



CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

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Scott Morelli
City Manager

MINUTES

O'Neil Street Facility Re-Use Planning Committee

Thursday, June 22, 2017

6:15 PM

City Hall - Council Chambers

Committee Members

Patti Smith (Chair, Council Rep)

Steve Marston (Resident)

Linden Thigpen (Resident)

Linda Boudreau (Planning Board)

Harold Spetla (Resident)

Joshua Reny (Asst. City Manager)

Consultants

Laura Moorehead (Facilitator)

Absent

Sara Zografos (Resident)

Tex Haeuser (Planning Director)

Barbara Dee (Conservation Commission)

Craig Piper (Comprehensive Planning)

1. Meeting was called to order by Patti Smith (Chair) at 6:10 pm.
2. The minutes of May 25, 2017 meeting had not been forwarded to Committee members in advance of the meeting and therefore will be circulated and adopted at the next meeting.
3. Forum Debrief: L. Moorehead explained where the committee is at in the process and opened discussion on the Public Forum held on Tuesday, June 20th. What about the forum worked best? The committee provided a variety of feedback. Having plans on each of the tables was very valuable to the table discussions. Overall, the forum went very well. The conversation allowed people to think about new ideas, it broke down some of the reservations that may have existed about what might happen. The committee could have done better preparing to answer some of the detailed questions people asked. For instance, questions about how affordable housing is defined, what the average size of homes are in the neighborhood, etc. People were curious to know if the City has the ability to limit the cost of housing, i.e. deed restrictions. The issue of housing affordability is a sensitive subject because many equate the term with low-income housing or rental housing. One table had a healthy debate on what the higher priority should be,

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rising property values or providing affordable housing opportunities. Participants had a difficult time understanding what a small commercial enterprise would look like in the neighborhood. Ideas floated included an art studio, co-working space, and a farmers market. Similar themes came from most tables, including open/green space, traffic calming, and affordability. People liked the idea of preserving the greenhouse, but there are some issues with the structure and ongoing maintenance that likely means it is not a feasible option. Perhaps it could be salvaged. Open/green space may involve some collaboration with partner organizations, the South Portland Land Trust for example.

4. **Public Comments:** Several members of the public spoke to the committee and advocated for retaining the land to create a public park. One member of the public advocated for affordable residential development with some land set aside for open space.
5. **Next Steps:** The Committee should work to answer all of the outstanding questions that have been captured in the Report on Public Input from the Forum. Staff will take the first crack at the questions and will assemble an FAQ document to be added to the City website. Some of the questions are black-and-white, and relatively easy to answer, while others are more nuanced and will require some additional study. There is a Council workshop scheduled for Monday, June 26 for a Committee check-in and update. Committee members are encouraged to attend. The meeting begins at 6:30p.m. Council guidance will allow the Committee to begin its next phase, to begin narrowing down some of the conceptual ideas to just a few design concepts.
6. The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Next meeting is on Thursday, July 27 from 6:15 – 8:00 pm at City Council Chambers.