



Peaks Island Council

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

6:15 p.m., ZOOM meeting

NEXT Regular Monthly PIC Meeting—July 22, 2020

July PIC meeting will be a ZOOM meeting

CALL TO ORDER: 6:22 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Devon Kraft, Randy Schaeffer, Peter Eckel, Andrea Kelly-Rosenberg, SE Rafferty
Absent: Steve Anderson

Number of Audience Members (AM) in attendance: 21

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kraft made the motion to approve the May 27, 2020 meeting minutes. Kelly-Rosenberg seconded. Unanimous vote to approve. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Schaeffer stated that the total remaining budget is \$3782.57 as of June 3, 2020.
Additional, previously approved expenditures that will be spent before 6/30/2020:
Needs based tickets – \$240.50
Administration - \$200

Subtracting those expenditures generates a remaining balance of \$3342.07

Kraft made the motion to accept the expenditure report with the additional expenditures made to existing line items. Rafferty seconded. Expenditure report unanimously accepted.

Status of PIC Allocation from the City of Portland for FY2021 –

Bill Patnaude said the finance director recommended not to spend the remaining FY2020 balance. Financial shortfalls across all the city departments will likely trigger budget cuts in the upcoming fiscal year.

Patnaude noted that In FY2020, about \$25,000 was spent in the first three weeks of the fiscal year. The finance director asked the PIC not to do that this year, and to try to spread out those expenditures across a longer time period.

Schaeffer noted that \$20,000 was spent to support the island taxi. Patnaude said if that expense could be spread out over time, it would be better. Eckel, who is also on the taxi board, said the taxi board does not need all that money in the first month. Eckel will help coordinate schedule of payments to Peaks Island Taxi from FY2021 PIC budget.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES

Ferry Service Committee

Chuck Radis, chair of the Ferry Service Committee, provided several updates.

Update on new ferry

CBL board member, Twain Braden, made a motion that the board look at a comparison at the operating and building costs of the 599 ferry vs the current ferry, which passed. The CBL meeting on 6/25/20 will review that report. A vote made after that report will be the final vote on to proceed or not proceed with the 599 ferry.

Radis noted that even before COVID hit in 2020, there were slightly fewer passengers in 2019 vs 2018. So numbers were trending downward before COVID 19. Radis encouraged people to send an email tonight if they want to have input.

Update on health measures

CBL has asked passengers that if they see someone not wearing a mask or not practicing social distancing to contact Hank Berg or Nick Mavadones. Radis did not know how many people had contacted them.

Schaeffer asked Radis what the comparison between the big boat and the small boat indicates. Radis said that the smaller boat is about 10% less to build and operate, but the comparison is being done by the company that would lose the contract to build the larger boat if they recommended a smaller boat, so there is a conflict of interest.

Councilor questions

Schaeffer asked if the analysis involved traffic projections. Radis said the information that came out today does not include projections of revenues.

Kelly-Rosenberg asked if CBL has considered the fact that the majority of islanders do not want the larger boat. Radis said that argument was lost some time ago when CBL made the original vote to build the bigger boat. Radis thinks a more persuasive argument is based on economics. He said that numbers show that fewer commuters take the boat between September and May, and that number is trending downward over the past few years. So less and less demand for a larger boat between September and May.

Public questions

Sharoan Cohen, member of CBL Board, said the board is looking at the economic arguments. She said she has posted board materials on FB and so the public has access to the board materials. She said the board has not considered revenue projections.

Executive Committee –PIC seats up for election in November 2020

Schaeffer reported that the PIC consulted with the City Clerk, Katherine Jones, to avoid the cluster of seats that would be up for re-election in one year. Her advice was that two seats would come up for election in November for three year terms (Schaeffer and Anderson), three other seats would be up for election for two year terms (Rafferty, Eckel, Winchester).

Nomination papers will be available July 1 and will be turned in to City Clerk with 100 signatures from registered voters on Peaks Island.

Kraft asked how it would be decided which elected councilor would get a 2-year term and which elected councilor would get a 3-year term. Schaeffer said he would check with the City Clerk to see how that would work.

Parking Committee –meters installed in Island Resident Parking Zone

Peter Eckel, chair of the Parking Committee, provided an overview of the reduction of parking spaces on Thames Street.

Eckel said the City eliminated four spaces on Thames Street but also added 42 parking spaces on Marginal Way, without informing PIC. This action was taken in June 2019. Eckel said PIC needs to be more vigilant in looking at City Council agendas to be sure there is nothing on the agenda that affects parking. Eckel also said that some momentum on the parking topic was lost after Michelle Winchester left and then the pandemic hit. He said the parking committee will follow up on loss of parking spaces.

Kraft asked if there is going to be a shuttle to the 42 spaces on Marginal Way. Eckel said he would research that and report back to the council.

Kraft mentioned that there had been talk about using the WEX shuttle from South Portland.

Kraft asked about the \$15/day lot being used for Island Resident parking. Eckel said he thought that was not part of the request of the city but he would go back and look at that.

Kelly-Rosenberg asked if the \$15/day lot could be used for snow ban parking. Eckel said he would check on that.

Schaeffer said the Island Resident Zone map expires June 30th 2020, and asked if the new map has been published. Patnaude said he has no information about that.

Eckel said that there seems to be less demand for monthly parking by some of the downtown companies, and the manager of the United Parking Partners anxious to talk to Eckel about offering some spaces to islanders.

Audience member, Barbara Carter, said the parking committee asked multiple times for use of the \$15/day lot for either summer or winter, and the city was not at all interested in it. She did not think garages really want year-round islander parkers because they make more money on hourly parking. Carter also said that islander parking was removed and meters were put in to help businesses, providing them with short-term parking directly in front of store fronts.

Audience member, Heather Murdoch-Curry, asked if there was any data about usage of the Marginal Way lot. Eckel said usage was tied to the shuttle. During the first year, the usage was encouraging but the shuttle was not well publicized. Eckel was not sure if the shuttle will be put into place this summer.

Schaeffer noted that city employees are currently working only three days a week because the city finances have been severely reduced at this time. The dynamics of development versus space/livability are even harsher at this time. Islanders should continue to make their point to the city that main land parking is a priority for islanders.

OLD BUSINESS

Reallocation of FY2020 expected surpluses -

Schaeffer said that the three organizations eligible to receive the surpluses – the taxi, PITEA, and PEAT – said they didn't need the surplus this fiscal year.

Schaeffer made a motion to leave the budget balance of \$3,342.07 in the PIC account so that it is available to the city or might be available to the PIC before the City Council approves a new budget in September 2020.

Kelly-Rosenberg seconded.

Public comment: none

Councilor discussion: none

Unanimous vote to approve. Motion passed.

Improvements to the Welch Street Parking Lot

Schaeffer said there was no update from Keith Gray. Schaeffer spoke with Bruce Hyman who was involved with the flow of traffic and pedestrians at the ferry landing. Hyman said they would have an online survey, and a web-based community meeting for a presentation of the proposed improvements. These would be taking place in early-mid July.

Community meeting with Mayor Snyder

Schaeffer said that the mayor has not responded about whether the meeting will still take place. He will update the community when he hears something from the mayor.

Island Noise study – preliminary results from February data collection

Noise data collection took place in February. July data collection has been put on hold. Erica Walker, researcher at the Noise Study Lab at Boston University, said they are pulling in the data from the February sound level measurements, as well as some survey responses and some app responses. She is pulling in flight information from the airport and is trying to incorporate distance from sensor to road information. An early analysis indicates that in the off-season, the soundscape is very, very quiet. Average of 53 decibels per day during off-season. That is a very quiet soundscape. So any disruption is very significant to perception of noise. A 15 decibel increase represents a significant change in the environmental sound scape.

Schaeffer said there were two main areas of concern – air traffic over the island, and gas-powered golf carts. Schaeffer asked if the two noise sources could be isolated when the data is finally analyzed. Walker said the flights would show up in the February data, but she would need to see the summer data to be able to see if the golf carts/airplanes could be isolated in the spectrum analysis.

Kelly-Rosenberg asked if the differential between off-season noise level and tourist season noise level is the source of stress for residents. Kelly-Rosenberg asked if her data will frame the noise differential as a health problem. Walker said that is exactly accurate. She will send PIC a document that outlines the impact on people of various increases in decibel levels.

NEW BUSINESS

Peaks Island Post Office

Schaeffer said the PIC would send a letter of inquiry asking the Postal Service what their plans are for a new post office on the island.

Community Health Concerns – promoting use of face masks and social distancing

Schaeffer said that with increased visitors to the island, islanders are observing people not wearing face masks or observing social distance. Concerned community members have asked what could be done to as a community to encourage people to wear face masks and maintain proper social distance. Schaeffer asked for public suggestions.

Jane Banquer suggested that we create some signage for the boats to provide information about precautions and proper behavior that should be taken when boat riders arrive at Peaks Island. Banquer suggested that the signs should also be placed near businesses and down front. She said the signs should ask visitors to respect the health and safety of islanders.

Heather Murdoch-Curry also said we need signs but suggested they be held by community members as a physical reminder that people are asking them to respect the islander's health and safety. She also suggested that CBL is allowing day trippers which is against the "essential travel" order from the Governor.

Sam Wainwright asked who would decide what the signs would say and offered to help. Schaeffer said any volunteer can contribute. Wainwright asked if anyone knows that Reggae Sunday is coming to Peaks Island this Sunday. Kelly-Rosenberg said bars cannot open in July except for outside seating. Schaeffer commented that it is something the community needs to pay attention to because the people attending Reggae Sunday will likely not practice social distancing or wear masks.

Barbara Carter said Robin Clark has planned Reggae Sunday starting July 5th for nine week. She commented that CBL said they will only enforce wearing a mask to buy a ticket, but they are not going to enforce that people wear a mask while they ride the boat.

Peter McLaughlin said his work involves meeting privately with government officials and the intent of the most recent governor's order is that people should only be taking the boat for essential travel. He suggested that CBL should engage security to help enforce the wearing of masks on the boat. He commented that capacity numbers on the boats need to be re-visited.

Kelly-Rosenberg said PIC should commit to a forum to discuss long term strategies for dealing with COVID-19 since it is not going to go away quickly.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Audience member said the family who owns the building that housed the post office wants to rebuild the building and lease it back to the post office. But the post office would love to stop having a post office out on Peaks Island. Island postal carriers encourage islanders to advocate on behalf of bringing the post office back to Peaks Island by writing letters, making phone calls, etc. It is not a given that the United States Postal Service will replace the post office on Peaks Island.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

None.

Next PIC Meeting: Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 6:15 pm via ZOOM.

Meeting Adjournment: 8:12 p.m.