

City Council Workshop

Agenda Item #1

June 12, 2018

Energy & Recycling Committee
Membership

The South Portland Recycling Committee was formed in 2000 and consisted of seven active volunteer members and two staff support members. Its mission was – and continues to be – to educate the public, promote, simplify, and measure the performance of recycling. The committee has done an exceptional job and the City has seen a significant increase in recycling.

In 2007, then-Mayor Claude Morgan signed the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and in doing so, South Portland agreed to establish an “energy conservation committee” tasked with exploring ways of promoting and implementing energy conservation in South Portland.

At the December 10, 2007 Council workshop, the City Council discussed combining these two committees into one based on their common goals which include: saving taxpayer dollars, educating, promoting, conserving energy, and preserving the environment. The City Council further discussed combining these two committees at its February 11, 2008 workshop and requested ordinance language be prepared and brought forward.

At the March 17, 2008 Council meeting, Ordinance #12-07/08 was brought forward to formally establish the Energy and Recycling Committee in Chapter 2 “Administration and Legislation” of the Code of Ordinances.

This item is being brought forward to discuss reducing the number of committee members as requested by the ERC Committee in the attached memo dated March 15, 2018. Members of the ERC will be attending Tuesday’s meeting for this discussion.



City Manager

Memorandum

TO: South Portland City Councilors

CC: Emily Scully, City Clerk
Julie Rosenbach, Sustainability Director

FROM: South Portland Energy & Recycling Committee

DATE: March 15, 2018

RE: Energy and Recycling Committee Membership

The purpose of this memo is to request that City Council consider changing Sec. 2-136 of the ordinance governing composition and quorum of the Energy and Recycling Committee (ERC). Currently the ordinance calls for the committee to be made up of fourteen (14) voting members. The ERC would like to reduce this number to seven (7).

Background

The ERC spent a substantial part of 2017 examining its functionality and defining its focus of work. By the end of 2017, the committee decided that focusing on one achievable project for the coming year would be the best way to serve the City and align with the committee's available resources and capacity. However, during that time, the ERC experienced a noticeable rate of membership turnover as well as difficulty achieving a quorum at monthly meetings. Both of these factors significantly hampered the committee's ability to make decisions and move forward in a meaningful way.

Membership turnover resulted in part from the appointment of a few members who either attended only one meeting or never at all. We hope to improve this situation by suggesting implementation of a more rigorous appointment process – one that will ensure appointment of members who are able to attend meetings regularly and contribute to the work of the committee in a meaningful way.

The committee believes that reducing the size of the committee and making the appointment procedure more robust will help mitigate attendance and quorum issues and thereby make the ERC more effective.

Suggested Changes

1. Reduce number of committee members from fourteen (14) to seven (7).

Section 2-136 of the current Ordinance states:

“(a) The composition of the Committee is designed to involve interested citizens, business leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that a variety of voices are heard and different sectors of the community are represented.

Accordingly, the Committee shall be made up of the following:

The Public Works Director or his/her designee (non-voting);

The School Department Facilities and Grounds Director or his/her designee (non-voting); and

Fourteen representatives appointed by the City Council, all of whom shall be residents of the city. There shall be no more than four (4) voting members from any one voting district.

(b) A quorum of the Committee shall consist of a majority of appointed members.”

ERC suggests the following changes/amendments Section 2-136 of the ordinance: (deletions struck through; additions underlined)

(a) The composition of the Committee is designed to involve interested citizens, business leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that a variety of voices are heard and different sectors of the community are represented.

Accordingly, the Committee shall be made up of the following:

The ~~Public Works~~ Sustainability Director or his/her designee (non-voting);

The School Department Facilities and Grounds Director or his/her designee (non-voting); and

~~Fourteen~~ Seven (7) representatives appointed by the City Council, one from each district and two at large members, all of whom shall be residents of the city. There shall be no more than four (4) voting members from any one voting district.

(b) A quorum of the Committee shall consist of a majority of appointed members.

2. When identifying new members for appointment to the ERC, the appointing City Councilor and ERC Chairperson shall meet with potential ERC appointees to:

- Explain the work of the committee and verify the appointee’s qualifications for the committee. No specific credentials are required. A qualified member may simply have an interest in energy & recycling issues and the ability to commit and contribute to the work of the committee.
- Explain and discuss the time commitment required, specifically the requirement of attending a minimum of 75% of meetings within a 12 month period. Potential appointees should also be informed that three (3) consecutive absences will render their spot on the committee vacant.

As of the date of this memo, the ERC has 12 active members. If changes to the composition of the ERC are accepted, then we suggest that no new members be appointed until membership falls below 7 members.

Conclusion

While the City continues to show a commitment to increasing energy efficiency and recycling, we hope that these proposed changes will allow the committed citizens who serve on the Energy & Recycling Committee to support the City’s efforts and provide additional capacity for new initiatives and policy development.