City of South Portland
OSAC Meeting
April 13th, 2021


1. Andrew F. called the meeting to order at 3:33pm

2. The committee approved the meeting minutes from the March 9th, 2021 meeting.

3. Two metrics for evaluation of properties were reviewed: “Heat Island/Tree Canopy Gaps” and “Climate Change Resiliency.” The Committee agreed that a high score in this category should reflect places where heat islands exist (with gaps in the tree canopy) and where there is the greatest capacity to improve these gap areas. Andrew asked the committee to rescore the properties with this in mind, sending their numbers to Karl before the next meeting. Regarding “Climate Change Resiliency,” the committee was reminded, especially when it comes to scoring shoreline properties, to give a higher score to those properties which already support and offset climate changes rather than those which would require/add infrastructure costs (such as sea walls) to the purchase price.

4. Incomplete scores for the properties evaluated to date were reviewed:
   a. Transit parameter on the Petrilik property was rated 1.
   b. The Sable Oaks property (and its capacity for outside funding) is made complicated by the two components of the parcel, the golf course and the trails/tree canopy on the site. Kathi noted that the Conservation Commission has been talking about the Sable Oaks golf course to be used as the South Portland municipal golf course, and the rest of the property retained as conservation. It was pointed out that this is a highly industrialized area with the potential for expansive commercial and residential development in the future… green space might be required in this underserved area. Milan commented that to negotiate with a developer on a project with community benefit was something to consider with this particular property; it was decided to score the parcel in its entirety, with a “3” score settled on for “outside funding” options, and as a “1” for “Maintenance Capacity” since a golf course would require considerable resources and attention.
   c. The PPL property near Bug Light was scored 6 for “Flexibility of Use.”
   d. The Hill Street property is to be looked at as only the parcel on Hill Street and not the entirety of the tank farm. There have been proposals to use this parcel as a dog park. Committee members were asked to rescore this property with these parameters in mind.
   e. 854R Highland Ave, a neighborhood trail system with connectivity to the Green Belt, was rated 2 on “Transit.”
   f. Tom mentioned that Robert Kimball’s property, as a gateway to the Barberry Creek Woods parcel, has potential DEP funding options due to the contamination of the waterways there. That possibility will have to be further investigated.
   g. New York Ave properties 200 and 199 were given a 2 for “Outside Funding” although this is an underserved area with few nearby parks or accessible green space.
   h. The TI properties have potential to be a resource for Redbank, a highly underserved and largely-minority population of the city, as a natural habitat, hiking and preservation area. There is very little public space in the general vicinity of these TI parcels.
   i. It was decided that while there were conversations about the property at 45 Wallace Ave being a potential location for an Amtrak station in South Portland some time in the future, that this was
a city/Amtrak issue and not one for OSAC to be reviewing, so that property was tabled.
j. Postal Way was debated as to its qualification as an “underserved” area as well as its limited
connectivity to other parcels; the prime value of this parcel lies in its use as “preservation of
natural habitat” and “resilience to climate change."

5. The Upcoming Bond Issue: Are We Ready? The effects of Covid and the current citywide
tax overhaul creates financial burdens for citizens this year, and the question lingers as to
whether a bond asking taxpayers to come up with more cash might leave a sour taste for this and
future requests for funding. Andrew supported the idea of forward and aim toward the November
date, while Tom and Dan urged that we take more time to compile information and resources,
waiting for a spring or fall 2022 opportunity.
Milan noted that the City budget workshops have begun but have not reached any final decisions,
however he did note that there would be NO appropriation from the city to the Land Bank
fund this year.
So where will acquisition funds come from in the next year? Milan noted the Freshwater
Acquisition Fund, the city fund balance, and land swap deals each are potential avenues for
acquiring quality properties before any bond monies become available.
Dan commented that we’ll need to be creative as to how properties could be acquired/funded,
and reiterated the points in Tom’s recent letter to the committee as important aspects of the bond
proposal we should have lined up prior to pushing for passage.
But Milan stated that rather than data analysis about the bond process and a specific list of
properties, the City Council is only looking to OSAC to provide a dollar amount for the
bond, based on our assessment of the properties on our list.
After much discussion about which city entity is responsible for which part of the bond question~~
for instance, “who writes the bond question itself?” and “how does it get decided whether we
move forward toward November or postpone until spring/fall 2022” ~~ it was determined that the
decision to put the bond on the ballot is ultimately up to the City Council. All OSAC can do is be
ready to move ahead by providing a specific dollar amount for the bond to the City Council, AND
if by consensus we feel it’s in the best interest of passage to delay, make a written suggestion to
the Council to that effect.
In the meantime, Andrew agreed to contact each of the Councilors to get a feel for where
they land on the timing of the bond, and for each OSAC member to read Dan and Tom’s
letters of concern so that we are prepared to make a final statement on the question at the
next meeting.

6. Chelsea suggested that each member send Karl their top 4 priority properties to Karl,
and it was agreed that this will be helpful to see which parcels “rise to the top.” There will
be no new parcels to score for the next meeting.

7. Barbara Dee, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, gave an update on activities regarding
Old Joe’s Pond, in which the property owner, developer, and relevant City departments are in a
series of meetings to solidify a conservation easement (in conjunction with the Freshwater
Conservation Fund) which would allow for transfer of ownership and reclamation/ rehabilitation of the
site. Barbara shared her contact info with the group so that any interested OSAC member might
attend future meetings on this project.

9. The next meeting for the OSAC was confirmed: 3:30pm – 5:30pm on May 11th, 2021.

10. Andrew F. adjourned the meeting at 5:31 pm.