

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON
Citywide Neighborhood Committee
Meeting Summary

September 22, 2015 Conference Room A, City Hall
Present: Cliff Lazenby, Cristy Cardoso, Kathy Bergeron, Paul Mannle
Also Present:
Absent: Marie Kelleher (e), Larry Cataldo (e)

The meeting was called to order by the chairperson at 7:01.

Attendance was circulated.

A motion was made to accept the July minutes. Aaron Garganta seconded. Minutes were approved.

NNO Recap:

Cliff: Anecdotally it seemed to go very well. Survey Monkey feedback was good. 20 neighborhoods participated most towns have one central event. 12 survey replies public works services went well, visits from police, Fire etc. were good in most neighborhoods. Resident attendance was good. One area of improvement, Citywide outreach could have been sooner, press releases to go out sooner. Start time was confusing because there may have been two start times published. One other suggestion was to encourage a later start time.

Doug Roberts PS21 presenting on Tactical Urbanism

Doug lives on Richards Ave, chairs PS21. Peter Bandermark was with him, he is the Vice Chair of PS21, he lives in the South End. They are here to talk about techniques to empower neighborhoods to do these things on their own, looking for support for city policy that allows community groups to initiate demonstration projects throughout the city. (Short video presentation)

The project on Islington St. featured consultants including Mike Lydon author of the book *Tactical Urbanism*.

There is a 50 page document outlining the Burlington, VT process.

Paul Mannle asked for clarification on the timeline of the Islington St. project.

It was a 5 step process:

Makers Space Meeting

Workshop at city chambers

City got involved with the recommendations (parklets, sidewalks etc)

Presentation at 3S art space (night before)

Build-out the next morning with 30 volunteers

It was up for 4 days, survey info and report-out to the Traffic and Safety Committee.

Cliff: Who at the city did you work with?

Grant from NH Charitable foundation.

City pledged some money.

Juliet Walker and Eric Ebe approved the project.

Police and DPW were hired.

Most of the expense was for the consultant.

Also, West End businesses helped fund it.

Kathy: If this was a policy how would it work?

Doug Roberts: Right now you would go to traffic and safety they would vote on a permanent solution. They are changing slightly and implementing some longer tests on the sidewalk on Islington for example. A policy may lay out specifics for citizens to spearhead these demonstrations. The Islington project was done to get some insight into the process before the big design process for the Islington re-do which is years from now.

Jim Splaine: What do you need from city council?

Doug Roberts: If the council would agree to support adopting something like the Burlington policy that would be great.

Jim: You should present this to city council, or ask city staff to help draft something that you can present.

Cliff: I can see this be a great early stage process for neighborhood input on CIP projects. Concerns are about the level of effort and fundraising involved.

Doug: Could the city adopt a certain amount of this approach? Take the financial burden off of residents. Burlington has materials for neighborhoods to borrow. The city liked the amount of feedback they got, the middle street bike lanes were an example of this kind of project being initiated by city staff.

Paul: The best thing about it was that for low cost they can test a good idea. When they pay architects it's expensive.

Aaron: Woodbury Ave. and Maplewood is another example of a test area that would have been a good example of a test to see if it works or if people will like it, get public support or amend designs that don't work as intended.

Cliff: To that same end of getting more public input, you mentioned getting a survey out to neighborhoods when we spoke. We could do that, do you have background materials we can send? Like Burlington papers?

Paul: Seeking a formal policy is a good idea. The city is embracing public feedback, for example the click and fix project. It's great for community building and it's a quick simple way to validate it and get feedback.

Peter's open streets project is another great example of this. We should support it. (Paul)

Aaron: It gives neighborhoods an opportunity to drive solutions. We tested it, it works, now can you put it on the list of projects? I can see how this would be giving up control (city staff) but they may be able to do this for projects already funded and find problems before they arise.

Tom Morgan made a motion that directed the citywide committee to bring the policy to the City Council. After discussion Paul Mannle amended the motion to say that the Citywide Neighborhood Committee would support PS21 in their effort to pursue a policy for the city to adopt that would allow for citizen led tactical urbanism in Portsmouth.

The motion passed.

Jim Splaine said now is a good time to bring this up to city council (oct / nov).

Next neighborhood outreach forum will be Ward 2. Dates are in the works (mid-October) the middle school is a proposed. The Creek wants Ward 1 to be next. They said that the school sidewalks are terrible; the rt. 1 bridges are red listed and they have projects coming up that need to be discussed.

Cliff: The next will probably be done in January. Then the rest in March and then May. After discussion Cliff agreed to put Ward 1 ahead of Ward 2.

The invitation to submit CIP Project input is out. October 14 is the last day to add suggestions.

Discussion: Constructive feedback from last meeting, take minutes, have after action items and follow through with city staff. Is this something the CNC can do? This is a tool we gave to you to make connections. This is a great opportunity to use your council liaison. Looking into recording the outreach forums.

Aaron Garganta- Sound barriers Update: - City has offered some funds, state does not have funds. Background, sound protection should have been put in when constructed. No excuse for not building them. Potential cost: Aaron was guessing 7-8 million citywide.

Beth Roth was interested in supporting it. The Executive council has to approve it and get it on the ten year plan. It needs political motivation. We presented to DOT and Sununu 2 and a half years ago and there was little funding and no will to get it done. Next steps: a meeting with DOT commissioner City Staff and six or so reps from impacted neighborhoods. Then a meeting with elected officials, possibly Chris Sununu, Beth Roth, and Colin Van Ostern. Possibly some media coverage of the situation.

Cliff: Any other items?

John Wykoff: Telephone poles are a problem in the creek. The power company has installed new but the old ones are just hanging there.

Paul Mannle: Borthwick Ave. connector going to court next week.

Sara McLaughlin: Little free library going in for the Creek neighborhood

Motion to adjourn by Cristy Cardoso seconded by Paul Mannle. Passed

Meeting adjourned 8:46