



District and Community Services Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 20, 2016 at 1:00pm
549 Congress St.

Board members present: Josh Benthien (Northland Enterprises), Ken Cianchette (Portland Properties), Phil Haughey (MHR Management), Anastasia Contos (Top of the Old Port Parking)

Others: Steve Kalisz (MHR Management), Steve Landry (Maine Historical Society), Christopher Papagni (CP Consulting), Art Johns (resident), Joan Dow (resident), Bill Daly (Westin Hotel), Kelley Craig (Ocean Gate Plaza), Jon Rizzo (CBRE|The Boulos Co), Stev Parker (Daggett & Parker), Jeff Laniewski (Unified Parking Partners)

Staff present: Amy Geren, Taffy Eaton

Minute 1. Josh Benthien welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

Minute 2. On a motion by Ken Cianchette and seconded by Phil Haughey, the committee unanimously accepted the September 15th meeting minutes.

Minute 3. Potential Community Forum Panhandling discussion: Josh explained that he and Ken will take the discussion to the Board to see if the Board votes for the creation of an ad hoc committee to address the panhandling issue. We don't want to take time away from this meeting because there are many other issues to address. Discussion/comments:

- The City does not have an appetite to tackle the panhandling issue again
- We need to bring in the agencies who may oppose us to get all viewpoints
- Panhandling is different from homelessness and should be tackled separately
- We need to change how Portland is handling panhandling
- Ken passed around a sign-up sheet for those interested in serving on the ad hoc committee. We want to set an attainable goal. Phil Haughey, Kelley Craig, Joan Dow and Harold Pachios signed up.
- Other cities have tackled the panhandling problem via ordinances but since the City of Portland doesn't want to tackle it, we need to look into other avenues.
 - Possibly target a specific section of the peninsula?
 - Make it illegal to hand anything out of car?
 - Rejuvenate the Have A Heart, Give Smart campaign?
 - Ordinances that have worked have involved downtown areas, offering lots of other areas for them to go. It takes considerable effort to draft an ordinance.
 - Amy mentioned the upcoming performance piece (in December) about panhandling and will distribute the information

Minute 4. Energy efficiency tracking discussion: the Benchmarking Ordinance draft is available and has passed through the City's Energy Sustainability Committee.

- The ordinance vote was postponed to the November 7th City Council meeting partially because the 2030 District has just been accepted on a national level. There is some thought at the City level to wait and see how the voluntary 2030 District does before passing an ordinance.
- The ordinance concerns properties with over 50 units. Portland Downtown has come out as not supporting the ordinance and Casey will read a prepared statement at the November 7th meeting.
- How would the ordinance handle change of use of buildings?
- Contact City Councilors now with your opinions – some are in favor of the ordinance and some are against.
- Climate change advocates are pushing for the ordinance.
- We need an audit for specific energy uses, not data collection for no reason.
- The municipality is the largest energy user at this time
- The 2030 District has energy buying power also

Minute 5. DEL update: Street cleaning, trash/recycling containers, graffiti removal, cadet program (attached) – Amy

- **Trash/recycling containers:** the pilot program of new trash & recycling bins is underway
- **Downtown Beautification:** Amy will meet with the lead Longfellow House garden club volunteer to talk about what needs there are for Portland Downtown doing such a volunteer project.
- **Property owner snow removal information:** Amy is working on the snow removal information letter to be sent to property owners
- **Downtown Cadet program:** The cadets are done. Tony was hired by PPD. Amy is working on a full evaluation of the program - see the attached chart.
- **Graffiti:** Learning Works has made good progress. Amy has reached out to the Portland Mural Initiative and the Neighborhood Prosecutor for creating a plan to discourage graffiti. Murals are working well on Gold Street.

Discussion: Amy described the current graffiti removal process with Learning Works and responsibilities of the property owner. Portland Downtown donated \$12,000 to Learning Works last year and \$6,000 this year. The City took funding away from Learning Works and Portland Downtown did not have available funds in the budget to donate more. Portland Downtown used the balance of last years' \$12,000 (\$6,000) for staff technology updates.

Cumulative graffiti is evident and the current ordinance and the Learning Works Graffiti Busters program are not having the desired effect.

Suggestions:

- It is time for Portland Downtown to take responsibility because no one seems to be accountable. Portland Downtown's performance should be measured by facts. The biggest deterrent to graffiti vandals is prompt removal. The installation of cameras helps too.
- Perhaps allocate part of the assessment income to graffiti removal that Portland Downtown's public services crew removes.
- Increase assessment for this purpose?
- Talk to the building owner and bring them into "we all share this street" shame
- It is best not to post pictures because that's what the graffiti vandal wants
- There are ways around the liability issue as seen in other cities (Charlotte, NC)
- Graffiti is a community problem and we need to find an agreeable solution

Action items:

- 1) Josh and Ken will take these thoughts to the Board to see about allotting funds towards graffiti removal.
- 2) Amy will research other community efforts featured on IDA's site to see how they got around the liability issue.
- 3) The Supplemental Services Agreement will be looked at this year also so this might be the time to bring graffiti removal into the contract.
- 4) Josh and Ken want to get Jeff Tarling, the City Arborist, and Steve Early from Public Works together to discuss the best tree planting locations for greatest impact and chance of survival. We need comments for the Supplemental Services Agreement contract by January 1, 2017 so this is good timing.

Minute 6. Other business

- Art Johns, resident has concerns with loud music on Middle Street. Amy told him that the Night Life Oversight Committee is addressing the Sound issue. The decibel level is not the issue. Art feels that residents get overridden for businesses. Amy will connect him with Casey Gilbert and/or send info about the monthly Sound Oversight Committee meetings.

Josh thanked everyone present for coming today and ended by saying that it is time for addressing these bigger issues now.

Respectfully submitted,
Taffy Eaton, recorder

Update from your Downtown Experience Liaison

October 2016

Graffiti

- LearningWorks has made significant progress at the end of the season with removal from some long-standing vandalized properties.
- The process of working with the neighborhood prosecutor to inform property owners of their responsibility has been impactful as well, with several hard-hit properties making graffiti removal a priority. At Casey's request, I send some thank you notes to New England Telephone (Forest Ave. at Cumberland & Oak), The Beaver Block (496 Congress – Subway), and 50 Monument LLC (50 Monument Square – FedEx), letting them know Portland Downtown appreciates the impact their efforts have.
- I have reached out to the Portland Mural Initiative to see about collaborating on projects with downtown property owners.
- Next Steps:
 - Casey and I will be meeting with LearningWorks to close out the year and get feedback on the program.
 - Casey and I will be meeting with the Neighborhood Prosecutor at the Police Department for ideas on working with property owners to deter graffiti vandalism, including a potential mural initiative with the City's Historic Preservation department.

Trash/Recycling Receptacles

- I received color swatches from the new trash and recycling receptacle manufacturer and confirmed the color match with the City's Historic Preservation.
- Next Steps: Receive and place new trash receptacles.

Downtown Beautification

- I have a meeting scheduled with a Longfellow House Garden Club volunteer to get input on developing a downtown garden club that might assist public works with some planter maintenance. This program, when developed with enough detail, could be a good fit for some volunteers through Catholic Charities, an organization that works with immigrants while they seek employment.
- Next Steps: Tour the downtown district with the garden club volunteer for suggestions and create a volunteer program.

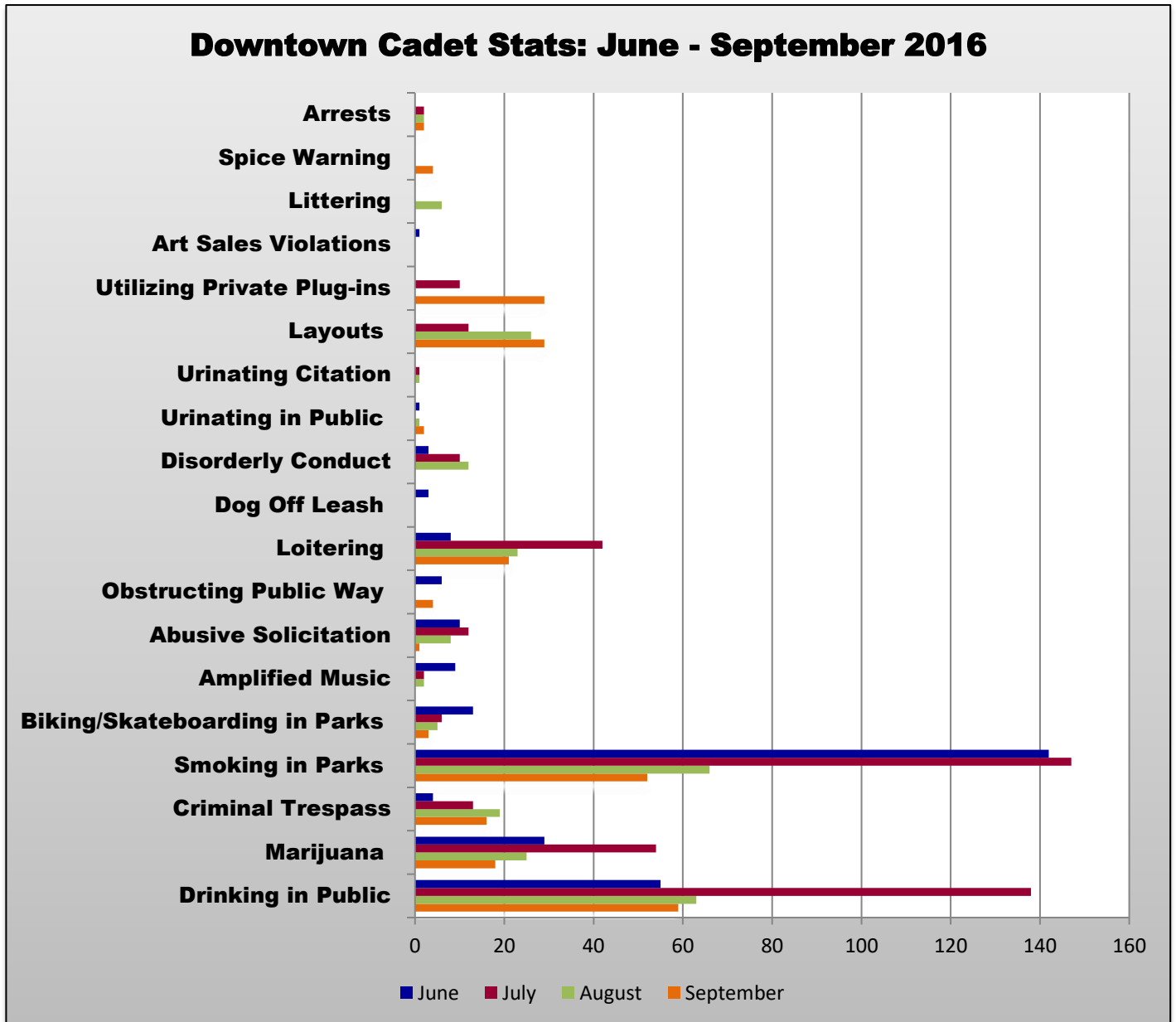
Property Owner Snow Removal Responsibility

- In preparation of the upcoming season, I have prepared a snow removal responsibility letter, similar to the graffiti responsibility letter we distributed in the spring. This letter summarizes property owner responsibility for snow and ice removal per the City of Portland's Code of Ordinances, and provides contact phone numbers for dispatch, parking ban information, and sidewalk compliance.
- Next Steps: Finalize letter to include asking business owners to remove signs, planters, etc. from sidewalks.

Downtown Cadet Program

- The cadets' last week of work was the week leading up to Columbus Day weekend.

- All stats are in and I interviewed two of the remaining cadets and their supervisor for program feedback from their perspective. I am working on a full evaluation of the program so we will have a full program description with stats to solicit supporting funds.
- Next Steps: Finalize cadet program evaluation and produce a thorough program description for potential funders.



Panhandling Discussion

- Casey and I met with Snowlion Repertory Company to discuss the upcoming production, *Anything Helps God Bless*, about the Portland median-strip panhandler controversy. The theater group is scripting a performance to share with the community in an effort to share a variety of opinions in a creative venue. Performances will be held in December at Portland Ballet.
- Next Steps: Confirm dates and arrange to view the performance in December.

Portland 2030 District

- Portland has recently signed a charter to become North America's 15th 2030 District.
- Next Steps: Formal PR event in January.