



CITY COUNCIL MCINTYRE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2020 MEETING

The October 13, 2020 meeting of the McIntyre Subcommittee was held via Zoom.

Chair Peter Whelan opened the meeting at 3:07 p.m. with a roll call.

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

Also present via Zoom were City Manager Karen Conard, City Attorney Robert Sullivan, and Legal Secretary Marian Steimke.

There were no members of the public that wished to speak.

Chair Whelan referenced the GSA letter which would be shared on Monday with the entire Council. He asked for comments regarding the Council motion for the \$150,000.

Councilor McEachern asked about the EDA grant request. City Manager Conard had reached out to the EDA representative and she will reach out again. She added that EDA grants typically have a matching component from the grantee.

Chair Whelan discussed the survey comments received from UNH which were circulated to Council. He would like to post the information to the McIntyre website, including the entire report that came from UNH.

The Chair asked for an update regarding the Design Alliance. The City Manager and Councilor Tabor spoke on Friday to Anne Wideman of the Design Alliance. They also spoke to Attorney Jim Noucas of Portsmouth Listens. Councilor Tabor said Portsmouth Listens is willing to do a dialogue process with them. He added that the Design Alliance would not want to do this pro bono, as money was tight.

The Subcommittee discussed the desired sequence of events and focusing the public process on the space where Building A was. They envisioned a dialogue to determine what people wanted and would enjoy. Potentially discussions via Zoom could begin with a "McIntyre 101 presentation" the first week of November. Subsequently, people

would go into smaller groups to deliberate on what would make people want to come and use the space. Design Alliance offered to raise their own money for the process. The City Manager explained how the Design Alliance would add to the Portsmouth Listens involvement in the process.

Regarding timeframe and number of meetings, Councilor Tabor said one McIntyre 101 night followed by two dialogue nights (potentially the Thursdays in November – the 5th, 12th and 19th) would be the plan. The groups would be self-functioning with hopefully enough facilitators and moderators for the process. A third night for a written report from each group for their best ideas might be required. They discussed training of facilitators and moderators.

Councilor Tabor said careful planning about the McIntyre 101 presentation would be required, and he discussed options to present from materials that already existed. There would be a need to present drawings, cost information, and he referenced a pdf he had sent. The priority should be to get the public space right.

Chair Whelan referenced facilitator comments from 2018 which listed highest ratings of design and public realm space requests from that time. The Subcommittee must reaffirm what the public wants, Chair Whelan said, and he asked for comments.

Councilor Tabor said there should be a steering committee composed of representatives from the McIntyre Subcommittee, Portsmouth Listens, Redgate/Kane, their architects Bruner/Cott and the City Manager to determine how to frame this. This is a hybrid of public and private and is important to understand. The next step would be to put that working group together within the next two weeks.

Councilor McEachern said they have a meeting with Redgate/Kane on Tuesday, October 20th. He shared concerns on involving Redgate/Kane early in the process.

Councilor Tabor sees the developer as part of the steering committee – not running the process. The Subcommittee continued to discuss how the various groups (i.e., Portsmouth Listens, Redgate/Kane, McIntyre Subcommittee, and Design Alliance) and their representatives would play a part in the process. Councilor Tabor explained that Portsmouth Listens – a neutral third party – would be free to work independently.

Councilor Trace wants residents to provide feedback unencumbered and expressed concern that too many visions coming back from different break-out groups would impede that.

Councilor Tabor said the steering committee would not participate in the process. The developer would be part of steering committee and would be available for questions. Councilor Trace pointed out that the steering committee would have the ability to affect outcome.

Councilor McEachern said he'd like Redgate/Kane included as much as possible – maybe in phases. He wants an envisioning process of what Portsmouth wants. Once there is a Phase II – that would be the time to have conversations with the developer. Councilor Trace agreed, but we must hear the wishes of the residents first, she added.

Chair Whelan said to schedule the Portsmouth Listens process, get study circles together for an envisioning process, and involve the developer after that. Councilor Tabor agreed. The Chair said this would include showing what the plan currently is and letting the people discuss the space where Building A was. Councilor Tabor said we know people want the larger public space. He anticipated the groups would deliberate and weed out non-sensible/workable ideas.

Chair Whelan said once the vision was established, they would work with the developer to determine the realistic possibilities. The developer would need to give the groups certain information up front to help the Portsmouth Listens facilitators, but resident-driven would be the best strategy.

Councilor McEachern agreed that knowing parameters, e.g., water tables, would be important and acknowledged a steering committee would be helpful. Councilor Trace reiterated the criticality of knowing parameters of features that can and cannot be changed. Many hours have been spent analyzing this already and she reminded them of working within the set monument parameters. After that, it would be a matter of affordability, she said. Councilor Tabor said there would be value in someone from Redgate/Kane or their architect for that reason.

Chair Whelan sees a steering committee as a resource vs. driving the conversation. Councilor McEachern would support this. His initial hesitancy in including the developer early has been assuaged – provided Portsmouth Listens is eliciting feedback and support, he said.

Chair Whelan suggested they ask Redgate/Kane who they would want on a steering committee. Councilor Trace said she supported this, but wanted to make sure they would function in an advisory capacity. When they did bring in the developer, she did not want to see conversation pushed in a certain direction.

Councilor Tabor made a motion to engage Portsmouth Listens to run a vision process for the additional public space in the McIntyre site expressed as a desire in the survey. Portsmouth Listens will create the steering committee, conduct a Zoom introductory session, and at least two nights of small group dialogue. After this, the groups will present their visions for the public space to the Subcommittee by December 14, 2020.

Councilor McEachern seconded and motion, and on a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

Councilor Tabor said there would be space on the steering committee for Redgate/Kane or Bruner/Cott as they choose.

They discussed hosting and producing zoom sessions. Councilor Tabor said he and City Manager Conard could discuss the administrative details.

Chair Whelan asked about the post office. The City Manager said she will check in again with the Post Master. She will also check in with the EDA and Sen. Shaheen's office.

City Attorney Sullivan said the Council has made it clear that the \$150,000 be tied to the withdrawal of the lawsuit by SoBow Sq. He spoke with Attorney Justin Pasay who said his clients understood, they would do that at some time, but were not willing to do so at this time. The City Attorney said a solution would be to enter an agreement with them now to withdraw the lawsuit at a future time and use the \$150,000 to get from here to there. Attorney Sullivan and Councilor Tabor have discussed this with the Mayor. The City Attorney said this issue would come up at the Council meeting, and he would explain this potential solution to the Council if the Subcommittee would like. Chair Whelan said Attorney Sullivan's solution is a good one.

Councilor Tabor said he hoped going forward many would be able to agree on features that will make this a place that people will want to go and that this process can heal some of the contentiousness of the project.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 with Redgate/Kane at 3:00 p.m.

At 4:05 p.m. Councilor McEachern made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Councilor Trace. On a 4-0 roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Minutes taken by
Marian Steimke, Legal Secretary
October 13, 2020