



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, September 11, 2018, 5:30pm, Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Attendance:

Councilors Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3), Pious Ali (At-Large)

Councilor Attendance: Ethan Strimling (Mayor), Jill Duson (At-Large), Nick Mavodones (At-Large), Kimberly Cook (District 5)

City Staff: City Manager Jon Jennings; Assistant City Manager, Michael Sauschuck; Director of Health and Human Services, Dawn Stiles; Director of Social Services, David MacLean; Executive Assistant, Adam Harr;

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements and Approval of Minutes:

Meeting was called to order at approximately 5:35 PM.

Chair Ray made the following announcements:

- A correction for an article in the newspaper over the weekend that stated 200 people in the crowd of an HHS meeting booed and hissed; that was not accurate and she is grateful that people have been very respectful throughout this process.
- It is the final night of Rosh Hashanah. Were there a conflict with a member of the committee or if there was public comment, the meeting would have been rescheduled. Chair Ray wished those observing a happy holiday.
- There won't be time to discuss Earned Sick Time.

Chair Ray moved to approve the July 10, 2018 and July 17, 2018 minutes Councilor Ali. Chair Ray rescinded that motion and made a motion to approve the July 10, 2018 and July 17, 2018 minutes as amended below; Councilor Ali seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Strimling was not able to review the meeting minutes and will be able to reconsider them at the next meeting if needed.

- July 17, 2018 Minutes
 - Anne said It could be good to clarify how the ordinance affects employers outside of Portland that have employees who come to Portland to complete onsite work.
 - The committee recommended not to exempt employees based on age.
 - The committee recommended not to exempt seasonal workers as a category.
 - Would consider a minimum number of hours that must be worked in order to be covered.



AGENDA ITEM 2 – City Staff answers to Committee and constituent questions on the proposed location for the Homeless Services Center.

Chair Ray called a recess at approximately 5:48 PM while agenda documents were projected and City staff reset the public wireless network. Chair Ray resumed at the meeting at 5:53 PM.

Homeless Services Center: Answers to Public Hearing Questions

Councilor Batson asked about process and order of events:

- Why an environmental assessment (impact analysis on the neighborhood) was not used to choose a site.
 - 9 criteria were used to determine the best site from the staff perspective
 - The planning department conducts environmental assessments further along in the process,

Councilor Ali asked if there was a consideration for smaller shelters while site selection was underway

- Assistant City Manager Sauschuck explained that staff looked at financial and logistical elements of multiple scattered sites of emergency shelters and clarified:
- Scattered site model refers to multiple temporary emergency shelters, not housing first projects.

Chair Ray requested the answer to what has been accomplished and has yet to be accomplished in the Homeless Task Force be further fleshed out to include the implementation or planning of:

- Housing First approach
- Rapid Rehousing
- Central Intake Facility (The proposed Homeless Services Center)
- Future steps, including a living document on taskforce progress

Councilor Mavodones asked about the sequence and process:

- What precludes an environmental assessment before the planning board's site plan review, given the area is not zoned for the proposed use?
 - In addition to smartcard process, phase of the plan does not include an environmental assessment as this first step for site selection does not have the enough detail of the grounds and facility to produce one
 - The Planning Board can advise the full Council before it goes to workshop

Chair Ray called the meeting to recess at approximately 6:07 PM

The second recess adjourned at approximately 6:15 PM

Chair Ray paused the review of the documents to hear where members of the committee and Council are with the process, what they feel next steps/changes should be.



Councilor Batson announced he will issue an alternative proposal on the September 25th meeting.

- Contract with a neutral outside organization through an open bid RFP to research a model of smaller shelters
- Pursue State legislation
- Cited a scattered site model as a best practice

Councilor Ali asked about process:

- Does Councilor Batson's proposal need to go through three readings of committee?
 - If there is a change there would be another public comment
- Prior to the meeting there will be a deadline to the RFP
- Councilor Ali will not bring forward a proposal
- Councilor Duson asked if other Councilors are drafting proposals and if so, would have a process suggestion
- Councilor Cook suggested a comparative analysis between each site (area) before taking an up or down vote including County Way, District Rd etc.

Councilor Cook: Given the change in State funding no longer providing for operations it is time to reevaluate:

- The policies and financial obligations of the emergency shelter
- Whom a new emergency shelter should serve
- Details on the shelter including size and funding sources

Councilor Mavodones

- No one disagrees that the current model is not the best
- A vote this month may be premature
- Process and relationships are important
- Agrees with Councilor Cook to think further on the liberty of the aid provided
- The City of Portland should shoulder State and country issues.
- The Council should spend some time talking about the policy and changes to state law.
- Councilor Mavodones is not opposed to either a larger facility or scattered sites.
 - Multiple smaller shelters will cost more
- When the map was rezoned, the change was driven in part by the idea that outside agencies might open new shelters

Councilor Duson shared that policies worked out in committee change significantly throughout the process

- If the committee does vote on the 25th, it should accept or reject, or come up with another path forward.
- Proposed the meeting finish the Q&A
- Next meeting to list options instead of voting
- Place options in a matrix.
 - Work with the Councilors proposals
 - Linked data to create a fair look



Mayor Strimling agreed with Councilor Duson that this process has started conversations about how to best serve its homeless population, including short term investments in Bayside..

- Would like broader Council input
- vote on rezoning expanded where shelters can exist in the city and did not choose between a single shelter or multiple smaller shelters
- Slowing down the process now could include short term options to help Bayside now

Chair Ray

- Not lose site of the multi-year long process
 - Slowing down means continuing a failing policy
 - Needs a backup plan
 - Does not want to lose momentum
- Data driven decisions
- Explore short term improvements in Bayside; how much more can be done in the current facility as many have already been implemented
- There are agencies that would say of the models this one is better than the other.
- Chair Ray talked to Cullen Ryan who announced his support for a singular shelter
- Does not want to go backwards and answer questions that have already been answered

Rob Parritt

- Single site and scattered site models can both be considered best practice; the important elements are:
 - Housing first approach
 - The best way to serve all of the clients would be under one roof

Councilor Cook

- There is already a scattered site model
 - 6 Shelters
 - 2 City Owned
 - Adult
 - Family
 - 4 Non profit
 - Teens – Joe Kreisler
 - Women – Florence House
 - Substance Use – Milestone Foundation
 - Domestic Violence – Trough These Doors
- A scattered site model previously discussed is actually the proposal to break up the Oxford Street Shelter population into sub populations each with its own shelter expanding the 6 shelters in the city up to 10.

The Mayor asked about the shelters that have closed in the city of Portland in the past 10 years

- YWCA
- Stepping Stones



Chair Ray reminded that the Council workshopped the decision to choose a single shelter over multiple smaller sites. When staff asked the Council, they were instructed to find a site for a single shelter.

- Mayor Strimling said that there was no vote in committee to go to a 200-bed shelter.
- Councilor Batson echoed the sentiment that there wasn't a decision between multiple City-run adult shelters versus one City-run adult shelter
- Chair Ray corrected that there was no amendment to restrict scattered sites
 - It was to rezone to allow smaller shelter zoning
 - It was not about the City perusing smaller scattered sites
 - The referral asked the committee to see where small shelters could go
 - Mayor Strimling understood that to be smaller shelters run by the City
 - Chair Ray noted that that may be an inaccurate characterization
- Chair Ray reiterated that the process needs to finish: one or two options presented to the full Council in the matrix format.
- Councilor Ali advised that anyone with proposals for the 25th to send back up materials to be able to vote and move forward.
- Chair Ray stated for the record that she believes the Barron Center proposal is a good proposal and that a 200-bed emergency shelter is the correct size.
- Councilor Duson believes a 200-bed shelter is the right size and to look at the sites again with a laid-out process.
- Councilor Batson would like to see how the decisions were made:
 - It is summarized in the matrix
 - There are only 2 Potential sites is the understanding of the Chair (County Way and Barron Center)
 - Community members have suggested District Road
 - Unclear if there were parcels on Outer Presumpscot

Councilor Cook Would like to know when the first question's answer will be finalized

- It will be answered when the draft map is finalized for the housing committee

Councilor Duson suggested the committee have a matrix of the committee

- The committee may record its progress in a matrix format
- May have five or six options recorded
- Matrix done in committee

Process

- Should the committee narrow down to one to two options recommended to the full Council;
- Councilor Mavodones would like to have a conversation before it goes to the planning board to mitigate significant issues before that far down in the process
- Could the committee bring something to the Council and then the Council send it to the planning board?



- The only requirement is the any zoning change that comes to the Council must go to the planning board to hold a hearing and send a recommendation to the Council before the Council can take an official act.
- If the committee recommends to go to the planning board it should do so directly
 - Would that have to come from workshop?
 - Straw poll?
 - Other option drafted by corporation Counsel?
 - Vote to forward to the planning board?
 - Councilor Batson asked how does the committee engage the Council if something does not need to go to the planning board?
 -
- The only requirement is that the planning board hold a hearing before the Council acts; the Council can make a recommendation but not a final act of implementing a zoning change
 - A recommendation in the same way a committee could
 - It may bog down the process
 - It could be helpful
- Clarification between rezoning the map with selecting a site
 - Rezoning requires planning board
 - Selecting site does not necessarily
 - Only if site selection would necessitate a zoning change
 - It would make sense for the Council to consider before the planning board in controversial situations
- Assistant City Manager Sauschuck explained that the Council needs to make major policy decisions that heavily influence the work of City staff before more meaningful progress can be made
- Councilor Ali would like all planning to be transparent and involve local stakeholders including the announced and unannounced proposals of other Councilors
- Councilor Duson understand that the Council desire providing services in a respectful and dignified way
 - Comprehensive effective services in a respectful and dignified way
 - Not to hide the homeless
- Chair Ray thought the Council was clear on the size of one shelter but is hearing that may not be so
 - A unified recommendation over multiple other proposals; do another workshop?
 - The visibility criterion may be interpreted differently
 - Chair Ray looked at 9/24
 - Mayor Strimling didn't believe that the workshop meant an endorsement but open to learning about a possible model
 - Believes the committee should move forward on the 25th
 - Councilor Batson questions if going back to Council is the best path forward
 - A lot of the conversation on recommendations were limited by environmental factors (one or two floors based on size of parcels)
 - Believes there would be more options looking at smaller parcels of land



- The Council passed new zoning but the recommendation brought to the committee was made for a residential zone.
 - This committee did not reject residential zones
 - It asked where does it make sense to look as it is not did not seem likely that one would find an appropriate parcel in a residential zone.
 - Councilor Mavodones: The committee should take into consideration their colleagues' thoughts
 - Staff need to changes in direction as soon as criteria change
 - What gets to a thoughtful course correction as quickly as possible
 - Chair Ray: How can the committee do its work without guidance as it could significantly change recommendations

Councilor Duson: must show how and where decisions were made. (Matrix)

- Councilor Duson supports the committee process over going back to a clarifying Council workshop

Councilor Cook delineated between Council Guidance and zoning ordinance.

- Visibility was not necessarily the sensibility and there is no document available to prioritize it
 - Public Hearing
 - The process of fixing the location may deserve another discussion at the Council
 - What is Portland's responsibility in terms of number of beds and funding
- Mayor Strimling recalled the City Council referral that the City does a full review shelter system and with single large shelter option and a more inclusive rezoning plan.

Chair Ray reminded that the Mayor Strimling was referring things that were already in the committee.

- Mayor Strimling wanted to remind that as part of Council Guidance, a second-tier approach was recommended.
- Councilor Duson clarified that the zoning allowed for large shelters and smaller scattered shelters, and did not narrow to smaller City run shelters
- Hiding the homeless: the perception that the Council has some nefarious intent to hide the homeless should not lead to a top line criterion of putting people experiencing homelessness on display

City Manager Jon Jennings: Staff does have a sense of the what the committee is asking for

- Finalized map
- Asked for the committee to consider Financial model of two to three scattered-site shelters
 - That guidance can be given tonight
 - If so, the 9/25 would not have a vote
- Councilor Batson is in support of the consideration and cost analysis of three sites.
 - Bring in the potentially affected communities
- Clear analysis and consensus among majority.
 - If it goes to the committee, the three members go the committee cannot make decisions without 5 Councilors in support
 - Councilor Duson reluctant to relinquish this work
 - Councilor Mavodones is not sure the process can move forward frustrated by angst without a workshop or some sort of a vote on criteria;



- Mayor Strimling believes that the visibility is important in the context of disability intersecting with homelessness from the input of someone who has firsthand experience of being hidden.
 - Councilor Batson expressed his desire to fully explore as many possibilities as fully as possible.
 - Chair Ray is concerned that the committee may be asking for something not supported by the majority: single new facility or scattered multiple new sites
 - Councilor Ali: if an issue goes to the full Council first, and receives guidance it may defeat the purpose of the committee
 - Councilor Batson echoed the same fear he has around the Barron center proposal and supports the information coming back to the committee

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Next Steps

On the 24th A Council workshop to clarify the policy decisions and Guidance from the Council

- Definitively state guidance as a Council (criteria, size, number of beds) so that the committee can complete their work and make a recommendation.

On the 25th: Paid Sick Time

When the Homeless Services Center returns to the committee agenda:

- Councilor Batson will have a proposal
- Matrix of options and choose one or two or create a master record in a hierarchical matrix
 - A first and second choice recommendation among the option in case the first fails.
- All locations of the potential sites
- Councilor Mavodones requested that Chair Ray and City Manager Jennings confirm the outcome of the meeting.
 - Chair Ray and City Manager Jennings agreed
- Councilor Cook requested that the County Way and District Rowe be included in the analysis to fully vet it.
 - Some may disappear and repopulate the chart
 - Is there some way to explore the acquisition of non-City owned land?
- Include pros and cons that are not purely financial

Chair Ray Thanked the Councilors in attendance and the members of the committee.

A motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at approximately 8:15 PM