

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Andrew Zarro (D1), Chair
Councilor Victoria Pelletier (D2)
Councilor Roberto Rodriguez (At-Large)

Minutes January 12, 2022

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Rodriguez, Councilor Pelletier

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Caity Hager

Meeting called to order.

November Minutes

Councilor Rodriguez moves to approve the November meeting minutes. Councilor Pelletier seconds the motion. November minutes passed unanimously, 3-0.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

The office is working to launch Electrify Everything! to help residents fully electrify their homes. We will provide educational resources, financial resources, and support to homeowners. The goal is to create a program that anyone in Portland can participate in.

Composting drop-off program is continuing to go well. There is more use each month. The Parks Department is working with Public Works to provide a Christmas Tree recycling program so that trees can be recycled at EcoMaine. EV chargers were installed in the lot on the corner of Spring St and High St and we are just waiting on CMP to connect them to the grid so they are operational. We are close to announcing a partnership with a private vendor to expand EV charging around the city. Many communities around the state have been interested in learning about One Climate Future as an example for their own climate action plans. Coffee and Climates occur each month and continue to garner support and attendance.

Committee Comment on Sustainability Update

Councilor Rodriguez asks where the compost drop-sites are located. *Mainly at community gardens: North St Garden, Boyd St Garden, Clark St Garden, Libbytown Garden, Riverside Recycling center.* Is there a plan to have more drop-sites? *Yes, the program is going very well and the demand is there. We would like to include more sites possibly starting around Earth Day.* It is worth mentioning even though EVs are beneficial, the EV infrastructure has a long-term commitment and it is worth considering how we live with this infrastructure in the long-term.

Councilor Zarro is happy to hear about Electrify Everything! and asks about the work being done to make the program as equitable and accessible as possible. There are good community solar options that anyone can benefit from. Efficiency Maine has great incentives for low and middle income people and our partners will help people apply for them. Many people who qualify for

these programs do not apply and we would like to help them apply. We would like to apply for funds to bridge the funding gap so that residents have little barriers to completing electrification projects. Older adults can benefit from heat pumps reducing heating costs and they also supply cooler air in the summer which is a big risk in older homes during the summer.

Have you been thinking about ways to include renters in Electrify Everything? Renters can take advantage of community solar programs and benefit from savings on their electric bill.

EV chargers that were installed at High and Spring St, are they level 2? They are level 2 and can serve as a charging hub for that neighborhood. Level 2 chargers take multiple hours to charge up their car.

Glad that Coffee and Climate is successful but how can we get the word out about the events to get new faces involved? *We share the postings on social media and the city calendar. Would recommend sharing the social media posts.*

Councilor Pelletier asks how to conduct outreach for this program offline for folks without broadband or laptops? *We are working with organizations that support seniors. There are many volunteers in the Portland Climate Action Team that will provide visits and calls with people interested in the program to provide on-on-one outreach.*

Is there any plan to partner with schools and get parents and teachers involved? That partnership hasn't been established yet but it is a great opportunity to get students involved.

One Climate Future Overview and First Year Progress Report

Presented by Troy Moon

The Sustainability Office includes Troy Moon, Sustainability Director and Erin Ferrell, a part-time Sustainability Associate. Targets established by the Council include: 80% reduction in community GHG emissions by 2050, run City operations on 100% clean energy by 2040, and establish a climate emergency to strive for carbon neutrality by 2030. Global temperatures are already above 1.2 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels. GMRI released an article stating that 2021 was one of the hottest years on record in the Gulf of Maine. In terms of emissions, they continue to climb. Portland emissions breakdown shows 60% from buildings and 30% from transportation. One Climate Future is broken down into 4 categories: buildings and energy, transportation and land use, waste reduction, and climate resilience. The plan shows the need to build better buildings with new construction being more efficient with low to no emissions. Retrofitting existing buildings to use renewable energy is a big focus this year with Electrify Everything! And our Energy Benchmarking Ordinance. OCF calls to deploy solar wherever we can with a goal of 245 mw solar by 2045. ReCode is a great opportunity to enact land use policies featured in OCF – Woodfords Corner is a great example of complete neighborhoods. Complete neighborhoods allow us to address mode shift – to use our streets for more than just cars. EV charging stations are being installed in neighborhoods to allow residents to purchase EVs. OCF outlines a goal of 90% waste reduction by 2050. Portland has seen a 60% drop in waste disposal in the last 20 years and we are looking to continue the reduction trend. OCF is a complete community effort with city staff, business owners, students, and all residents needed to have the most impact. One Climate Future means a sustainable community. This means that social sustainability is just as important as environmental sustainability and economic sustainability.

In the first year, we've started progress on over half of the 58 strategies outlined in OCF. The OCF progress dashboard is a great resource for seeing progress that has been made in the first year. The City was one of the first municipalities that adopted IECC 2021 stretch code this past year. Energy Benchmarking has been a priority with all 800 buildings to start reporting in May 2023. 4 new EVs in 2021 along with 15 networked EV charging stations. The Technical Manual requires new parking lots to install EV charging stations. In terms of Resilience, the council voted in 2021 to work on improving tree equity in Bayside.

Key Sustainability Office projects this year include: Electrify Everything!, EV charging deployment, fully implementing the energy benchmarking ordinance, supporting the ReCode effort, begin efforts to retrofit City buildings. Policy and external work includes: collaborating with allies in the building and design community to promote high performance buildings, continuing to work with stakeholders to modernize the electrical grid in Portland, and advancing discussion of climate resilience overlay zones.

Engaged citizens calling for action helps to move OCF projects forward. The much improved state renewable energy policy, ReCode, increasing support from City departments and ongoing collaboration with South Portland have all helped move these projects forward. Limited office resources and staff hours are a limiting factor in this effort.

Councilor Comment on One Climate Future Overview and First Year Progress Report

Councilor Rodriguez asks about what else we are doing in terms of outreach? *The Planning Dept is leading the effort in terms of ReCode. The Sustainability Office is helping to support their outreach efforts.* Councilor Rodriguez emphasizes the importance in getting residents involved in the ReCode process. Councilor Rodriguez agrees that updating the electrical grid is incredibly important as we continue moving forward with OCF projects. In regards to complete neighborhoods, Councilor would like to highlight the opportunities at Allens Corner.

Councilor Pelletier flags when Troy spoke about equitable sustainability. It is important to be mindful of gentrification and further displacement in the spirit of improving climate change. The intersection of social justice and climate is important to highlight. Historically the war on climate change has upheld systemic and environmental racism. It is important that the information makes its way to all impacted neighborhoods.

Councilor Zarro wants to highlight the fact that the Sustainability Office is one and a half people while the climate change issue is an extremely important issue. There is a lot of work to do. Sustainability needs to be a facet in every aspect of municipal government. Climate accountability means acknowledging the state of the climate crisis we are in and taking action on the goals that have been set. Getting more residents aware and involved in OCF should be a big priority.

Community Resilience Self Assessment

Presented by Troy Moon and Caity Hegar

The Resilience Self Assessment is an exercise needed to join the Community Resilience Partnership. When creating OCF, there was a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment completed that identifies threats likely to come from climate change. These include: sea level rise, heat, powerful storms; damage to infrastructure such as energy systems and water resources; environmental hazards such as marsh migration, lost habitat and damaged ecosystems; socio-economic risk such as threats to housing, local economy and health systems; and Inequity and social risk such as amplified climate threats for vulnerable communities.

Key terms in terms of resilience include shocks and stressors. Shocks are acute events such as a storm that results in immediate disruptions from damage and requires action to keep people safe. Stressors are chronic conditions that will challenge us gradually as climate changes. These include nuisance flooding, worsening air quality and hotter days. Both shocks and stressors exacerbate existing problems, especially for vulnerable populations.

The Resilience Self Assessment identified that the City prepares well for emergency situations including storms, fires, and accidents. But we have work to do in terms of long term resilience in relation to climate change. In regard to Emergency Response: the City has an Emergency Management System that is well established and coordinated with County, State, and Federal EMAs; We have an Emergency Management Coordinator; Collaborate well on the County emergency management plan; We drill and plan out responses to a variety of emergency situations. The City has the governance structures to make decisions during emergencies. Professional staff with subject matter expertise in City administration, emergency management, infrastructure, health, and public safety. The Council meets regularly and can convene more often if necessary. The City has financial reserves to carry out emergency operations during a crisis. Climate vulnerability assessments overlays census data to indicate where vulnerable populations are at risk of climate hazards. The City works with community members on hazard mitigation, coordinates mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities, and actively seeks to address the housing crisis.

In terms of long term resilience, we need to: incorporate more robust design standards for new development; implement climate resilience overlay zones; ensure that new infrastructure projects are designed for a future of climate change; and electrify everything we can. Two areas to improve in the short term include: working with communities including private property owners to prepare for the impacts of sea level rise; address resilience and threats from climate change in land use code/ adopt resilience overlay zones. Areas to address in the long term include: ensure that the transition to a clean energy economy includes all members of the community and that everyone has access to energy resources; ensure access to wild harvest seafood and aquaculture resources in a future where species shifts and dynamic environmental conditions become the norm.

Five priorities identified include: electrification of homes and businesses, electrification of transportation, revising the land use code to support goals established in One Climate Future

and Comp Plan, implementing Climate Resilience Overlay Zones described in OCF, support the Portland Fish Exchange as the state's largest location for groundfish.

Public Comment on Community Resilience Self Assessment

Allen Armstrong of Portland echoes Councilor Zarro's comments on the importance of climate change and resilience. Allen emphasizes the need for more staffing in the Sustainability Office and asks the Committee to advocate for more staffing for the office in the coming budget cycle.

Elizabeth Parsons echoes Allen Armstrong's comment. South Portland has 4 or 5 full time positions in their Sustainability Office and asks the Committee to advocate for more staffing in Portland's Sustainability Office.

Maggie Wolf of Portland welcomes the new councilors and echoes their previous comments. There is great concern of gentrification and the housing crisis happening in Portland. Climate needs to be incorporated in every decision being made in Portland. We need to improve outreach efforts to engage more community members in these efforts.

Councilor Comment on Community Resilience Self Assessment

Councilor Zarro realizes how difficult it can be to look at the realities of climate change. Councilor echoes the 5 priorities that were identified and emphasizes the aquaculture and blue economy. How often are these assessments done? *This was the first for the Sustainability Office but the Emergency Management Coordinator does assessments every few years on the city and county levels.* Councilor Zarro asks Troy to share the presentation with the entire Council.

Resolution to Join the State of Maine Community Resilience Partnership

By joining this partnership, we would be able to apply for some grant funding for the projects identified in the presentation.

Councilor Rodriguez asks for the purpose of the grants. *The grants are to move forward community resilience projects. We would like to use the grants to help homeowners electrify their homes. No grant would exceed \$50,000.* Are these grants related to the land and conservation grants? *This funding source is something from the state legislature. The Land and Conservation grants are on the federal level. We are continuing to identify funding opportunities.*

Public Comment on Resolution to Join the State of Maine Community Resilience Partnership

No public comment.

Councilor Vote on Resolution to Join the State of Maine Community Resilience Partnership

Resolution passes unanimously, 3-0.

Work Plan for the Year

Presented by Troy Moon

Topics rolling over from last year include:

1. Food Trucks
2. Heritage Tree Ordinance
3. GPCOG would like to address the Committee on the bus rapid transit study
4. Food Waste Composting Options
5. PMAC Report in April

Councilor Comment on Work Plan for the Year

Councilor Pelletier would like to address the lack of capacity in the Office and wants to be realistic about what can be done in this year. Everyone has a role to play in actions that are community and neighborhood based. It is important to hold community conversations to get feedback and input on all projects. Attacking climate from an equity perspective. There are many languages spoken in Portland and including access to these conversations is important. Using language that people can understand should be a priority. Every project should also identify who is going to be most impacted and how are we reaching that community.

Councilor Rodriguez reaffirms prioritizing expanding the composting program. Community members are interested in this and it is something everyone can do on an individual level.

Councilor Pelletier asks if the OCF page is translatable? *We have translated fact sheets and we can make sure they are posted.*

Councilor Zarro asks about the Sustainability Fund and CIP. Identifying funding to move these projects forward is a priority. Councilor would like to emphasize complete streets and mode shift. Would like to continue the conversation of curbside composting collection especially with the success of the community food scrap drop sites. We should look at how we are funding the Sustainability Office and asks Troy to guide the Committee on the needs of the Office. Echoes Councilor Pelletiers comment on reaching people where they are and using language they can understand.

Councilor Pelletier asks if the Parks Commission can come to present and identify other collaborative efforts. *One of the strategies in OCF talks about expanding the Land Bank and that could be a collaborative conversation.*

Troy mentions that the agendas fill up and more topics will present themselves. Such as the conversation of requiring property owners to disclose energy ratings of their buildings.

Councilor Zarro asks about hiring another Resilience corps member. *We hope to get the budget to fund a Resilience Corps member for the year.*

Councilor Rodriguez moves to adjourn.