Parking & Transportation Committee meeting minutes

March 27, 2019 9:00 – 10:00am

549 Congress St.

Board members present: Megan Doane, Mike McDonald
Committee members present: Megan Doane, Mike McDonald, John Peverada, Kevin Thomas, Denise Beck
Guests: Steve Kalisz, Stephen Houdlette, Bruce Hyman, Nell Donaldson, Kara Wooldrik
Staff present: Casey Gilbert, Taffy Eaton, Amy Geren

Minute 1. Megan Doane opened the meeting, welcomed everyone present and asked for introductions

Minute 2. Review and approve January 23, 2019 minutes: Mike McDonald made a motion to accept the minutes, Steve Kalisz seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Minute 3. **Committee member update**: Megan Doane

- New Committee Co-Chair: Megan welcomed Mike McDonald as new Committee Co-Chair

Minute 4. City updates

- Bruce Hyman provided updates on various projects:
    - Franklin St and Commercial St redesign projects are ongoing. Jerimiah Bartlett is the lead on the Franklin St plan. In January 2019 the City presented the concept plan of Exit 7 from 295 to Commercial St. Fox and Somerset Streets to Marginal Way is being worked on also.
    - The study of 295 to Commercial St brought up plans from 2016/2017. The plans were unaffordable at the time and work was supposed to be phased in. There was a lot of push-back concerning costs and the footprint of Fox/Somerset St plan.
        - Reevaluating the infrastructure project surrounding traffic signals. They are now looking at working with DOT and replacing lights at Franklin St and Exit 7. It could be done as a stand-alone project or part of Phase 1.
    - The City is also working on a Master Plan for Commercial St. They held stakeholder and public meetings in 2018 and have been reworking the plan since then. They heard a lot about traffic congestion and the impact it has on access to piers and wharfs. They found it wasn't the amount of vehicular traffic causing congestion, rather delivery trucks parked in the median and on sidewalks. They are trying to find common sense solutions to balance all needs.
    - The City hopes to test making the Franklin/Commercial St intersection more compact with bollards and planters in order to reduce the pedestrian crossing time
    - They are evaluating the benefit of consolidating the number of crosswalks. Center/Commercial St crosswalk is a very wide intersection also.
    - Beach St ramp congestion – they are looking at ending the left turn option from Beach St onto Commercial St. They might also remove the right turning traffic to Beach St and the bridge.
    - The City is looking at
        - Changing how deliveries are made on Commercial St
        - Sidewalk congestion during tourism season, including vendors. The need to widen the water side sidewalks is evident. Can the City manage the current space more efficiently?

        - Continuous bike lanes on Commercial St
        - Time table: the next public meeting is the 3rd week in April
        - Casey complimented the Commercial St process and facilitator
    - Megan Doane asked about continuous bike lanes on Franklin St. Yes, there are plans.
    - Kara Wooldrik asked whether there are or could be plans for temporary signage to have cars passing through avoid Commercial St. Bruce said the City is working with DOT on signs for 295 to have visitors take an alternative exit in order to avoid Commercial St.
    - Parking options:
        - Angelo's acres will remain available for parking
        - Kevin Thomas said the Cat ferry lot will be converted to allow for 250 parking spaces temporarily. John Peverada added that for now the lot is $15/day with a 15-day limit.
    - Bruce spoke about the bike share program. The City received one proposal from Jump to pilot the program this summer. The proposal would provide 200 bikes to start with.
        - Casey mentioned that Tom Higgins is concerned that a dock-less system might create additional work for the downtown Public Works crew. In other cities where they have installed dockless systems, bikes end up all over sidewalks, in alleys, and in waterways. It presents quite an issue/obstacle for sidewalk cleanliness and safety. Bruce assured Casey that Jump has performance measures in place.
    - Multi-Modal Marketing Campaign – Concord Coach has contributed to a bicycle wayfinding sign program in exchange for parking lot expansion. They are working with Portland Trails and The Bicycle Coalition.

- Nell Donaldson updated those present on:
    - Fort Hill Parking Study update – the study was completed 18 months ago and recommendations were presented to City Council. The City and partners are moving incrementally on the recommendations such as remote parking options. There is a working spreadsheet that will be used to update the committee.
    - Transportation Management Association (TMA) - the City has been working with partners on the concept of a public/private partnership working to solve transportation issues. The idea is to find creative solutions. The City and partners are thinking about developing a pilot TMA and have generated some funding. Casey mentioned that the Parking + Transportation Committee has discussed contributing to the pilot. Phase 1 would be figuring out what services are needed, based on feedback from employers. Phase 2 would be a launch of the services. Nell provided handouts. The pilot will help gather data, which could signal the need for a TMA.
    - The City Land Use Code is undergoing a rewrite. The City currently asks developers to conduct impact analyses' and offers a tax credit for active transportation options.

  Questions:
    - Megan Doane asked about High/Congress St intersection congestion. Bruce said that in conjunction with the Congress Square Park Redesign Project, the intersection will be reconfigured. Signals, new curb lines, and tightening up the intersection is projected to take place within 2 years. Plaza work will follow.
    - Commercial St street lighting – Bruce said technical standards were presented to the Planning Department yesterday. Kevin said cobra head lights will be installed. The City will also add to LED lights.

Minute 5. Other business:

- METRO updates: Denise Beck distributed handouts
    - METRO has held 8 public meetings about fare pricing changes in all affected communities and they have been positive. The last fare increase was in 2010. They will be introducing the automatic fare options and hope to raise general awareness.
    - Ridership is below 25% and METRO wants to increase that number. Automating with cards and smart phones. Denise reviewed the changes. Automation will speed up the boarding process.
    - Discounts will only apply to Smart Cards or smart phone apps

    - The Monthly Cap will replace the Monthly Pass.
    - Dennis asked everyone present to take the survey on the METRO website
    - METRO is hoping to expand the network of where one can purchase passes
    - METRO is working with larger businesses to expand the program. Frequent service is essential.
    - There will be a public hearing on April 10th and then they hope to move the fare increases forward to the METRO Board of Directors and then start a communication plan.
    - The anticipated roll-out of automated far payment is between September and November 2019. They are hoping to have a partnership with South Portland Bus Service and Zoom.
    - Smart Card money rolls-over if not used within a month
    - Kara asked whether data gathered will be shared publicly
    - Denise said there is much more information to come. They need to find a vendor and also have to analyze feedback.
    - METRO is in talks with the Portland Advisory Task Force with GPCOG about plans to change Route 8 (downtown circulator) next year. METRO hopes to launch a new circulator route for the peninsula within a year. Also, more electric buses will be added.
- Kevin Thomas said
    - The Traffic Department is on schedule to paint in-town crosswalks May 6th week
    - Franklin Street lights will be going back up
- Stephen Houdlette asked about the status of the Multi-Modal Marketing Campaign. Casey said The Brand Collective presented their initial campaign ideas to the stakeholders and will provide their new ideas at an upcoming presentation. Stakeholders will then select a campaign.

Megan adjourned the meeting at 10:05AM.

Next meeting: May 22, 2019

Respectfully submitted,
Taffy Eaton, Recorder