



**Peaks Island Council
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

6:15 p.m., ZOOM meeting

NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting–May 25, 2022

May PIC meeting will be a ZOOM meeting

CALL TO ORDER: 6:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Peter Eckel, Fred Somers, Peter McLaughlin, Jerzy Sylvester, Natasha Markov-Riss, Scott Mohler

Absent: SE Rafferty

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 11

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Somers made the motion to accept the March 23, 2022 meeting minutes.

McLaughlin seconded. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Affordable Housing Committee will be having the first meeting next week. Anyone interested in joining the committee should reach out to Natasha Markov-Riss at nmriss@portlandmaine.gov. Markov-Riss is particularly interested in having attorneys join the committee.

TREASURER'S REPORT

McLaughlin shared the expenditure report as of April 27, 2022 via Zoom. Bill Patnaude noted that the total remaining budget for FY22 is \$3,103.65, with almost \$750 expenditures last month in ferry tickets, administration and Maine island coalition payment. **Somers moved to accept the treasurer's report. McLaughlin seconded.** No discussion. **Treasurer's Report accepted unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation to review the Peaks Island Ferry Landside Operations Study with Bruce Hyman, Portland Transportation Planner and Nell Donaldson, director of special projects in Portland's Planning and Urban Development Department.

A study was done in 2019, conducted by consultant (WSP). Public input was given via a public meeting and survey. The final report was issued in August 2021.

Key Takeaways:

Current passenger & vehicle levels stress the island's infrastructure and environment. Future, higher levels will stress the island even further.

Short to Mid Term Infrastructure recommendations:

Expand queuing space on sidewalks and expand pass-thru space for passenger loading.

Mid to Long Term Infrastructure recommendations:

Reconstruct Welch Street to increase passenger queue capacity and improve visual cues for vehicles approaching the ferry.

Operational recommendations:

Define queuing areas and use signage and wayfinding to inform vehicles/passengers about ferry boarding procedures.

Demand Management recommendations:

Use webcam to provide real-time vehicle and passenger numbers. Casco Bay Lines could implement vehicle and passenger reservation systems, real-time arrival/departure displays, priority boarding.

Next Steps:

- Short-term – webcams, real-time displays, assess feasibility of expanding queuing areas and relocating passenger queuing south of ferry landing.
- Mid to long-term – design and construction of passenger queuing and side loading platforms.

Islanders can contact Bruce Hyman with comments at bhyman@portlandmaine.gov.

AM asked if Bruce Hyman interfaces with police department to get better traffic control at the ferry landing for this coming season, specifically having a police cadet to direct traffic. Hyman said he needs to check in with Casco Bay Lines and the police department to investigate whether a police cadet can be hired for this season.

AM said CBL should not be allowed to constantly grow the number of people being sent to the island as their projected growth curve suggests. The island has limits to the number of people that it can absorb.

AM said Welch Street and sidewalks along Welch Street are full of holes and pavement irregularities that make walking and pushing carts up the street difficult. Would it be possible to improve the surface of Welch Street and its sidewalks for the summer of 2022? Bill Patnaude said repaving was not possible this summer, although some small fixes might be able to be implemented.

Somers asked if either Hyman or Donaldson had any sense of if the long-term infrastructure improvements are possible within the next two years, before the arrival of the new, bigger car ferry. Hyman said he does not have a sense whether the long term

infrastructure projects can be put in place before the new vessel is operational. Work will have to go through Maine Department of Transportation.

Eckel said that the overcrowding situation at the Peaks Island ferry suffers from an out of sight, out of mind problem. If huge crowds of 300-400 people assembled three or four times a day on Congress Street, much more attention would be paid to the problem.

Eckel asked “who owns this?” Hyman said the solution to the problem is a shared responsibility between the state, Casco Bay Lines, the city.

Markov-Riss asked what company would be used to set up the webcam? Hyman said Minute Man Security is the company that the city has engaged.

Mohler asked if people from the city would actually come and observe the ferry landing during peak times. Hyman said the city captured video of the ferry landing on Labor Day Weekend in 2019. Additional observations are possible if PIC felt it would be helpful.

Eckel asked Somers what is the best way for PIC to keep track of the project, to be sure it keeps moving forward. Somers said he has been keeping track of the discreet projects that have emerged from this study in his role on the Ferry Service Committee.

Eckel asked Somers if monthly updates from Hyman and Donaldson make sense as part of the monthly PIC meeting. Somers said periodic updates make sense. Hyman said he could provide a written update to the council instead of taking time during the meeting. Eckel said he would prefer a live or zoom update. Hyman said he could do live updates or zoom updates periodically, but not monthly. Donaldson said she could help to be sure monthly updates are given.

Somers thanked Hyman and the city for the Welch Street parking lot improvements that had a good outcome. Eckel agreed that the parking lot project was a huge success.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

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

Eckel said the notices for the lottery for spaces in the Ocean Gateway Parking Lot will be going out in early May.

- **Golf Cart –**

Licensing and inspection process is going to begin on May 1st. Notices have gone out to the island golf cart rental companies and license applications are due on April 30th.

- **Ferry Service – update**

Somers said CBL approved permanent implementation of residential boarding between July and October. Grants were approved for electronic signage on the Peaks Island side. CBL is working on a new bidding process for the larger ferry that involves

educating the ship yards about the new ferry, and it has resulted in more vendor bids. CBL is working with the vendor to increase the frequency of trash pickup at the ferry.

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

Rafferty was absent, so no update.

- **Environmental and Sustainability**

Mohler said the first meeting of the Environmental and Sustainability Committee was held. Two options for community composting for islanders were discussed: city picking up compost from the island and bringing it to town or composting here on Peaks Island. EV charging stations were discussed. The city arborist, Jeff Tarling, came out to the island to discuss street tree planting as well as bringing a chipper to the transfer station so that brush can be chipped on island and provide mulch for the community. Periodic beach clean ups were discussed. Ideas for Trott Littlejohn Park were discussed.

Patnaude said it would be possible to bring a chipper out to the island for a week or so.

- **Housing**

Markov-Riss said first meeting will be held next week, and there will be an update next month.

- **Jetport Noise**

Somers said the Peaks Island Flight Path Committee (chaired by Basil Klosteridis) has been working with the Noise Advisory Committee that was created by the City Council. The Peaks Island rep to the Noise Advisory Committee is Jennifer Laventure.

Somers said the coalition of neighborhood associations has made good progress with the moving flight paths. The Jetport has set up a subcommittee to work with the neighborhood associations in approaching the FAA.

McLaughlin made a motion for PIC to approve the mission statement of the PIC Peaks Island Flight Path Committee:

The Peaks Island Council Jetport Flight Path Committee seeks to minimize the adverse noise impact of Portland jetport operations on Peaks Island through collaboration with the Portland Jetport and its Noise Advisory Committee, and other Portland neighborhoods in working to discourage island overflights and promoting flight paths over water to the extent possible.

Somers seconded.

No discussion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Executive Committee**

McLaughlin said a committee met to determine the next steps in developing the emergency evacuation process. More updates next month.

McLaughlin and Eckel met with Anna Treverrow, and Eckel met with city manager and staff. The meetings were productive and will be held quarterly.

Eckel met with the Visit Portland CEO. They are also concerned about parking in the Old Port and they are also interested in a parking shuttle. Eckel is working with the City Manager's Office to get a parking shuttle for next summer.

Eckel said he shared an email from Barring Coughlin to address summer crowds. There will be more discussion in public comment.

McLaughlin said that Portland Downtown is hosting a Public Restroom Forum 5:30-6:30pm on May 4, 2022. They will be discussing locations for new public restrooms. McLaughlin said it would be good for islanders and PIC councilors to attend.

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ej5mqt4ta8b739d4>

OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion regarding returning to in-person meetings - public comment**

Sylvester said the Community Center has equipment that could be used to set up a hybrid meeting, but it wouldn't be a high quality video. It could cause more problems than it solves. One possibility would be to have an in person meeting and allow emailed comments from the public to be sent in before the meeting.

No public comment.

McLaughlin said he does not think PIC in-person meetings should return in May, since COVID cases have been increasing lately. But the item should remain on the agenda for future meetings as a check in.

Somers agreed that it makes sense to wait for in person meetings.

Eckel agreed that it makes sense to wait for in person meetings.

Mohler said that perhaps an outdoor in person meeting would be possible soon.

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)

- **Discussion regarding definition of island use only vehicles - public comment**

Community member asked for definition of island use only vehicle since they were unable to register an ATV as an island use only vehicle. McLaughlin said the state does not allow use of ATVs on roads – which used to be the same rule that restricted use of golf carts on roads. Current legislation allows use of golf carts and “low-speed” vehicles on the road, and the island police use an ATV on the island.

The legislation says “A low-speed vehicle or golf cart may be operated on an island if the governing body of the municipality allows. A low-speed vehicle or golf cart may be operated only on a road or street where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less.”

Eckel said he will ask community member to continue to investigate the issue and report back at the next meeting.

AM asked the status of golf cart registration. Why are golf carts on the island are not registered even though it is required by statute? Eckel said it would be a good question for the police chief, because it is a law enforcement issue.

- **Organizing upcoming candidate night meeting - public comment**

McLaughlin said that the upcoming June election will have two school board candidates and State Legislature candidates. He would like to organize a candidate night meeting on zoom. Sylvester said he would help.

McLaughlin made a motion to create an adhoc Election Committee to organize a candidates forum to be held on June. Somers seconded. No discussion. Unanimous vote to approve the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

AM asked when will there be a meeting with the police chief. Eckel said he is trying to set up an evening meeting in May.

AM asked if there is a zoning committee? Eckel said there is no zoning committee. AM said that there used to be a zoning committee and there still should be.

AM asked why Jetport Noise Advisory Committee has not heard from our representative, Jen Laventure, for a long time. AM said Jen has been our representative for three years and little has been accomplished. AM asked PIC to find a new representative. Somers said that the island Jetport Noise Advisory Committee meets weekly and has done a lot of good work, and Jen Laventure has contributed to the committee’s work. Somers noted that changing FAA flight paths is a long process, something that takes several years.

AM asked why the Island Institute Representative never gives the public a report. AM asked that the Island Institute Representative give monthly reports at PIC meetings.

AM asked if the two golf cart rental companies should be following the same rules that personal owners have to. AM said that no golf cart rental companies have flags on their carts. Sylvester said that only golf cart flags with no roof are required to have a flag.

AM said a recent survey about visitors on Peaks Island revealed several issues and some recommendations:

- 1) We need more signage down front
- 2) We need more trash cans on the island
- 3) We need dog waste stations on the island
- 4) We need more public toilets in the summer
- 5) The golf cart rental companies should include a plastic trash bag

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 6:15 pm via ZOOM.

McLaughlin made motion to adjourn. Markov-Riss seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjournment: 8:01 p.m.