address rail needs, somewhat closer to downtown, but only limited bike/ped benefits. All alternate locations needed significant capital investment and support from stakeholders and private property owners. Determined other location to also be evaluated and removed some original alternate locations. December 2019 concluded that additional evaluation needed to be done.

Version 2.0: Narrowed down to three locations (existing location with combined bus/rail but potentially with separate stations, rail only location on St. John Street, rail only location at Union Station on Congress and St. John Street).

Next steps are updated alternatives analysis June 2020 and draft/final report summer 2020.

Councilor Ray appreciated the update. She's glad about the engagement with Portland staff members. Are both locations around St. John Street on the main rail line? Paul says yes.

Councilor Duson thought the update was thorough. Is there an option to collocate with Greyhound if Concord Coach Lines wants to remain where it is? Paul says that is being considered now but hasn't been determined.

Council Thibodeau wonders about analysis of people who start on one service and then transfer to another. Paul says about 10% of survey customers would use both bus and rail. They are trying to understand how that multimodal use would compare to other benefits from alternatives.

Councilor Thibodeau wants to know about the two rail only sites. Why wouldn't bringing both services to the southern rail only location? Paul says that the parking requirements would require much more parking. It's also farther off of 295 and would need street network improvements for busses. Concord Coach Lines is settled in their current space so it would take a lot to convince them to move.

Councilor Ray feels like being on the main rail line is imperative because of the time savings it offers. Collocation of bus and rail would be nice but it's not imperative. Understands what Commissioner Van Note was saying about the current comfort level with transit but thinks that will change and transit can be retooled to make social distancing possible. The pandemic has shown how much a reduction in the use of vehicles can impact our environment. The pandemic has also been a significant disruptor to the system so it might make it a good time to change.

Councilor Duson wonders about transfer from north to south station in Boston to make it to Portland. She is thoughtful about the fact the Greyhound serves more locations north in Maine, compared to Concord Coach Lines, so maybe it makes sense to collocate the train with Greyhound instead.

Councilor Thibodeau thinks that moving to the main rail line is an imperative goal. The bus station and train station don't need to be in the same place. This time does present an interesting opportunity to think about how we're commuting. Portland wants to be a partner in this work so would like to continue the conversation. Wherever this plan goes, development will follow it.

Draft Commercial Street Operations and Master Plan Recommendation

Bruce Hyman and Bill Needelman presented Commercial Street Operations and Master Plan updates.

Themes from outreach: Peak season travel times are unacceptable. Pace, location, and scale of development is a concern. Address multimodal access and safety. Prioritize the working waterfront.

Currently at the draft recommendation stage with immediate, short and longer term recommendations, organized thematically (thriving waterfront, smart city, great street).

Next steps are to complete the final report and implement some short-term actions (traffic signal enhancements, proposed policy/regulation changes).

Councilor Dusen appreciates the prioritization of the working waterfront while mixing in the other uses. She wondered about how sea level rise issues are being factored into the plan. Bill says that coastal resiliency and sea level rise didn't factor into this plan and recommendation. None of these recommendations will be affected more than other assets on Commercial Street.

Councilor Ray is glad to hear that the peninsula loop reboot is being considered in the Commercial Street plan. She isn't in favor of seeing improving traffic flow as a goal. She appreciates the prioritization of the working waterfront. She is interested in robust transit in this area which means discouraging single-occupancy vehicles. In terms of smart cities, protected bike lanes are great places for robot deliveries. She is interested in reducing the crosswalk pilot. Looking at restricting delivery areas and times makes sense.

Councilor Thibodeau is supportive of this work and plan. He is pro-roundabout. Moving tour buses closer to the queuing lanes last year worked out well. Reduction in crosswalks makes sense when there are crosswalks on both sides of the street. More organization of working waterfront trucks would be beneficial.

Air Quality Monitoring

Troy gave a quick update on the air quality monitoring on the waterfront. Maine DEP provided some initial reports which they stated don't show any short-term problems. Maine DEP will be attending the June Sustainability and Transportation meeting.

Heritage Tree Ordinance

Councilor Ray asked about replacement caliper. She wondered if replacement trees had to add up to the diameter of the original tree and if there was a minimum diameter. There is a segment about if a replacement tree dies within 18 months of planting, it must be replaced. What if someone plants the tree, they move and then the tree dies? Would the fine stay with the property or with the owner?

Councilor Thibodeau is curious about the 90 days for implementation and how that was determined.

Comment from Allen Armstrong. His house is in the historic district and has an eligible tree. He's very supportive of the ordinance.

Comment from Elissa Armstrong. She's supportive of this ordinance. She hopes it can be expanded after a pilot in the historic district. She's interested in reducing the size of the trees that are designated because we need to preserve all trees.

Steve DiMillo had a question on Commercial Street.

George Rowe is opposed to the ordinance. He doesn't think this should have attention paid to it. His objection is an environmental justice issue to stop development in an affluent neighborhood.

Katherine Gilbert has lost a few trees on her property recently. They are looking to replace the trees for privacy concerns. Trees have a lot of benefits. She is supportive of the ordinance and the replacement piece is key.

Councilor Ray moved to pass. Councilor Duson seconded.

Jen Thompson says the permit is issued to the property owner specifically so if a tree were to die in the 18 months the City would look to the property owner for fines or replacement.

Councilor Ray asked if the payment would differ based on the tree needing to be replaced. Troy says that the payment would be fairly substantial. The definition of heritage tree references 24" diameter is unclear about what height that is at.

Councilor Ray moved to adjust the diameter to breast height. Passed unanimously.

Councilor Ray would love to see this expanded beyond historic districts. This ordinance puts a lot of responsibility on Jeff. Is he comfortable with that? Troy had discussed this with Parks & Rec so that there will be some support from the Department to implement the ordinance.

Councilor Thibodeau would like a yearly check up on this to understand the scope of this work.

Councilor Ray wonders if a fiscal note needed for this? Parks & Rec had said maybe a halftime person in the future which is below the need of a fiscal note.

Councilor Duson is happy with this. A cursory analysis of the costs would be beneficial to have in the files.

Councilor Thibodeau is supportive and grateful for what staff has done to get this where it is. It's good to be thoughtful about making sure tree growth is a part of Portland.

Public comment from Jennifer Defilipp has had a devastating loss of historic trees in her neighborhood. She is supportive of this ordinance. Neighbors should be informed of tree loss like they are informed of development. Preservation of historic trees is key for climate change mitigation.

Councilor Ray wanted to know if clear cutting of lots of certain sizes was still being looked at. Jeff said that's being worked on with the Planning Department.

Councilor Thibodeau is wondering about the 90 days for implementation. Jen and Troy think that will give some time to the arborists and outreach. Councilor Thibodeau would prefer it to be

30 days to implementation. Councilor Thibodeau made an amendment for 30 days, seconded by Councillor Ray. Pass unanimously.

Councilor Duson made a motion for passage as amended. Passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Thibodeau and seconded by Councilor Ray. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Sustainability Updates

June 2020

Staffing

Like many City operations, the Sustainability Office is working reduced hours. We are doing our best to advance our work and keep up with questions from residents and businesses during this unprecedented time for the City budget. We are asking people to please be patient because it will take longer than normal for us to respond to them.

Straw Ordinance

The City of Portland Straw Ordinance went into effect on April 1, 2020. During this first phase of the ordinance food service establishments may only provide customers with a plastic straw upon request. We haven't had an opportunity to do proactive outreach to the businesses that are re-opening but will respond to questions or resident complaints.

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/2558/Straw-Ordinance>

Energy Benchmarking

Buildings with 20,000 square feet and a single primary occupant were required to report their energy and water consumption to the Sustainability Office by May 1, 2020. We continue to support building owners working on their reports. Several have indicated that responding to the pandemic is slowing their ability to complete their reports. We've let them know we understand.

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/2389/Energy-Benchmarking>

Pesticide Ordinance

We have been fielding questions about the ordinance from residents and applicators. There have been three See Click Fix complaints in the past month that we are following up on. Applicators appear to lack familiarity with the signage requirements and we will need to do additional outreach to remind them how to properly prepare their warning signs so the public is aware of the type of application and the product they are using.

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/2168/Pesticide-Use-Ordinance>

Sustainability Updates

June 2020

EV Chargers

EV charging equipment is currently on order and installation will begin shortly. Locations are the Jetport, Congress Street in front of City Hall, Payson Park, parking lot at Spring St / High Street, and probably Back Cove parking lot.

One Climate Future

We are circulating draft chapters of the One Climate Future plan to staff in various City departments for comment and feedback. We will be making a presentation about the planning process to the City Leadership Team at an upcoming meeting. We anticipate presenting a draft to the committee in August or September.

Outreach and Education

We continue regular social media posts. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram at @sustainableportlandme.

We now have a YouTube Channel, City of Portland, ME Sustainability Office. We'll host the videos we produce as well as curated playlists to help educate residents and businesses about sustainable practices. For instance, we have a featured playlist with videos about how to manage your lawn organically.

We invite people to participate in One Climate Future by visiting the webpage at www.oneclimatefuture.org