



CITY COUNCIL MCINTYRE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 MEETING

The September 17, 2020 meeting of the McIntyre Subcommittee was held via Zoom.

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

Also present were City Manager Karen Conard, City Attorney Robert Sullivan, and Legal Administrator Synthia Ravell.

Members of the public that were present via Zoom were Justin Pasay of Donahue Tucker & Ciandella; Michael Kane; Ralph Cox; Tracy Keirns of University of New Hampshire Survey Center; and resident Sam Cook.

Chair Peter Whelan opened the meeting at 3:11 p.m. with a roll call.

Councilor John Tabor moved to accept the minutes of the September 10, 2020 as altered, seconded by Councilor Deaglan McEachern. The minutes, as altered, were approved on a 4-0 roll call vote.

Chair Peter Whelan noted a discussion of the survey would with guest Tracy Keirns of the University of New Hampshire Survey Center and noted that we had a member of the public, Sam Cook, and asked Mr. Cook if he had any comment he wanted to make. Mr. Cook stated that he had a question he wanted to pose to the Subcommittee. Chair Peter Whelan informed Mr. Cook that the Subcommittee was not going to take any questions but he could make a comment. Mr. Cook affirmed he could change his question to a comment.

City Manager Karen Conard announced to the Subcommittee that Ms. Keirns was only available until 3:30 and asked Ms. Keirns could provide the UNH Survey Center's update first. Both Chair Peter Whelan and Mr. Cook agreed that would be fine.

Ms. Keirns stated that the UNH Survey Center was asked to assist in analyzing the survey data conducted of Portsmouth residents. Of the surveys returned by the public, 66% of the surveys that were returned were ranked fully and correctly, 22% ranked some but not all, and 11% did not rank any of them or did not rank in a meaningful way to know what their option was. Results of the surveys returned to date:

- With respect to the first survey question, the order of importance ranking was as follows:
 - 64% - larger, more meaningful public open space (either indoor, outdoor or combination) in one piece between Federal Building and Bow Street
 - 54% - Post Office returned to original location
 - 38% - less density and mass on Bow Street side
 - 26% - availability of public parking
 - 17% - minor changes to existing project
- With respect to the second survey question, whether the public would support changes to the project if it required financial commitment from the City to achieve the goals, 75% said yes and 25% said no.
- With respect to the third survey question, whether the public would prefer contemporary or traditional architecture for the new buildings on the project, 83% said traditional and 16% said contemporary, with 1% saying both.

These results are based on the 66% ranked fully and the 22% that ranked some.

Open-ended comments are not yet analyzed. Once they are put together in a format to be easily consumed, they can be read to add context.

Councilor John Tabor said that 3,687 was the raw total of survey responses were received, take out the 11%, is still a really high level of engagement of survey results.

Ms. Keirns confirmed she did not have information on the distribution so would not be able to give a response rate. City Manager Karen Conard stated that the surveys mailed was roughly 16,500. Sam Cook said that the response rate was 20% and that 10% is considered good. Ms. Keirns confirmed the response rate was over 20% and that she considered the survey as solid numbers and represent the Portsmouth community sentiments.

Chair Peter Whelan asked to talk about the comments and that we were capturing all the comments, and believe on question one there were 592 comments, which Ms. Keirns confirmed that was correct. On question two, there were 393 comments, and

question there was 492. Ms. Keirns stated that they will organize the comments alphabetically and will be able to interact which one was for question one and make them searchable, such as the term "Post Office" to see any comments made about the Post Office, or any other keyword they think someone would mentioned. Ms. Keirns recommends that everyone that needs to make decisions based off the results of the survey should read through the comments. A brief report will be made with some illustrative comments to highlight the quantitative data they are laying out.

Chair Peter Whelan noted that the plan is to capture all the comments and put them in an excel spreadsheet deck by end of next week that will go together with all the survey results so that everyone will be able to read through them.

City Manager Karen Conard stated that she and the City staff will work with the Survey Center to build on what was being asked of the Survey Center to do and expanding the scope to incorporate the comments.

Chair Peter Whelan invited resident Sam Cook to provide his public comment. Mr. Cook noted that the Subcommittee mentioned they would be making the surveys public. He stated that he was hoping that would include the raw data results so that the public could see what the totality of the survey results were. Mr. Cook also asked whether they are going to have, pay for a qualitative analysis for the comments to go along with the quantitative analysis.

Chair Peter Whelan spoke to Mr. Cook's comments and question and confirmed that the Survey Center is going to do it all. If the public wants to look at the raw surveys, those will be made available for people to go through and wants to be as transparent as the Subcommittee can through the whole process.

Mr. Cook had one last comment. He has a PhD in stats; he is a statistician. His comment was that the 20% return on surveys that were received, while not all of them are usable that is a good return and from a stats standpoint that is considered a strong response. Mr. Cook thanked the Subcommittee for allowing the public to join the meetings.

Chair Peter Whelan then asked for comments from Ralph Cox and Michael Kane. Discussion included:

- Results in on survey, with more to come next week on with the comments;
- Letter from Attorney Justin Pasay with questions and would need to discuss as a Subcommittee moving forward;
- Moving forward and meetings to be scheduled for further discussion to keep things moving in the right direction

Michael Kane would prefer not to wait a full week between meetings and would like to move things forward.

Ralph Cox stated that this brings tremendous clarity to the direction going forward and Subcommittee has expressed a desire to move with a little bit of pace. Mr. Cox stated that it is important to start something next year.

Councilor Deaglan McEachern stated that he is happy to put more than one meeting on the calendar and increase the pace of the meetings. Even if they are shorter meetings and have more of them, we might be able to move faster. On the Subcommittee's end, the public needs to be notified of the meetings with time to make the notices.

Councilor Paige Trace confirmed her schedule availability for upcoming meetings.

Ralph Cox stated that between him and Michael Kane they could make their schedules work. With the survey being out and clear, they would like to get going and get back into an official process.

Chair Peter Whelan suggested that City Attorney Robert Sullivan and Attorney Justin Pasay set up a schedule that is agreeable for everybody to be set over the next 2-3 weeks.

Councilor Paige Trace confirmed she would make herself available, as it is important enough that no matter what happens she is happy to do that. She would like to get as much done where she can participate.

Councilor John Tabor suggested finishing the meeting with just the Subcommittee reviewing Attorney Justin Pasay's letter and schedule a productive meeting.

Chair Peter Whelan agreed that was his thought, as the Subcommittee has not had time to review.

Attorney Justin Pasay said that worked for him as well and would be in touch with City Attorney Sullivan for discussion.

Councilor John Tabor noted that when the survey process was started, Ralph Cox and Michael Kane said just clarify what you want. Glad the Subcommittee went to the public for that clarity and the time spent looking at the option of more open public space was not time wasted.

Motion was made by Councilor Deaglan McEachern to move into non-public to discuss a legal letter from the development partners, seconded by Councilor John Tabor. On a 4-0 roll call vote, the meeting was moved to non-public session at 3:39 P.M.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

The meeting moved to non-public session. The Subcommittee discussed the following:

- The legal letter received by Attorney Justin Pasay;
- Meeting in public versus meeting in non-public; and
- Next meetings which resulted in possible meetings to be scheduled for 3:00 PM on the following dates:
 - Tuesday, September 22, 2020
 - Thursday, September 24, 2020
 - Monday, September 28, 2020
 - Tuesday, September 29, 2020
 - Monday, October 5, 2020
 - Tuesday, October 6, 2020
 - Tuesday, October 13, 2020; and
 - Thursday, October 15, 2020

At 4:08 P.M., Councilor Deaglan McEachern made a motion to move the meeting back to public session and adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Paige Trace. On a 4-0 roll call vote, the meeting was moved to public and adjourned.

Minutes taken by
Synthia M. Ravell, Legal Administrator
September 17, 2020

Date: _____

Peter Whelan, Chair
McIntyre Subcommittee