



**District and Community Services Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 17, 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), Mike McDonald (North River), Trish McLellan (JB Brown), David Packard (Frederick, Quinlan & Tupper)

**Guests:** Steve Earley (City of Portland winter operations director) and Jeff Tarling (City of Portland Arborist)

**Others:** Jeff Laniewski (Unified Parking Partners), Megan Doane (Portland Stage), Michaela McVetty (Sisters Gourmet Deli), Jon Dow (Waterfront Concerts), Jim Brady (Press Hotel)

**Staff present:** Casey Gilbert, 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 October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

**Minute 3. Strategic tree planting/replacement downtown:** the thought process behind this is to make winter operations as easy as possible by eliminating obstacles to sidewalk plows and to eliminate trees where they won't survive.

- We need to be strategic about problem areas and come up with a plan.
- Jeff Tarling suggests that input from the public would be helpful. Concerns should be collected at Portland Downtown, in one spot.
- Interested members of this committee will do a walking tour of current downtown tree locations (sign-up sheet was passed around).
- Amy can pull up a See Click Fix report of damaged trees/empty tree wells.
- Jeff suggested putting reflective snow stakes around raised tree wells.
- This committee can come up with a planting list/strategy in April for the season.

**Minute 4. Potential Community Forum Panhandling discussion:** Josh gave some background on asking the City Manager about the possibility of the City addressing the Panhandling issue again. The City does not have the temperament for the issue right now. Portland Downtown will create an ad hoc committee to brainstorm a plan for addressing panhandling downtown.

- Panhandling in medians is what the voters turned down. There are many other areas that need to be worked on.

- A Have a Heart type fundraising campaign allows for collection of donations in a safe manner.
- Buy-in from Preble Street and other organizations is important so that everyone is working together.
- The Ad Hoc committee will be the “do-ers”:
  - The committee will work on how to get all organizations involved and working on a common goal.
  - Portland Downtown staff can support the committee by collecting information from other Business Improvement Districts’ successes and strategies.
  - Organize past ideas of what has been discussed and hasn’t worked so we don’t reinvent the wheel.
  - Amy Geren will add See Click Fix reports to her reports and check for panhandling incidents.
  - The Police Chief and Crime analyst can be invited to address the ad hoc committee as to why certain things did not work.
  - Maybe invite City Councilors because they might have ideas. Belinda Ray is our councilor so should be invited.

**Minute 5. Energy efficiency tracking discussion:** the Benchmarking Ordinance passed. It affects buildings over 20,000 sq. ft. and will not be implemented for two years. The City will spend the first year tracking municipal buildings.

- EnergyStar.gov/Portfolio Manager data collection software will be used by the city to collect data. Once “Green Button” technology is available through utility websites, it will make data collection simpler.
- If a tenant refuses to give their utility data, the landlord can document their attempt to collect it in lieu of providing the energy usage for that tenant.
- Casey reminded this group that Portland Downtown did not support the ordinance.
- The City’s goal is to review all the data collected by the end of 2020 and assess whether the ordinance is having an effect.

**Minute 6. DEL update:** Amy covers Graffiti removal, Winter operations, Ordinance enforcement, Panhandling discussion, Supplemental Services data collection, Downtown Beautification in the attached report.

- Casey told the group that the City is open to providing graffiti removal from private property if Portland Downtown chooses to add it to the Supplemental Services Agreement. We could perhaps use the money that was going to Learning Works. Discussion:
  - The downfall is that property owners potentially won’t remove their own graffiti if they know that Portland Downtown will remove it.
  - If there could be a way to charge the building owner for graffiti removal, it could make the process more equitable.
  - Anastasia said she had good luck with hydrophobic coating, which is a deterrent because paint won’t adhere to it.
  - The Renys building is very hard to keep clean. Removal takes place, then it happens again.
- Panhandling – the *Anything Helps God Bless* theatre production is on 12/10 and 12/11. It explains the turning down of the Panhandling on the Median ordinance.
- Amy distributed a sample Supplemental Services data collection tracking sheet (attached) that she will use to track time spent on each service area.

- Josh talked about the process of reviewing the new Supplemental Services Agreement. Committee members should let Amy know which listed items are more important to them.

Josh adjourned the meeting at 2:10

Respectfully submitted,  
Taffy Eaton, recorder

## Update from your Downtown Experience Liaison

November 2016

### Graffiti

- Last month, Josh asked me to look into processes that other BIDs utilize with graffiti control. I looked into other BIDs featured by the International Downtown Association and from the comparison BIDs the planning students used earlier this year for their expansion feasibility study, and have found that other BIDs tend to list graffiti removal as part of their daily cleaning activities. Please see attached for some details on how these BIDs track and report and graffiti vandalism.
- I met with Tess and Will from the Portland Mural Initiative last week. The organization's aim is to paint several permanent murals around the city of Portland every summer, creating a walkable tour of the murals. They hope to grow the project annually, with a five-year plan to host an annual mural painting conference in August 2020. They are open to properties that would make good locations for public art.
- Next Steps: Connect interested property owners with Tess and Will for potential art projects in an effort to deter graffiti downtown.

### Winter Operations

- Portland Downtown staff sent a snow/ice removal responsibility letter to downtown property owners. The letter clarifies city and property owner's responsibilities, and what Portland Downtown provides as extra service.

### Ordinance Enforcement

- The cadets finished their season last month. I have drafted an evaluation of the program for continuous quality improvement.
  - One highlight in the evaluation findings is that the cadets took a different approach to managing perceptions of safety with loitering in the parks this summer. After finding that warning or citing for an ordinance violation did not hinder some of the issues around transiency in the parks or other special attention areas, they began issuing criminal trespass citations, which would lead to an arrest if the offender continued to loiter in an area. The result was an increase of 200% in criminal trespass citations.
  - Another finding is that the cadets are dealing with issues that might be better served by social service providers, including homelessness, drug and alcohol use, and mental health.
  - There was an overall decrease in most activity by cadets this year as compared to last year. One of the reasons for this was the reduction in staff midway through the season with the hiring of one cadet, and one cadet scaling back to part-time while he attended college. The reduction in staff meant the cadets had to work in one group because, for safety reasons, they cannot work alone.
- The police department created the new position of Ordinance Enforcement Officer, per Portland Downtown's request. Dylan Matthews is the new hire in this position: [dmatthews@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:dmatthews@portlandmaine.gov); [207-939-8196](tel:207-939-8196). Dylan started with the city as a Downtown Cadet, so this role is familiar to him. His role is unique in the police department and he is able to spend a lot more time focusing on special attention areas and helping to problem solve with property owners at violation hot spots. He has been spending some time doing community outreach at neighborhood association meetings so community members know he is available to attend to ordinance violations that hinder quality of life in Portland.
- Next Steps: Connect Dylan with downtown constituents as the need arises.

## Panhandling Discussion

- The *Anything Helps God Bless* production will be held at Portland Ballet Studio Theater on two dates in December:
  - December 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM
  - December 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM
- Next Steps: Attend *Anything Helps God Bless* if interested. Reservations (\$10 suggested donation) are highly recommended and are now being accepted. Call 207-518-9305 for a reservation. FMI - [www.snowlionrep.org](http://www.snowlionrep.org)

## Supplemental Services Data Collection

- Casey, Adam and I attended a data clinic at the Data Innovation Project at USM last month. We have been interested in collecting data in a way that can be presented to downtown constituents to show value from the services Portland Downtown provides. A key opportunity to show value is with the services detailed on the supplemental services agreement with the city. I created a document that aligns these service areas with hours spent on each activity:
  - Event support (transportation and set-up of materials and equipment)
  - Litter patrol (collection and disposal from streets, sidewalks and public spaces)
  - Graffiti removal (from city property)
  - Removal of posters
  - Furniture and fixture maintenance
  - Sidewalk sweeping, cleaning and repair
  - Tree well maintenance
  - Weed control (to include mowing and leaves)
  - Winter operations (snow clearance and preparation)
  - Holiday decorations (installation and removal)
  - Visitor Booth maintenance (to include directory delivery)
  - Bathroom maintenance
  - **Development (to encompass training and HR related meetings)**
  - **Shop/equipment maintenance**
  - **Street sweeping**

The last three bolded items were added after consultation with our public services crew to account for all working hours. I have been working with Robert to collect and track the data.

- Next Steps: Finalize the data collection system by January, with Robert leading the collection.

## Downtown Beautification

- I met with a volunteer from the Longfellow House Garden Club and toured Congress Street/Free Street planters. She outreached at the next Longfellow House Garden Club meeting to assess interest in helping to select plants and/or train a team of volunteers for regular maintenance, and has interest from a couple volunteers.
- Next Steps: Draft a volunteer description for outreach; outreach for volunteer interest in adopting a planter or section of planters for the summer. This has the potential to be a good project for scout troops, community service requirement for high school students, and/or supported immigrant volunteerism.