

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



notes

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th Ave, 8th Floor Hawthorne Room

Committee Members:	Alternate Members:
Roger Averbeck* Don Baack* Chase Ballew* Anthony Buczek* David Crout* Marianne Fitzgerald Rebecca Hamilton* Arlene Kimura Doug Klotz* Scott Kocher* Rod Merrick Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara Eve Nilenders Suzanne Stahl	Lillian Karabaic Erin Kelley

** Indicates committee members in attendance*

Bureau of Transportation Staff:

Sara Schooley
Alexis Kelso

7:00-7:30 Introductions, Announcements, Hot Topics

- Introduction question – random acts of kindness
- Chair/co-chair – moving forward (15 min)
- Hot topics/announcements
 - Scott – Subcommittee on crosswalk enforcement conversation going on now by email. Will have something to report in a month or two.
 - Anthony – Buckman neighborhood discussion beginning on permitting parking in residential areas. Starting small to build support.
 - Doug – Sunnyside neighborhood—anecdotally, people are willing to accept multifamily without parking.

- Rebecca – Downtown Parking Advisory Committee will be beginning soon after not having met for a month.
- Don – Riverview Park/mountain bike controversy. Discussion to use some of the trails putting in now for peds could accommodate bikes in the future. Don supports having separated trails because bikes can be moving much faster than peds. Roger – BAC is working on a letter to Mayor re: bikes in Riverview. Roger’s main concern is breakdown of public process in the way city officials suddenly made a decision that upset months of collaboration with the public. PAC should be concerned about this as precedent for cutting advisory committees out of decision making. Anthony – is it appropriate for us to write a letter in support of BAC? Don – we should write a letter about separating modes on trails. Scott – Note from Commissioner Novick didn’t know about ban any sooner than constituents. Doug – It would be useful to write to City Council then, not to Commissioner Novick.
 - Sara to follow up (with Roger Gellar) on the breakdown of the process, including staff involvement.
- Rebecca – Can we get someone from Parks to talk about dogs off leash on trails?
- Don – (at end of meeting) – Community-Initiated Neighborhood Trails Process is important; should be on agenda next time.
- Sidewalk repair/inspection update (Scott – 15 min)
 - This presentation is to provide information on a project that Oregon Walks is working on—the state of repair of Portland sidewalks. Two-part request from Oregon Walks: 1) feedback on how to do process effectively and 2) potentially advocating for proposals.
 - Adjacent property owners are supposed to maintain sidewalks, but it is very rare that they are proactive. Instead, repair of sidewalks is complaint-driven. Injuries are insured, so owners are furthered disincentivized to do repairs.
 - In 2014, one person sent in 386 (valid) sidewalk repair requests. This was reported by the news and unwelcome by property owners. Created a backlog in the sidewalk repair department.
 - Requests are handled by many bureaus, depending on the type of repair.
 - Lifts – Trees – PBOT, Parks
 - Cracks - PBOT
 - Vegetation, Obstacles – BDS
 - Parks, Schools – Parks, PPS
 - Typically there isn’t repair until things are really bad. We’d be doing better as a community if people were doing maintenance before things got really bad. For example, near hospitals they grind uplifted panels every year.
 - Areas with trees and in underserved areas are the worst off.
 - The vast majority of people getting notices don’t know anything about sidewalk repair or hiring contractors.
 - “Unlucky neighbor” – when city inspectors are responding to a particular complaint, they will also look at the whole block for technical compliance (not just the really bad thing that was reported), so the “unlucky neighbors” will also get notices from the city.

- Corners are repaired only when they are extreme hazards. Property owners are not responsible for repair corning. The City has a backlog of thousands of corners that are not ADA-compliant or which otherwise need repair.
- Ideas for improving the process:
 - Education so property owners knew what their responsibilities are.
 - Education so general sidewalk users know that the system is complaint driven and who to contact.
 - People are frustrated about BES processes. Could PBOT do it all?
 - People are afraid to put in trees because of potential sidewalk lift.
 - Tree inventory volunteers could also note uplifts, since they're already on site.
 - Could rubber be used to bridge uplift gap?
 - Equity consideration – Could the City subsidize repair / defer costs until the sale of a property?
- Q&A
 - (Don) Suggests having tool lending library so people can borrow a grinder to repair their own sidewalks.
 - (Don) SW Trails did inventory with volunteers. That was effective.
 - (Doug) In some cities, if damage is done by street tree the City pays for it.
 - (Chase) Friends of Trees can install a root barrier for an extra cost. Could this be required? Urban Forestry is now requiring root barriers in planting strips less than 4' wide.
 - (David) Has had experience getting a notice as a property owner for minor repairs (probably as an “unlucky neighbor”), but then notices much larger repair needs. Seems not fair. It's also a misplacement of repair dollars.

7:30 – 8:50 PAC Rules of Conduct and Giving Effective Feedback

In order for the PAC to be effective, we need to have a set of agreed upon rules of conduct so that all committee members feel comfortable expressing themselves at meeting, presenters feel that the PAC is a productive use of their time, and the chairs can effectively facilitate the meetings, among other benefits. Let's take this time to do some initial work in creating a PAC Code of Conduct.

- **Guidelines of treating presenters and each other**
 - Questions:
 - What things would make this committee work for you?
 - What (if anything) would you like to change about the PAC?
 - What would make meetings better?
 - Answers as arranged under headings in discussion:
 - Build Alliances
 - Willingness to work with presenters as allies.
 - I would like presenters to walk out of meetings feeling like we'd been helpful, like we're partners not adversaries.
 - Tough on the issues, soft on the people. Never attack a presenter.
 - Facilitation and Respect

- Chair can cut off a comment if it is off topic. (Have a “save it” board for that?)
 - Always respect the chair when the chair cuts off comment time.
 - PAC members should respect the moderator who is calling on people and setting time limits.
 - More orderly PAC member input for presenters.
 - I’d like PAC members to be more aware of how long they talk.
 - Ensure all committee members who wish to ask a question or comment on a presentation have the opportunity to do so.
 - I would like to go around the room to comment instead of taking comments by raising hands – everyone gets a chance to speak, not just loudest members.
 - Use of a facilitator to guide discussions and make sure a few members aren’t dominating the conversation. It may be appropriate in some instances to either impose time limits on members’ input or only allow one comment per member.
- Agenda Management
 - More time should be allowed per topics.
 - Meet more often if we cannot get through our intended agenda.
 - PAC meeting agendas often seem to have too many topics to adequately cover in the time allotted. It would be nice to consider reducing the number of items or allowing more time per item.
 - Limit of one presentation per meeting.
 - I wish we could let presenters get all the way through their presentations before questions.
 - Good time management at meetings: including the facilitator and the presenter; that allows time for committee members to ask questions or make comments.
 - I would like us to stay on schedule and end on time.
 - Ensure enough time in agendas to complete question and answer sessions, so that we don’t cut off discussion or go overtime.
 - Balanced presentations. We usually only get one view of issues—that of staff. We should invite alternate views if available. Examine issues in detail—make more informed decisions and recommendations.
 - Feedback Loop
 - Committee work for City? ... Is key question!
 - Meetings better if... PAC more influential (input and recommendations taken more seriously, more likely to be implemented).
 - Relevant and Respectful Comments / Constructive Comments
 - Agreement on how we give constructive feedback to presenters.
 - Make comments brief and concise, and to the point.
 - I’d like us to give concrete suggestions – clearly defined ideas that a PM could take action on.

- Focus commentary on specific actions for staff. Recommendations, not criticisms.
- Comments should relate directly to issue being presented.
- Presenters should have a focused request re: what they want committee feedback on.
- Other things heard during discussion:
 - **“Relevant and respectful.”** Comments should be targeted to the needs/request of the presentation and delivered in a respectful manner. Contingent on having an explicit need/request from presenter.
 - **Facilitation.** Chair should have authority to keep the schedule on track, and the rest of the committee should support that.
 - **Method of delivering feedback.** Need discussion time, not just brand new information and immediate demand for opinion. Could be handled through subcommittees who track discussion and then follow up with presenters as needed.
 - **Agenda setting / time management.** Agendas are too large, try to fit too many things; cuts discussion off. Sometimes works to go around the table and let everyone talk; sometimes works better to have discussion that builds.
 - **Feedback Loop (What is the purpose of the PAC?)** To make good decisions, need to have full picture, not just a biased presentation. How is PAC feedback incorporated into projects, plans, policies?
 - **Build alliances to make change.**
 - **Everyone should be allowed to comment.** Respect the knowledges of members. Respect everyone’s communication styles. Committee may need to better understand communication styles (genders, intro/extrovert)
- **Giving feedback**

When I give feedback I struggle with...	I will improve how I give feedback by...
Focusing on being helpful rather than emotionally-driven.	Thinking, before speaking, about how feedback will be used.
Not being blunt.	Try to be more positive.
Finding balance between being tactful and being honest.	Use fewer words.
Recognizing when my feedback is just my opinion.	Not making generalizations and remember when feedback is my opinion.
Listening all the way to end before forming opinion.	Working on active listening and let people finish before giving feedback.
Having too many ideas/things to say.	Waiting until end of conversation to provide comments.
Not getting defensive.	Just letting a statement sit without having to reply/defend position.

Swallowing/giving “poop sandwich.”	Before giving feedback, thinking something nice about the person.
Being concise.	Limiting feedback to a specific thing and to what’s relevant.
Speaking up.	Talking more.

8:50 – 9:00 Meeting Map

- Idea: Do a meeting mapping/graphing exercise at the end of meetings to come. The purpose is to reflect on why good things were good and bad things bad.
 - This time:
 - Scott’s presentation good because reporting back on things already talked about, well-researched, and made clear next steps
 - Grouping exercise bad because uncomfortable and slow, but was necessary.

Next time: Move Powell-Division to 6:00 pm as subcommittee meeting in order to spend more time on this topic.