

City Council Workshop
September 8, 2014
6:00 P.M.
South Portland City Hall Council Chambers

Councilors Present

Gerard Jalbert, Mayor (absent)
Linda Cohen
Thomas Blake
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. Southern Maine Community College – Site Walk**
- 2. Climate Action Plan**
- 3. SMART Initiative**
- 4. Review of Upcoming Workshops**

1. Southern Maine Community College – Site Walk: Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that Harriman Architects & Engineers, on behalf of Southern Maine Community College, requested an appeal to the City Council for the denial of a permit for curb cuts for the school's Hub Athletic Center parking lot. The property is shown as Map 5, Lot 89 on the City's tax maps. It borders Fort Road and Surfsite Road. The college had 225 leased parking spaces near Bug Light Park; however, the lease was discontinued. In order to provide parking for its students, it would like to create parking at its Hub Athletic Center Lot. The number of curb cuts, the width of the curb cuts and the placement within 200 feet of an intersection constitutes denial per Chapter 23, of the City's Code of Ordinances. This request for an appeal was brought forward at the August 4th City Council meeting. The item was postponed in order to conduct a site walk of the property. This site walk was Monday September 8 at 6:00 p.m.

2. Climate Action Plan: Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that in September of 2007 the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement was signed by the City of South Portland. This agreement called for the City to focus on reducing global warming pollutants through programs that provide economic and quality of life benefits such as reduced energy bills in residential, commercial and public buildings, green space preservation, air quality improvements, reduced traffic

congestion, improved transportation choices, and economic development and job creation through energy conservation and new energy technologies.

As part of this goal was the creation of a Climate Action Plan that would identify attainable goals for the following: using energy more efficiently to keep municipal operating costs low, harnessing renewable energy to power City buildings, enhancing access to sustainable transportation modes, and recycling local waste, in order to keep dollars in the local economy, support local green jobs, and improve community quality of life.

The Plan has been years in the making and has had a number of individuals working on the document, starting with the federal stimulus funded sustainability position the City had in 2010. I would like to thank Emily Freedman, former Community Development Coordinator for collecting what had been done in the past and reorganizing and reformatting the Plan to what is being presented on Monday. In addition to Emily, the Energy and Recycling Committee, Michelle DeBartolo-Stone, Todd Erickson, Karen Purinton, Jon Jennings and Russ Brigham all played a role in the development of the Plan.

On Monday night I would like to present the Municipal Climate Action Plan for review and discussion. Members of the Energy and Recycling Committee have been invited to the presentation.

Mr. Gailey gave a Power Point Presentation and further discussed each of the following areas:

- Why a Climate Action Plan
- Vision
- Executive Summary
- Introduction/Development/Commitment to the CAP
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baseline
- Municipal Opportunities for Reducing Energy Consumption
- General Recommendations
- Municipal Facility-Related Actions
- Behavior Change and Policy Recommendations
- Implementation Plan
- City of South Portland Sustainability Resolve
- 2007 Emissions Inventory
- City of South Portland/Siemens Energy
- Performance Contract and Performance Assurance Report
- Energy & Recycling Committee
- Accomplishments to date
- Treatment Plant
- Greenhouse Gas/City Buildings/School Buildings
- What's next – Ideas of what to come, with savings, etc?

Recommendations:

- Energy consumption reduction
- Municipal Facilities

- Transportation
- Renewable Energy Actions
- Behavior Recommendations
- Implementation Plan
- Do now: (vehicle issues)

Public Comment Opened:

Russell Lunt Brigham Street felt that this process was being very proactive and congratulated the committee for its great work.

Public Comment Closed:

Councilor Blake thanked the committee and Mr. Gailey for this great information and for the proposed goals for the future and was supportive of this. He added that the work here started in 2007 and would possibly like to re-visit the committee name as it covers a wider area than just Climate issues. He looked forward to moving ahead with the goals listed above and to look at the following areas:

- Adopt Plan – Take out supplemental information as it can become too large to focus on, need to pair down.
- Get the School Department on board
- Funding areas and issues
- Kick-start an in-house energy sustainability committee as there are many areas that a new staff person can work on now.

Councilor Beecher agreed with Councilor Blake on moving forward and asked when they could start these projects. She felt the need to have more than just a part-time staff person but more of a coordinator possibly to work full-time. She asked for a summary that would list out all of the points for public/school areas to work on as this many help it to be not as complex as they move forward.

Councilor Smith felt that this is a moving target of so many different areas, that a full-time person monitoring, developing the potential growth in this area is great and they could really do a wonderful job here. She added working on advocacy in Augusta would be very important as well, using the green capital budget and changing the behavior of how things are done currently. She felt that this is a big issue and can be hard to change such areas. She discussed looking at this with a performance review and further discussed street lights and how many of them were shut off and maybe if they were changed to all LED's that they could bring some of the lights back, she felt this was a great presentation, was excited for this to happen and thanked all involved.

Councilor Linscott agreed that this was an impressive document and had so much information in here; she added that working with the School Department on this is very important and that this is serious dollars and cents that can help this City out. She agreed that a summary of the presentation would be helpful to use as well.

Councilor Pock added that he sits on the Comprehensive Plan/Implementation Process agreed that this was great work as well as getting the School on board, he also liked the idea of the new electric cars and was in support of a full-time staff person and providing more education on this program which is big but he feels they can do it.

Councilor Cohen discussed the street light issue and maybe going to LED's and having some turned back on, she discussed a full-time person and agreed about the name of this program and how there is much more to this than the climate aspect and people may not realize how much more involved this is. She asked the City Manager where they would go from here (October for a next meeting)

3. SMART Initiative: Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that in July of 2013, the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) worked with area transit agencies to send out an RFQ for consultants for the assessment and feasibility of, and development of an Implementation Plan to achieve consolidation of the existing three fixed route transit providers in the Greater Portland region. This process was a result of the 2007 Regional Transit Coordination Study. In the study many of the recommendations of the Coordinated Study have been completed or are underway with consolidation being one of the last to be explored.

As part of PACTS and GPCOG, a Southern Maine Area Transportation (SMART) Steering Committee was established to explore the potential for consolidating two or more of the seven transit providers in the Greater Portland Region. Councilor Blake serves as the City's representative on the SMART Steering Committee. The SMART Committee asked an Ad Hoc Working Group made up of transit providers to provide a recommendation on how to proceed. Upon hiring the consultants, URS, one of the first decisions the Committee needed to work through was to define the scope of work. Five options were submitted by URS for consideration (Option A – Option E) ranging from Option A do nothing and Option E establishing a transit authority. The Committee instructed URS to proceed with the following three options:

Option C - Merger of Two Providers (SP and Metro)

Option D - Merger of Three Providers (SP, Metro & Shuttle) through a new transit district

Option E - Merger of Three Providers (SP, Metro & Shuttle) through a new transit authority

Through the knowledge of the desired Options of the Committee, URS went through a Cost-Benefit Analysis (Phase I of the study) to better define and understand each of the three options chosen. The results as it relates to money were done in two ways as outlined below:

Option E – had a ten year savings of 1.9 million

Option C – had a ten year savings of \$563,094 (\$56K a year or \$28K per entity)

Option D – had a ten year savings of -\$156,251 (each would be paying more)

Option E – had a net present value (NPV) of 1.6 million

Option C – had a net present value (NPV) of \$720,611

Option D – had a net present value (NPV) of -\$13,303 Taking out capital expenditures over ten years resulted in:

Option E – positive \$229,729

Option C – negative \$91,482

Option D – negative \$68,722

The consultant has now completed step one of a two step process. The next step is for the Steering Committee to provide guidance on a preferred Option and for the consultant to work through the implementation portion of the study. The numbers above range from having minimal to no benefits of a merge. The Option that has been recommended, but not acted on, is Option D. The City Council has an opportunity to share their opinion of which Option should be explored. Through his conversations with Greg Jordan, Executive Director of Metro late Friday afternoon, these numbers could change as a result of the process the consultants will work through as they develop implementation phase of the study. If this is the case, the City should hold on any decision making

until the implementation portion of the report is complete. The workshop is geared to provide the Council with an update of the SMART initiative. Further City Council and staff review and analysis will be done once the entire study has been completed.

Public Comment Opened:

Ed Suslovic President GPCOG discussed further information on this SMART Initiative let the City Council know if they had any questions that there were several members present who could answer those.

Mike Reynolds Select Board Raymond, Maine GPCOG Representative/SMART Committee and was positioned for the outside view and offered information to help assist toward a final decision. He would like to see the elimination of borders, to have all transit for Southern Maine.

Steve Linell Team Member discussed the Benefit Analysis Summary Results Option E.

Neil Allen Executive Director GPCOG thanked the Council and felt that this initiative strives to bring all communities together and moving forward on this project and would ask to come back for the implementation process.

Bonnie Rodman Metro Board of Directors (President) discussed giving up the “Metro” brand and becoming regional transportation, becoming all linked for the rider. She further discussed benefits, barriers, and questions to answer regarding labor issues, working out in time with an in-depth study, letting it go through the process to see the outcome.

Greg Jordan General Manager of Metro thanked all involved with this work, discussed moving ahead and felt gratified. He discussed a study of options here and gave examples of ridership.

Ed Suslovic thanked Tom Meyers who was instrumental in writing this first plan and felt that this was a great job done. He further discussed the need to look at this openly and fairly as it is a cost allocated among several communities which would have a governance model. He further discussed that it is eight different communities who has an individual that is from an elected body to become a point person for contracting by GPCOG as a working group for being a voice to be heard from each area loud and clear.

Russ Lunt Brigham Road asked about the bus drivers and had concern for them and others regarding such a change here.

Public Comment Closed:

Councilor Blake has been part of the GPCOG and SMART initiative and with a change in directors he apologized for not providing up-to-date information or contacts here. He felt that this was the right direction to move in, he discussed being flexible, moving forward, having a level field and like the ideas that they were looking at.

Councilor Beecher recalled several years back when they were part of Metro and the reasons why South Portland left, she had concern regarding these past issues and felt that they could be a problem this time around as well. She felt that they have worked very hard here for our City system, and bringing it where it is today. She was willing to sit through another process here but did have concern about people who are involved here that do not have a stake in the process. She is open but does have that strong memory of the past.

Councilor Smith discussed the customer benefit here, growth of ridership, possible Sunday service, Airport area, increase modes and was open to the second phase. She would like to see more information and asked about a time-frame?

Councilor Linscott just recently traveled on a bus to Boston and felt that this was a great service to use. She further discussed the new ideas, customer service, quality control and the importance of all areas as well as local control being an area for further discussion.

Councilor Pock he agreed with the idea of having a better bus service, trying to eliminate cars, helping the area out and agreed with the need to look further into the study with more information.

Councilor Cohen has been a bus rider over the years and understands the importance of this service and felt that providing the best service for riders and local consumers is the direction she would like to see happen and was in support of furthering this process into the next phase.

Discussion ensued on the taxpayers and the system serving the public well and to keep looking at the study and taking it from there. Phase II January 2015 4-6 months plan for one option.

4. Review of Upcoming Workshops: Jim Gailey, City Manager explained that this item was brought forward to discuss upcoming City Council Workshop and added that this discussion is done on a monthly basis.

- September 22 - Draft Ordinance Committee (Invite Comprehensive Plan and Planning Board Members)
- October 15 – Conservation Commission Update to Council, Electric Cars
- October 27 – School Board Combination (Energy Sustainability, Day Program, High School Update)
- November 10 – Caucus for Mayor

Further discussion on SMCC and the need to give them answer weather it be a Workshop or a Meeting but should most likely make a decision soon, possibly after the September 15 City Council Meeting.

Jim Gailey discussed electric vehicles and a lease for the next three years.

Councilor Smith agreed to look at a lease and at feasibility.

Councilor Blake and Beecher felt the need to have a Workshop on this first.

Councilor Pock agreed on a Workshop and getting the numbers.

Councilor Linscott agreed as well on a Workshop and discussion of lease or purchase.

The City Council Workshop Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.