



**Peaks Island Council
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 23, 2021

6:15 p.m., ZOOM meeting

NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting–March 23, 2022

February PIC meeting will be a ZOOM meeting

CALL TO ORDER: 6:18 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Peter Eckel, Fred Somers, Peter McLaughlin, Jerzy Sylvester, SE Rafferty, Scott Mohler

Absent: Natasha Markov-Riss

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 6

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

McLaughlin made the motion to accept the January 26, 2021 meeting minutes. Somers seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

McLaughlin shared the expenditure report as of February 22, 2022 via Zoom. Bill Patnaude noted that money had been moved to cover the middle/high school summer ticket costs per last month's council vote. Eckel reported that the total remaining budget for FY22 is \$3,861.20.

Somers made the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Rafferty seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

• **Parking – MHR parking garage request, mainland parking**

Eckel said that he expects the city will reply to the PIC's proposal for collaborating on parking issues and bringing islander parking issues to the city council by city councilors by the end of the month.

Eckel said that he has been in touch with Cary Tyson, executive director of Portland Downtown, regarding toilets for back shore.

• **Golf Cart Committee – update**

Somers said there is no current chair to the PIC Golf Cart Committee. The two-member committee (Fred Somers and Joanne MacIsaac) is looking for a chair.

Somers said he is still working with the city to ensure enforcement of the golf cart regulations issued by the City Manager in September 2021.

- **Ferry Service – update**

Somers said that new vehicle reservation system, installation of webcams and electronic signage, and backup generator for transfer bridge were discussed at the CBL operations meeting last month.

CBL has a new system that will accommodate vehicle reservations but the CBL board has not decided whether or not to implement a vehicle reservation system. Somers suspects the system will not be piloted until the fall.

Somers said that the city has received quotes about the installation of webcams. CBL has had a vendor out to Peaks Island to determine the best place to install electronic signage. More information will be available in April.

Somers said the installation of a back-up generator on the Peaks Island transfer bridge is moving along at the Maine Department of Transportation.

Somers has been in touch with Bruce Hyman about having a community meeting to review the Peaks Island landside study. Somers asked Eckel if he thought it should be a standalone meeting or should it be part of a regular council meeting. Eckel said he felt the topic warrants a standalone meeting.

- **Anti-racism Committee – annual update**

Rafferty said the PIC Anti-racism Committee did not meet this month but is working with a potential speaker for a future event.

- **Environmental and Sustainability**

Scott Mohler is going to chair the Environmental and Sustainability committee.

- **Communication and Outreach Committee**

McLaughlin is seeking members for this new committee. The scope of the committee is to analyze and improve how PIC communicates with the community, as well as how PIC communicates with the city. One community member has expressed interest, but more people are sought.

All PIC councilors now have portlandmaine.gov email addresses and their addresses are listed on the city website. Community members can speak to all the PIC councilors at once by emailing PIC@portlandmaine.gov.

- **Executive Committee – charter commission update**

After last month's meeting, PIC sent a letter to the city asking it to codify the existence of the Peaks Island Council as part of the City Charter. The city is open to it but they

need help crafting appropriate language. McLaughlin said he will be drafting the first draft of language and he will get PIC approval of it, and then send it the city.

Jerzy Sylvester said he would share a template developed by Ryan Lizanecz, District 5 charter commissioner, that outlines how things move through the city council.

Eckel said he is developing talking points for zoom calls with Anna Trevorow (District 1 councilor) and Danielle West (Interim City Manager) and he will set up dates for zoom calls with Anna and Danielle.

OLD BUSINESS

• Review of 2020-2021 priority survey + 2022 priority-setting plan

Eckel said he checked to see how community priorities identified in the recent community survey aligned with PIC committee structure. He pointed out that there were two community concerns that did not already have a PIC committee that aligns with it:

- Enrollment numbers for the Peaks Island Elementary School
- Overall affordability of living on the island

Eckel suggested that a new PIC committee should be created to deal with affordability on the island (which would attract more families).

Rafferty commented that addressing affordability also addresses diversity issues (age, race, ethnicity, income) on the island.

Somers said most of the community priorities that are not aligned with an existing PIC committee could be grouped under the broader concern of quality of life.

Mohler said that increasing enrollment at the PICW may attract more families with children. Eckel said that PICW is critical to the life of the island but it is a very complicated organization that involves several state entities.

McLaughlin said he supports a new, separate PIC committee dedicated to addressing affordability.

Eckel said he would create a first draft of the scope of a new PIC committee and will circulate it to PIC members for input.

NEW BUSINESS

• FY2023 budget recommendation

Somers said he is concerned that PITEA did not submit a request for money this year in light of their request last year for \$5,300. Eckel said that he does not think it is

appropriate to make an allocation to an organization that has not made a request. Eckel said one option is to make a motion to put some “contingency money” aside for them as a place holder since there is a well-established pattern of need, and then work with PITEA to have them submit something in writing.

Patnaude said he believes the city council would question a line item labeled “contingency.” Eckel said PIC would resolve the line item prior to sending it up to the city, so the budget would not go to the city council with a line labeled “contingency.”

McLaughlin said he was not in favor of putting forward a \$61,179 budget but he is willing to put forward a budget that is slightly over the previous years’ \$40,000 allocation.

- A-E (ferry ticket program) – McLaughlin made a motion to approve the total expenditure of \$8,850 for ferry ticket programs. Rafferty seconded. AM said that PIC needs to publicize the ferry ticket programs more next year. Motion passed unanimously.
- F - administration – Somers made a motion to approve expense of \$2,000 for administration. Sylvester seconded. No public comment. Eckel asked if the amount of \$2,000 covers the Zoom expense. McLaughlin said it does. Motion passed unanimously.
- G - Peaks Island Tax & Energy Assistance – Somers made a motion to allocate \$3,000 in a contingency fund to provide PITEA with funding pursuant to further discussions with the organization, to be resolved prior to sending the budget up to city council for approval. AM said setting money aside to groups that didn’t bother to apply sets a negative precedent. AM said PIC is on a slippery slope when they presume they know what an organization wants when they haven’t applied for funding. Rafferty agreed that with so many organizations that made the time and effort to apply, and with the work that PIC has done to create by-laws and to create a formal structure, awarding money to an organization that does not apply undermines the procedures PIC has created. Eckel said he was not able to get in touch with the chair of PITEA and found out later (and perhaps too late) that they were ill and unable to submit an application. McLaughlin said he also reached out to a few members and he feels PIC did their due diligence to contact them and provide them with the opportunity to apply. He said he agrees with the spirit of the motion, but he doesn’t think they should receive funding that they didn’t apply for. Four nays, one yay, one abstention, motion failed.
- H - PI Food Pantry – no amount requested, no vote required.
- I - Island Transportation System – Somers made a motion to approve \$22,246 for the Island Transportation System, McLaughlin seconded. No public comment. McLaughlin said the taxi is a critical service on Peaks Island. Motion passed with one abstention.
- J - Fifth Maine Museum – McLaughlin made a motion to approve spending \$1,000 for the Fifth Maine Museum’s program about the history of the Confederate flag. Mohler

seconded. AM asked if program would be open to the public. AM said that it would be open. Motion passed unanimously.

- K - Peaks Environmental Action Team – McLaughlin made a motion to approve spending \$360 for the Peaks Environmental Action Team for litter pick up. Mohler seconded. No public comment. Eckel said that this is an example of doing a lot with a little. Motion passed unanimously.
- L - Community Arts & Play – Rafferty made a motion to approve \$1,600 for Community Arts and Play recreation programming at New Brackett Church. McLaughlin seconded. No public comment. Somers asked about the criteria used to prioritize new projects being put forward. McLaughlin said no criteria exist because there have been few applications in prior years and there was no need to prioritize. This year had many more applications for funding than PIC expected, or than there has been in the past. Sylvester supported the application by New Brackett Church by saying that in growing up on the island, recreation programs were very important to the young people on the island. Eckel said that the process is intentionally open to encourage comment on each project. Eckel and McLaughlin said that applications in future years should include judging criteria. Five yea and one abstention, motion passed.
- M - Clock Tower Project – McLaughlin made a motion to spend \$14,826 on a clock tower located at the Peaks Island ferry terminal. Mohler seconded. AM said that the proposal seems slightly inappropriate for PIC because there are so many unresolved legal issues, and that other funding sources exist for a project like this. Rafferty said that since digital signage is already being explored by CBL, a clock tower is redundant and old technology. McLaughlin said other questions about the project include feasibility and maintenance issues. Mohler said he supports the project but doesn't feel it is a good fit for PIC. Sylvester said the role of PIC could be to facilitate helping the city put the clock tower up as they are putting up monuments in other city neighborhoods now. Five nays, one abstention – motion failed.
- N - Friends of Brackett Cemetery – McLaughlin made a motion to approve \$3,400 for equipment to be used for maintenance. Mohler seconded. AM said they feel it is a very worthwhile project but the city has an entire department committed to maintaining cemeteries, and the Friends of Brackett Cemetery group should approach the city for money. McLaughlin made an amendment to his motion, move to approve \$2,000 (instead of \$3,400) for Friends of Brackett Cemetery group. Rafferty seconded. Eckel said he was not clear about who would own the lawn mowers and where would they be stored. Somers said the lawn mower was priced at \$200, not a significant portion of the funding request. McLaughlin said most of the request was for cemetery beautification projects – a bench, a sign, and a new flag pole – and it is good to support an organization in its infancy. Somers said he supports the project and echoes McLaughlin's comments. Eckel said he likes the project but thinks the group should pursue other funding sources. Vote on amendment: Five yea, one no – amendment passed.
Vote to approve amended motion (\$2,000 expenditure) – Four yea, one no, one abstention – motion passed.
- O - Peaks Island Community Collaborative -- McLaughlin made a motion to approve \$857 for Peaks Island Community Collaborative. Mohler seconded. No public

comment. Mohler said it is a modest request for an impactful project. Five yay, one abstention – motion passed.

- P - Peaks Island Barn Concerts – McLaughlin made a motion to approve \$3,540 for Peaks Island Barn Concerts. Mohler seconded. AM said PIC should exercise caution in expending funds for capital equipment for organizations that are using a fiscal sponsor. AM said the proposal didn't address who would own the equipment. McLaughlin said there is a question about who would own the equipment and where it would be stored, etc. and funding this purchase feels like purchasing personal property. Four no, two abstentions – motion failed.
- Q - Illustration Institute – McLaughlin made a motion to approve \$2,500 for Illustration Institute. Mohler seconded. No public comment. Sylvester asked if the presentation said where the money is going? McLaughlin said the money is to pay five different artists, \$500 each. Eckel said Illustration Institute is a great organization but this proposal does not include broad based community appeal. Mohler said that programming that focuses on children would give it broader community appeal. McLaughlin made a motion to change the funding amount to \$1,500. Sylvester seconded.

Vote on amendment: Five yay, one no -- Amendment passed.

Vote on amended motion: Four yay, one no, one abstention – motion passed.

- R - Peaks Island Children's Workshop –McLaughlin made a motion to approve \$2,257 for a new stove for the Peaks Island workshop. AM said they would be willing to donate money for a new stove, and that the workshop is an island treasure, but this request for a new stove is not appropriate for the PIC. Rafferty said the workshop is beloved but PIC should not purchase capital equipment for organizations. McLaughlin said he is not opposed to purchasing capital equipment directly for non-profit organizations, although he is opposed to purchasing capital equipment for fiscally-sponsored projects. McLaughlin said PIC reached out to him asking what types of things PIC supports and he did not tell the workshop that PIC does not fund capital expenditures – if he had told them that, they may have applied for money for another program. Mohler said that if PIC thinks having young families on the island are important, this is an easy way to do it. Sylvester said that PICW is part of island infrastructure and it is important to support them. Sylvester commented that these discussions clearly show it is important to develop criteria for funding decisions in future years. Eckel said that PIC supports Island Transportation System (taxi) to purchase a new taxi, which is a clear capital expense. Rafferty said that Katie's comments also noted that the stove is actually part of their programming. Five yay, one abstention – motion passed.
- final budget approval – Mohler made a motion to submit the PIC budget request of \$42,670. Rafferty seconded. No public comment. Somers said that on balance the budget reflects PIC values and he will support it. Eckel thanked McLaughlin for his work in putting the budget meeting together, and he thanked the councilors for their efforts. Six yay, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

AM thanked councilors for their hard work and encouraged them to develop funding guidelines for next year so there is a framework for evaluating submissions.

AM asked to put meeting with police chief on the new business agenda.

AM asked when meetings would be in person instead of on zoom.

AM said they liked pairing the survey with the committees and that PIC should develop a committee to address public safety concerns, which also surfaced as a very high priority on the community survey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 6:15 pm via ZOOM.

McLaughlin made motion to adjourn. Somers seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjournment: 8:23 p.m.