



EXECUTIVE  
DEPARTMENT

## CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

P. O. Box 9422  
25 Cottage Road  
South Portland, ME 04116-9422

Scott Morelli  
City Manager

### MINUTES

#### O'Neil Street Facility Re-Use Planning Committee

Thursday, April 27, 2017

6:15 PM

City Hall - Council Chambers

#### Committee Members

Patti Smith (Chair, Council Rep)

Linda Boudreau (Planning Board)

Harold Spetla (Resident)

Barbara Dee (Conservation Commission)

Steve Marston (Resident)

Linden Thigpen (Resident)

#### Staff & Consultants

Tex Haeuser (Planning Director)

Laura Moorehead (Facilitator)

Owens McCullough (Engineering)

#### Absent

Andrew Capelluti (Energy & Recycling)

Sara Zografos (Resident)

Craig Piper (Comprehensive Planning)

Joshua Reny (Asst. City Manager)

1. Meeting was called to order by Smith (Chair) at 6:15 pm.
2. L. Moorehead asked for comments and/or responses related to the working group's O'Neil St. site walk on April 5. S. Marston mentioned the diverse elevations and severe slope on the property. H. Spetla mentioned the idea of re-using some materials that are currently on the property. L. Thigpen mentioned the adjacent private (unimproved) lot (on Olive St.) and described its current state. L. Boudreau commented on the relatively large size of the parcel and given the varied topography, the approx. 6-acre parcel was deceiving in size. She provided the group with similar sized public places in the City to help us better appreciate and understand the relative size of the O'Neil St. parcel in relation to other well know public spaces within the City. O. McCullough provided the group with a rough estimate of parcel clean-up/readiness of \$250,000 (includes building demolition and removal of underground tanks). He also mentioned that Sebago Technics would be responsible for providing a current, up-to-date boundary survey of the parcel. L. Moorehead reminded the group that one of the charges of the group is to balance both community development and economic development interests. The working group

would strive to balance the needs and concerns of the abutters/neighbors, and immediate neighborhood with the broader needs and goals of the City.

3. L. Moorehead provided an overview of the group's work plan, including the progressive phases and specific activities within those distinct phases that the working group would undertake over the next several months.

The group reviewed its vision statement and committee members provided additional comments relative to what the group would like to accomplish. In thoughtful response to the vision statement, the group added:

- An inclusive and transparent process.
  - Building and gaining public confidence for a well-organized, thoughtful public process, including the two public forums to maximize input and involvement.
  - Recognizing that the entire City should be involved in this process and not just the immediate neighborhood.
  - Create a positive, well-designed process that could be replicated to other City parcels, projects and re-development opportunities.
  - High quality, thoughtful, integrated design for now and future generations.
  - Many liked the idea of creating a "hidden gem" with the neighborhood
  - Character and uniqueness does not need to be expensive.
4. Next, the group referred back to the list of Assets, Ideas and Principles document that was submitted by committee members and collated by L. Moorehead. Emphasis was placed on the principles that emerged for the combined lists. There was strong consensus that these principles would serve as a good foundation for the public forums.
  5. In discussing phase two (sequence and initial thoughts) about creating a robust public forum(s) process, much of the conversation was focused on providing an integrated approach that would be most applicable given the location of this property (nestled within a well-established neighborhood). Its *overall design* would be one of, if not the most important element to the successful redesign of the property. L. Boudreau suggested that the public forums would potentially generate more discussion if there were some initial/proposed details about re-use, versus plans from one or more developers. O. McCullough and T. Haeuser suggested that we contact three architects who excel with an integrated design approach of both land(scape) and built structures. The working group agreed that having architectural concept plans developed for the property would be a worthwhile investment. T. Haeuser and O. McCullough will use their professional contacts and begin to create a design charrette for our next Meeting on May 25. This architecture-focused charrette would produce three architectural concept plans utilizing the working groups' previous conversations, known constraints, asset lists, ideas and vision and present-time feedback throughout the charrette. The goal is to have three architectural (land and buildings) concept plans to present at the public forums.
  6. Midway through the meeting, public comment was encouraged. One resident was present and spoke at the Public Comment period. K. Arsenualt (of Walnut St.), an abutter to the property,

inquired about abutters' properties in general and asked how buffers or the integration of design would impact the existing abutters. She also mentioned she attended the meeting because she was curious about process and that after hearing our discussions on the importance of thoughtful integration within the existing neighborhood, she felt comfortable with how the working group was functioning and working together and would share this with her neighbors.

7. The working group also had a few historical questions and discussed the importance of sharing some historical images (if possible) at future meetings and/or public forums. Working group members discussed concepts such as new urbanism, front porches facing other front porches and common green spaces to promote community and neighborhood connection. Many members of the working group are interested in considering forward thinking design concepts with both the land and buildings. L. Thigpen suggested that this is a great opportunity to pursue this idea of creating a "hidden gem".
8. While T. Haeuser and O. McCullough are working on securing architects for the next meeting, three members of the working group: L. Thigpen, B. Dee and P. Smith will meet with facilitator, L. Moorhead to devise a communications/format plan for the upcoming public forums.
9. The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

**Next meeting is on Thursday, May 25 from 6:15 – 8:15 pm at City Council Chambers.**