

City Council Workshop
June 2, 2014
8:30 P.M.
South Portland City Hall Council Chambers

Councilors Present

Gerard Jalbert, Mayor (absent)
Linda Cohen
Thomas Blake (absent)
Patricia Smith
Michael Pock
Maxine Beecher
Melissa Linscott

Staff Present

Jim Gailey, City Manager

MINUTES

In Mayor Jalbert's absence Councilor Cohen opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. She reminded folks that members of the public are invited to comment on each item as it comes before the Council for a period of no more than two (2) minutes. All questions or concerns would be made through the Chair and if they wished to address the City Council they would be asked to please raise their hand and upon being recognized would state their name and address for the records.

1. Amending Chapters 24 & 27 amendments regarding vernal pools and natural resources, historic and archaeological resources, shoreland zoning, variance approval process.
2. PACTS Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP) for FY's 2016/2017/2018

1. Amending Chapters 24 & 27 amendments regarding vernal pools and natural resources, historic and archaeological resources, shoreland zoning, variance approval process:

Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee has made proposed amendments to Chapter 24, "Subdivisions," and Chapter 27, "Zoning," as part of its charge of implementing the City's new Comprehensive Plan. The following are three sets of revisions:

- A few Shoreland Zoning changes requested by Mike Morse at DEP.
- New Subdivision and Zoning requirements relative to historic and natural resources, including vernal pools.
- An "opt-in" streamlining amendment per the new State law that would let the Code Enforcement Officer grant variances for ramps or other disability structures that encroach in setbacks (so that disabled folks don't have to wait in rehab centers, etc., until the monthly Board of Appeals meeting rolls around).

The Planning Board held a public hearing on April 22, 2014 and by a vote of 5-0 (Laidley absent; District At-Large vacant), the Planning Board recommended approval of the subdivision and zoning

text amendments. Attached is a copy of the Planning Board report. Tex Haeuser was at Monday's meeting to answer any questions.

Tex Haeuser, Planning Director discussed further details of this item and explained that as its second action to meet the charge of implementing the City's new Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee has brought forward a proposal to amend the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances with three sets of revisions:

- A few Shoreland Zoning changes requested by Mike Morse at DEP.
- New Subdivision and Zoning requirements relative to historic and natural resources, including vernal pools.
- An "opt-in" streamlining amendment per the new State law that would let the Code Enforcement Officer grant variances for ramps or other disability structures that encroach in setbacks (so that disabled folks don't have to wait in rehab centers, etc., until the monthly Board of Appeals meeting rolls around).

On April 22nd the Planning Board held a public hearing regarding these proposed amendments after having work shopped them on March 25th.

He further discussed the new items being presented as part of this and Vernal Pools being one of them. He described these as being wetlands that are not wet all year around and support frogs, salamanders, and other wildlife like this and are protected areas. He discussed asking applicants on the impact of land and having this burden be on them, not trying to set-up a whole separate board for this but more so having the applicants address such issues, feasibility and how they can fix and relocate.

Tex further discussed Code Enforcement provisions for them to be able to create or following through with what needs to be done, proposed amendments that were first discussed and changed at the Comprehensive Planning Committee, then to Planning Board for a 5-0 vote at that level.

Public Comment Opened: No comments

Councilor Smith was happy to see this upgrade being done at this level, she asked about having more support from the State and asked how a land owner would know if they have a Vernal Pool?

Tex Haeuser added that there is not a checklist and many times they will bring in a specialist to determine this.

Councilor Smith asked if we have archeological digs on the State registry. (Yes 3)

Councilor Pock felt that there is a Vernal Pool behind Small Elementary School.

Councilor Linscott added that there is a Vernal Pool near Adelbert Street beyond Hinckley Park. She asked if the property owner would know where to go and what to do with this? She had concern for them regarding this issue.

Tex Haeuser added that they would refer to the DEP if unsure about a particular parcel and they would help as much as they could. He also discussed the size of a development at which this could become an issue but added that it's not too common.

Councilor Beecher added that she and Tex have discussed this and understand the issue regarding the requirement and having concern with all of this and for the individual property owners, and felt that larger developers will realize that this is a requirement.

Jim Gailey added that property owners may know and reach out to an Engineer to take a look at a parcel before they move ahead.

Councilor Smith asked if this was being viewed as a project or not and felt that this is hard without a lot of easy answers.

Councilor Cohen asked about educational literature to hand out to people.

Tex Haeuser explained that there is web site information on this and added that this is something that they can do.

Councilor Linscott discussed modifications to property to support this and added that it is required and needs to be done.

Jim Gailey added that they will plan to move forward with this item for the June 16 meeting and have the first reading.

2. PACTS Projects: Jim Gailey explained that the City of South Portland participates in an organization called the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee (PACTS) that distributes state and federal money for transportation studies and projects for the communities around Greater Portland. PACTS is a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that develops a priority list of projects to be funded with the "MPO Allocation" made available by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT). The MPO Allocation is the sum of the federal plus state and local matching funds. Proposals for use of the PACTS MPO Allocation must be eligible for STP or NHS funding. Categories for funding eligibility include:

1. Reconstruction of roadways
2. Bike/Pedestrian Improvements
3. Collector Roads
4. Transit
5. Intersections

In January, City staff developed and submitted a number of proposals for PACTS funding. Around the first of May staff received word that four projects scored high enough for funding consideration. These projects included the following:

Project Cost Local Match

25%

Broadway corridor and Mill Creek signal improvements \$320,980 / \$80,245

Main Street - complete streets project – Thornton Heights \$1,246,664 / \$311,666

Lincoln Street rehabilitation from Billy Vachon Drive to Broadway \$385,000 / \$96,250

Multi-Use Path - Billy Vachon Drive to Greenbelt \$597,300 / \$149,325

Total 2,549,944 \$637,486

South Portland was very successful in this application round for PACTS funding. Funding for these projects requires a local match of 25%, which is currently slated at \$637,486 based on current day estimates.

Broadway Corridor & Mill Creek Signal Improvements – This Project is a corridor improvement program that has a variety of improvement actions aimed at addressing vehicle congestion and pedestrian and bicycle safety. These strategies were developed in 2012 as part of a PACTS funded Study entitled "Broadway Corridor Intersection Improvement Study". As stated above, PM Peak Hour traffic operations are Level of Service E at all major intersections. The intersection of Broadway and Cottage Road is a High Crash Location. There is a mixture of pedestrian signal phasing at these intersections - some concurrent and some exclusive. Free channelized right turns make crossing Broadway unsafe for pedestrians. And finally, bicycle accommodations are limited through the corridor making travel by this mode a challenge, even for experienced riders. The proposed Project contains action items specifically aimed at all of these deficiencies. The proposed Project will include the following actions:

1. Extend the right turn lane coming into South Portland at Waterman Drive by restriping the existing pavement.
2. Lengthen the existing double left turn lanes heading westbound at the Broadway/Waterman Drive intersection.
3. Signalize the free right turn lane at Broadway/Ocean
4. Signalize the free right turn lanes at Broadway/Cottage
5. Improve the bike connection to the Greenbelt coming off the Casco Bay Bridge at Waterman Drive
6. Add signage and pavement markings along the corridor to enhance driver awareness of bike usage within the roadway
7. Upgrade the pavement markings and color treatment of the crosswalks at the Broadway/Waterman intersection
8. Upgrade the crosswalks at Ocean, Cottage, and Erskine Drive
9. Connect the traffic signals at Waterman/Erskine, Waterman/Market, and Ocean/Highland to the Regional Transportation Management System.
10. Make lane use and signal indication changes on Waterman Drive at Erskine and Market to better reflect traffic volumes.

Main Street Complete Streets – The section of Main Street proposed for reconstruction is the focus on a number of current state, local and regional initiatives that the City would like to combine into a single coordinated program. Main Street (US Route 1) is presently a 4- lane facility that once served as the primary north-south route for the State of Maine prior to the construction of the Maine Turnpike. It currently serves between 15-16,000 vehicles per day of a local nature. As such, the City believes that it is a prime candidate for a Road Diet treatment, i.e. a reallocation of the existing pavement width for uses more than just cars and trucks. The City is also in the process of reconstructing its underground sewer, water, and drainage infrastructure in this location to address stormwater quality issues, which means the street, will be torn up and need to be rebuilt. Maine DOT has this stretch of roadway scheduled for pavement preservation in 2016. PACTS has identified this street as part of its Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update – linking Scarborough to South Portland and Portland. And finally, the City has recently adopted a Complete Streets policy, which it feels is most appropriate here, as evidenced by a recently Conceptual Study, partially funded by PACTS that contains new bike lanes, reduced width and number of travel lanes, improved sidewalks, and a new overall streetscape. The end product will be a much improved appearing streetscape for the neighborhood and abutting businesses, but also an improved transportation facility for all modes that will calm traffic speeds and improve safety for all users of this corridor. The portion of this overall Project that the City is seeking assistance with is primarily the street, sidewalk, and streetscape elements. More specifically this will include, curbing and curb bump outs, ADA compliant sidewalks, esplanades, landscaped medians, street trees, street lighting, upgraded bus stop facilities, and highly reflective pavement markings and colored stamped pavement for the bike lanes and crosswalks. The Main Street streetscape work was originally slated for Phase III of the Thornton Heights project, but due to the need to keep both Portland Water and Until on the project, the Phase II and III scopes have been swapped. The PACTS grant of over 934K will be funded using 2016 funding, however; MDOT will allow the funds to be allocated and spent during the summer of 2015. MDOT will then final pave the entire Main Street corridor in 2016.

Lincoln Street Rehab from Billy Vachon Drive to Broadway – Install a new strategically placed closed drainage system to correct existing surface runoff ponding and reclaim/repave the roadway's surface to reestablish the street's crown and provide a new and structurally improved roadway

wearing surface. It is the City's intent to perform this work prior to the construction of a new multi use path along Lincoln Street which will connect the Veteran's Memorial Bridge to the Greenbelt. **Multi-Use Path from Billy Vachon to the Greenbelt Walkway** - Construct a 9 -10 foot wide multi-use path from the existing Veteran's Memorial Bridge pathway to the South Portland Greenbelt using Billy Vachon Drive, Lincoln Street, and Broadway in accordance with the recommendations of the PACTS funded Multi-Use Path Connection Study by Alta Planning and Design. See attached plans. Tex Haeuser was at Monday's meeting to answer questions.

Tex Haeuser, Planning Director further discussed the maps that showed the projects to be worked on as well as the creation of more improvements for walking and biking. He discussed the Bike/Ped Committee and the work that they have done, and the Pleasant Hill Road area.

Public Comment Opened:

Russell Lunt Brigham Road added that this was excellent work, great re-stripping that had been done and great plans ahead.

Public Comment Closed:

Councilor Beecher added that this is great work being done here by the City Manager and Staff, she added that they are very fortunate to have this work, and projects which can be very hard to accomplish.

Councilor Smith agreed that these are great projects, having a PACTS relationship is a good thing. She added that Tex and staff should be proud for work well done and all at different levels being dealt with here as well. She felt that building relationships and having support is key.

Councilor Linscott asked about the timing on this, and when we will hear word on this she also asked about more options on funds for the path on Evans Street to Lincoln.

Jim Gailey discussed that the money would be available October 2016, he added that in June they can authorize for funding and that we will need to show that matching funds are available.

Councilor Pock liked the long-range planning but had concern for the bikes and having these become safer.

Councilor Cohen liked the building of relationships with PACTS and working with them on these projects being very beneficial. She felt the importance of drawing closer and not dividing out.

Jim Gailey added that this order can come forth at the June 16 meeting for discussion, voting and moving forward.

The City Council Workshop Adjourned at 9:20 p.m.