



CITY COUNCIL MCINTYRE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2021 MEETING

The McIntyre Subcommittee held the January 11, 2021 meeting via Zoom.

Chair Peter Whelan opened the meeting at 3:04 with a roll call.

Present via Zoom: Chair Peter Whelan and Councilors Deaglan McEachern, John Tabor and Paige Trace.

City representatives present via Zoom: City Manager Karen Conard, City Attorney Robert Sullivan, Principal Planner Nick Cracknell, Moderator Synthia Ravell and Legal Secretary Marian Steimke

Also present via Zoom: James Nocas, Sr. of Portsmouth Listens (PL), Russell Preston and Mandy Reynolds of Principle Group (PG), Councilor Cliff Lazenby, Gerald Duffy, Ian Lenahan, Councilor Petra Huda, Stephanie Seacord, Bill Downey and Bryan Matto

Chair Whelan asked Jim Nocas and Mandy Reynolds how it was going and if there were any issues they needed to address going into week two.

Ms. Reynolds said all 22 groups were able to meet last week. She was waiting to hear back from a few facilitators and will report the following week. There were a few technology issues with the zoom white board, and they were hoping to get more information on the post session reporting. She has received positive feedback from the facilitators.

Mr. Nocas said he was not involved with any circles. He noted that people realized there was more commonality than they thought. We look for that to make sure the process is working. He reported that folks are working through the technical issues. He said the Subcommittee will be impressed by the reports; the values the groups have elicited are fantastic; there has been very little pushback from people being malcontented; and comments received so far have been very positive.

Next, he spoke about report-out and what they've done in the past. This would allow the Subcommittee to have interaction with the groups. He suggested breaking up councilors

and study circles into groups to chat, and he discussed logistics on how that would work. This would be an opportunity that the participants have earned due to the amount of work they have put in. He asked Attorney Sullivan about the legalities of public meetings and who can talk on this. There would be no quorum because councilors would be broken up into groups.

Attorney Sullivan answered saying if there is a quorum of the public body present, then it is a public meeting. If it is a public meeting, the public has a right to attend, but there is no requirement for them to participate unless the public body votes to let them participate.

Mr. Preston anticipated a special meeting of the City Council. That was how he envisioned the report-back – where all can hear the same thing.

Councilor Trace suggested the public meeting can be a work session.

Mr. Noucas said he would break up the City Council because all will get more involved with more individual interaction, acknowledging, there would be some redundancy across the groups. At the end of having 22 groups report to all the Councilors, folks will be worn out. Councilor Trace pointed out that breaking up into three groups would be less transparent.

Chair Whelan suggested breaking up the report-out over two nights.

Councilor McEachern would want to ensure PL is not doing marathons of 6-8 hour meetings. He would be fine if they split the groups, if we had one committee member in each of the groups. We'd be able to go back and listen to all the presentations afterwards, since they will be public meetings. We have ability to split up due to technology.

Councilor Tabor reminded all that groups will submit written reports. Seacoast Media has agreed to publish all, so the 22 reports will be available to read. The benefit of three different zoom rooms is the additional time for Q&A. He suggested the Subcommittee weigh that against the transparency of all 22 presentations in one group.

Mr. Preston said it was important to understand patterns that would emerge, and that would be important for PG as the consulting team. He strongly encouraged the Subcommittee to stick to a single place to summarize, but wanted to consider how to go deep. He suggested doing two minutes, see what emerged, and revisit.

Mr. Noucas reiterated PL should be allowed their time, as they have earned it.

Chair Whelan said Mr. Noucas and Mr. Preston will figure out the best way to present – making sure all 250 participants are heard by the full City Council. The report-out night is on the calendar as a work session on January 20th. It will be a zoom call, it will be open to anyone, and we should not be taking public comment that night. It should be PL that night, followed by some discussion. Mr. Noucas and Mr. Preston agreed with working out a process going forward. Mr. Noucas will try to provide the written reports by Tuesday electronically.

Public comment opened at 3:26 p.m.:

Bill Downey of 67 Bow Street said we still don't see the updates on the website.

Mr. Preston said they were working with the City to get that done. He asked that if that doesn't change within 48 hours, to give PG a call directly. Chair Whelan said PG sent updates which the Subcommittee approved.

Mr. Noucas left the meeting at this time – 3:28 p.m.

Chair Whelan provided updates saying they were working hard to get the post office back. The Mayor is working with congressional delegations to make that happen. Also the City will be getting the building in March from GSA. For next year, the City will have to put maintenance costs into the budget for that.

Councilor McEachern requested a report back from the City Manager about the area functioning as an outdoor market. The Chair said the City is already working on what the cost will be.

Chair Whelan asked if anything else regarding PL needed to be discussed. Mr. Preston said we are on schedule, and February 4th was the tentative date for the round table discussions, which he'd firm up that week.

Councilor Tabor asked PG if we are on target to get to the sketching phase. Mr. Preston was not sure, but said the process with the City Council will be so important to be able to address that. He said it is best to stay on schedule now to see what happens.

The City Manager said we'll be more forthcoming with budget numbers related to the maintenance as the City proceeds with its budget schedule.

Councilor McEachern moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Tabor. On a roll call vote 4-0, the motion passed at 3:35 p.m.

Date Approved: _____

Peter Whelan, Chair
McIntyre Subcommittee

Minutes taken by
Marian Steimke, Legal Secretary