



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, July 10, 2018, 5:30pm, Council Chambers, City Hall

Committee Attendance: Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3), Pious Ali (At Large)

Council Member Attendance: Mayor, Ethan Strimling, Councilors Nick Mavodones (At- Large), Jill Duson (At-Large), Spencer Thibodeau (District 2),

City Staff: Dawn Stiles, Director of Health & Human Services; David MacLean, Director of Social Services Division; Rob Parritt, Director of Oxford Street Shelter; Aaron Geyer, Program Manager/General Assistance Program Manager; Jeff Levine, Director Planning and Urban Development.

Agenda Items 1& 2 - Meeting Called to Order and Minutes from Previous Meeting Reviewed:

Meeting called to order at approximately 5:30 PM by Chair Ray and Minutes from the June 26th meeting were reviewed with a few changes. Mayor Strimling notated that he should be included in the Councilors attendance at meetings, not City Staff. Chief Sauschuck also clarified the 90-10 Principle as it relates to the majority of service calls both Police and Medical.

Agenda Item 3 - Staff Overview of Homeless Services Center Site Recommendation and Answers to Committee Questions from 6/26/18 Presentation:

Rob Parritt addressed the Committee with an overview of the Homeless Services Center Site and reviewed the initial Missions for moving towards a new Homeless model.

The Questions and Answers were also reviewed from the previous meeting.

Councilor Batson would like to see a cost analysis for a Single Shelter model compared with a Scattered model.

The Mayor would like to see a summary of cost for smaller scattered sites vs single site. Same capacity overall but with 4 sites, 3 sites etc. The proposed site will fit 200 single beds.

Jeff Levine spoke to the Committee and gave a brief overview and reasoning for the Barron Center location.

Councilor Mavodones questioned if there was a more comprehensive alternative analysis report that was done for the site ? Dawn Stiles responded that they did not put together a formal “Pro’s and Con’s” for each site but could do so.

Councilor Batson would like to see a financial breakdown with a map if possible. He would like to know how it will add to the overall city budget. Rob indicated that they have not progressed quite that far yet in the process.

The Mayor feels that the number of sites was very limited and expected there to be upwards of 20. The Chair also agreed and would like to see a list recreated as to what sites were skipped or missed.

Councilor Batson addressed the issue of commitments from service providers. Rob indicated that we do currently have MOU’s with some of these agencies but that this is an ongoing process. Councilor Mavodones would like to see current copies of MOU’s or Letter of Commitments sent to each Councilor. Councilor Thibodeau also is curious about lease costs for providers and also would like details about the shuttle. Rob responded that the intent is not to lease space but to provide space for them. Chair Ray indicated she feels the Health Center should or would be a lease situation.

Councilor Duson is interested to know what things will look like in Bayside when Oxford Street leaves. What will that picture look like? The Mayor commented that he has a hard time understanding not having an emergency shelter downtown.

Councilor Batson questioned the staffing at Barron Center. Dawn responded that they are currently holding CNA classes at BC. She added that there will be volunteer opportunities at the new shelter with the availability of space and staffing, currently neither is an option at Oxford Street.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - Public Hearing on Homeless Services Center Recommended Site and Required Zone Change:

At approximately 6:35 PM Chair Ray opened this portion of the meeting up to Public Comment and reviewed the guidelines for commenting.

Robert Haynes - Reside of Holms Avenue; Mr. Haynes does not believe this shelter belongs in any backyard and suggested alternative sites throughout Portland.

Cullen Ryan, Executive Dir of Community Housing of Maine; Cullen would like to see an end to homelessness but stresses this model will be very different from the one we currently have on Oxford Street and he supports the proposed location.

Marcia, resident at The Loring House; Marcia commented that the school bus stops at Barron Center and there are a lot of children in this area. The sidewalks are not properly lit or plowed and there are concerns that the green space will disappear.

Kelly Walsh, Through These Doors Shelter; Supports the new proposal and works closely with Oxford Street Shelter. She believes the new changes will vastly improve safety.

Judy Dimucci, Nason's Corner resident; She does not feel this proposed shelter will fit the needs and gave alternative solutions.

Sam Rosenthal, Nason's Corner resident; Sam lives close to the Barron Center campus and feels that placing the homeless out there is going to be hiding them.

Ashish Shrestha, Preble Street Resource Center; Ashish looks forward to working with the City.

Stephanie Scherer, Bayside Neighborhood Association but speaking as a Hanover St resident; Stephanie supports the new proposed center.

Kaler Theriault, Representing Sagamore Village; She would like the City to consider the elderly population that resides at the Barron Center.

Lyle LCSW, Nason's Corner resident; She believes this is just moving the problem.

Michael Archer, Taft Avenue resident and close neighbor; He would like to see scattered sites.

Ray, Groveside Road resident; Has questions about security at the proposed center.

Maya Lena, Essex Street resident and President of Nason's Corner Neighborhood Association.

Robert - Bayside Neighborhood Association; Encourages folks to go to the website <https://baysideportland.org/> for more information on the proposed project.

Dick Niles, Resident of Nason's Corner; He questioned the language of the City Managers recommendations in 2017 and asked what has changed ?

Todd Henry, Resident of Nason's Corner; He is concerned with public safety and referenced the Public Safety budget.

Matt Leblanc, Resident of Four Winds Road; He referenced the County Way location mentioned as a potential site.

Debra Rothenberg, Windy Way resident; She encouraged the Committee to explore other location with more access to transportation. She was also questioning the plot and floor plans.

Victoria, Resident of Portland; Very disheartened by the process and stressed the need to slow it down.

Norman Maze, Shalom House; Norman indicated that Shalom House is a committed partner with the City of Portland.

Cecilia Smith, Warwick St resident; She is concerned with the zoning and has a list of questions for the committee.

Justin Riley, Nason's Corner resident; Justin referenced the close proximity to the Amanda Rowe Elementary School and has concerns about overflow and bad actors at the Shelter and how will we keep his children safe ?

Frank, Capisic St resident; Frank referenced the response time from Central Fire and Police from intown to Brighton Avenue. He also is curious as to how much Portland is reimbursed for housing out of towners at the shelter.

Mark Cannon, Nason's Corner resident; Mark is concerned if there has been an environmental or site assessment and feels we're just moving the problem.

Courtney, Machigonne Street resident; She does not feel this is following Best Practices.

Rose, Holm Avenue resident; Rose is concerned about response time to the Center.

Steve, Nason's Corner resident; Steve does not agree with this at all.

Simon, Brackett Street resident; Simon is speaking on behalf of the Greater Portland Chamber who is in support of the City's development plan.

Deborah Feranti, Nason's Corner resident; She feels this neighborhood has been where Bayside currently is. Does not want to go backwards.

Estel LaRoux, Bancroft Court resident; Estel referenced a sober house.

Shane, resident of the homeless community; Shane has been a resident of Oxford Street shelter on and off and understands the population.

Michael, resident of Four Winds Road; Concerned about children attending school in the area.

John Buckley, Portland resident; John would like to see a positive impact at Nason's Corner.

Gloria Sklar, Sandy Terrace resident; Gloria believes in the smaller, scattered shelter system. She also questioned if the city has included clients in this search?

George Rowe, West Bayside resident; George is angry and questioned what happened to the Housing First developments.

Mike Tarpinian, CEO of Opportunity Alliance; Mike and Opportunity Alliance are in support of this move to the Barron Center location,

Ann Tucker, Greater Portland Health Centers; Ann and GPHC is in support of the move to Brighton Avenue.

Andrea Cesario, Holms Avenue resident; Andrea is opposed to this proposal.

Casey McCormick, Capisic Street resident; Casey gave a brief overview of the District Road Proposal and feels this committee should recommend at least 3 sites to the Council.

Adam Burke, former employee of Preble St; Adam is troubled by the process and not happy.

William Higgins, High Street resident ; William is also a former resident of Oxford Street Shelter and does not feel the bed capacity is adequate. He also questioned why this is being rushed.

Rhonda Danis, Rowe Avenue resident; Homeless are now currently living in the woods close to Portland Trails. They do not want more of this.

Alex Landry, Boynton St resident; Alex is questioning why this is being so rushed and would like to see an alternative analysis.

Madeline Gorsuch Segal; Madeleine's father was twice Mayor in Portland and referenced the long standing history of the Barron Center helping those in need.

Lisa, 17 year resident of Nason's Corner; She encouraged the Committee to slow down the process and keep our children safe.

Laura Cannon, VP of Bayside Neighborhood Association; Laura agrees with the proposal but encouraged the committee to please take time and do it right.

Ed Cundy, Nason's Corner resident; Ed lives adjacent to the new Rowe School and supports the idea of scattered sites.

Chen, Taft Avenue resident; He is here supporting the Cambodian Community and disagrees with the proposal.

Christina Cook, employee of Opportunity Alliance; Christina is in support of the project.

Kelly Caiazzo, Nason's Corner resident; Kelly lives 1 mile from the proposed shelter. She feels the city needs to share the burden, not bare the burden.

Sean Kerwin, Parris Street resident; He feels there is no perfect solution, he also acknowledges the proposal is not to just move Oxford Street Shelter but to create a whole new model and he is in support of that.

Sarah Michniewicz, President of Bayside Neighborhood Association; Sarah feels the system needs to be modernized and supports the proposal.

Brian Townsend, Ex Director of Amistad, also a resident of Nason's Corner; Brian communicated that his clients at Amistad want to see an end to the current homeless model.

Bob Fowler, Executive Director of Milestone; Bob supports the new proposal.

Ken, Portland resident; proposed a cruise ship model to house the homeless and encouraged the Committee to think outside the box.

Riley, Deering area homeowner;

Tammy, resident of the West End;

Carolyn Silvius, Homeless Voices for Justice; Carolyn stated the organization has not reached a consensus on this project yet.

Public Comment was closed at approximately 9:15 PM.

Chair Ray closed public comment and addressed various questions from the audience. A question arose about public safety budget going down for this FY. Dawn addressed this was due to the fact we hired the security guards as full time employees of the City so staffing went up as a result.

Mayor Strimling would still like to see more detail moving forward. He is questioning the building design as it appears the building does not fit on the site. Dawn also addressed this. This was a rendering and is conceptual only at this stage. Planning design is part of the 2nd stage of the project.

Councilor Batson would like clients to come to public comments in the future. Questioned the proposal that Mike Tarpinian of Opportunity Alliance. Jeff Levine responded that this is a possible Shelter Care Plus site on Brighton/Holmes Avenue.

Chair Ray reiterated that this Committee does not have full jurisdiction over this. After this Committee it will move on to full Council and Planning Board approval so many more opportunities to speak on the issue.

Environmental Impact Analysis was discussed with the Chief responding that they did do an impact analysis of the area . Chair Ray would like to see this and/or pos on Planning/Shelter website.

Councilor Duson would like to see a presentation from the Police who have been dealing with Bayside etc. She feels it would be beneficial for the neighbors to hear.

Mayor Strimling addressed the security and asked of the Chief what is the issue about the current police model that does not work. Chief responded the updated model and changes that would take place in the new location.

Councilor Ali would like bullet points of what isn't working and what will change. Rob has agreed to do this.

Other issues; Clarification of site selection, need a clearer explanation and methodology of how it was selected. Also Transportation budget and Overflow issues.

Response time from the City for Police/Fire were discussed. This should not be an issue at all as all are located all over the city at any given time. Questions about reimbursements from other communities, Feds, GA funds etc. and why isn't Housing First part of this program?

Councilor Batson questioned the current zoning of the Barron Center and this site. Jeff Levine responded that yes it would require an analysis and there would need to be a zoning change that would require Council approval.

Mayor Strimling would like to have details on the largest shelter in Cambridge and those numbers, also capacity for each current shelter and evolution of smaller shelters in Portland (Mark Swann).

Chair Ray gave a tentative timeline moving forward;
Community Informational Session -
Aug/Sept
Planning Board Workshop - Oct
Final Council vote - November

With no further business to attend to the meeting was adjourned at exactly 10:00 PM.