

# Friends of Casco Bay Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 19, 2019  
Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Commercial Street, Portland

Present: Malcolm Poole, President, Steve Bushey, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, Sandy Marsters, Althea Bennett McGirr, Seb Milardo, Tollef Olsen, Derek Pelletier, Joan Benoit Samuelson, and Jack Thomas  
Absent: Dave Kaufman, Peter LeBourdais, Ann Thayer, and Lori Thayer  
Staff: Mary Cerullo, Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, and Cathy Ramsdell  
Guests: Troy Moon and Julie Rosenbach

## **Welcome** — *Malcolm Poole, President*

Malcolm asked the board and staff to introduce themselves to our guest speakers.

## **A Minute for the Bay**

Tollef cited a detailed article on seaweeds published last week.

Jack mentioned that the docks next to the Harraseeket Yacht Club were removed from the water for the winter, and for the first time, no mussels were found underneath the floats.

## **Board Consent Package** (minutes and financials) — *Malcolm*

*Action Item:* Approved to accept the October minutes and financials.

## **Climate Change in Portland and South Portland and One Climate Future, a joint climate and action plan** — *Troy Moon, Portland Sustainability Coordinator, and Julie Rosenbach, South Portland Sustainability Director*

The pair explained the elements of their One Climate Future initiative, which they believe is the only dual community effort in the country to address climate change. They are pooling financial resources and working together on multiple fronts. They are two of 4.5 sustainability directors in Maine, but there are many more nationally. Both offices have great assistants.

**One Climate Future** <https://www.oneclimatefuture.org>

Mission: Promote more sustainability now and into the future.

Assumptions: People live here because it is a great place to live. Our vision is to keep the quality of life so that people can thrive in a changing climate.

They collaborate on energy, LED street light upgrades, waste reduction, pesticides use, energy benchmarking ordinance, attaining climate action goals: 100% clean energy by 2040; 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050. Doing greenhouse gas inventories.

Sit on Governor's Climate Council Energy Working Group.

## **No matter how much we reduce our emissions we also need to have adaptation strategies for:**

- Building and energy use (Buildings are responsible for 60% of our greenhouse gas emissions)
- Transportation (responsible for 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions)
- Waste reduction (only 2-3% of greenhouse gas emissions, but it is a gateway sustainability behavior)
- Climate resilience—withstand and recover from natural disasters

Equity is incorporated into the mission:

- Flyers on website are translated into four languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.
- Seek to engage the most vulnerable populations: seniors, young people, low income, new Mainers

“We are trying to make this a conversation.” This is a “people plan.”

- The Street Teams go out and ask people to weigh in.
- Surveys in three phases: What are your needs and interests around climate change? What are the barriers to action? What are suggested strategies?
- About 700 people responded to the first survey. 70% expressed concerned about climate change in Portland and So Po and concerned that it will affect them personally.
- Social media: Instagram is the most effective tool for getting information out to the public.

- Invited to be on WGAN radio; interview link is on their webpage.
- South Portland encouraged a community read of *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know* by Joseph Romm. South Portland library gave away hundreds of free copies to SoPo residents; several discussion groups were held around the community.
- Use decentralized engagement strategy: “Meeting in a box” enables volunteers to lead their own meetings: parks, churches, neighborhoods, etc.

**Climate impacts**--More rainfall, more snow, increasing intensity of storms, rising temperatures, heat waves (more like Alabama), sea level rise, warming ocean, vector-borne diseases (ticks, mosquitoes), decreased air quality from ozone and pollen, climate refugees. Projections are based on IPCC scenarios for 2°C temperature increase, 2-3.6°C, and 3.2 to 5.4° C by 2100

Sea level is projected to rise 9 to 11 feet by 2100 if we continue on the current course. Portland has been working on the issue of sea level rise through Bayside Adapts. South Portland has not experienced flooding yet. Part of that is thanks to the City investing \$46 million over the last decades to separate its stormwater system, and partly due to higher geography.

### **Top 10 vulnerabilities:**

Hazardous Waste  
 Grid system  
 Business continuity  
 Property values and tax base  
 Transportation routes  
 Stormwater  
 Eco systems  
 Public health services  
 Food systems  
 Social inequity

### **How do we reduce impacts?**

Great partners working collaboratively  
 Revise building codes  
 Renewable portfolio standards  
 Fuel economy standards  
 Electric vehicles  
 Solar policy  
 Mode share of transportation

### **Community Engagement Committee** — *Sandy Marsters, Committee Chair*

Sandy reviewed highlights of the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- The positive media attention over the past few days is so valuable: from the Continuous Monitoring Station (a result of Woodard & Curran Foundation’s press release) and *The Forecaster’s* interview of Ann Thayer and river gauge installation on the Royal River.
- Film Festival: Next year we can be more aggressive in reassuring people that tickets will be available at the door.
- Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund update:
  - Woodard & Curran Foundation grant of \$100,000 over 3 years.
  - Campaign has raised over a million in donations, pledges, and one bequest, from 26 requests to date.
- The CEC Committee brainstormed 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event ideas.
- Sandy handed out the just-released Annual Report.

### **Board Open Discussion**

Comments on One Climate Future presentation:

Sandy: When will we see the wholesale change we need in order to respond to climate change?

Tollef: Younger folks are very engaged.

Jack: South Portland is light years ahead of Portland on infrastructure improvements.

Ivy: They are coordinating activities with many different sectors.

Derek: Their goals are so dependent on leadership at the state level.

Bud: It made me think about what this Board contributes to this incredible organization. I asked Malcolm to think about a project we could adopt that we could all do together to touch the environment. We should be actively involved as a Board to measure compliance and report out on it.

Joanie: Conservation is to the environment what prevention is to health. Link to a healthy community to make a difference for the environment.

### **Baykeeper Update** — *Ivy Frignoca, Casco Baykeeper*

Ivy discussed the Portland Harbor Dredge. The areas between the wharves and piers have not been dredged for 70 years; we have lost 25% of berthing spaces. 30 different property owners, 60+ dredge areas. The sediment is contaminated with toxins that are harmful to marine life and cannot be disposed of at sea. This and the cost of disposal on land have been barriers to dredging.

The proposal to dispose of contaminated sediments in a contained aquatic disposal cell (CAD cell) is the “least worst option.” The proposed site is by the Coast Guard Station in South Portland, where they will dig a hole with sloped sides that is capped with clean sediments. The Portland Harbor Commission hopes to submit permits in early December for construction in early May 2020.

### **Friends of Casco Bay’s role:**

We asked the Harbor Commission to allow us to review draft permits before submission to ensure that sediments are sequestered in the most secure way. The commission has agreed to:

- Do sequential dredging. The Portland side is more contaminated than the South Portland side, so the most contaminated sediments will go into the deepest part of the CAD cell first.
- Excavate deep enough so there is always 10-15 feet of water at mean low water.
- Use a clam shell bucket dredge that will hold the contaminated sediment and water as they dredge so polluted water is not released.

To be decided:

- Dredging will disturb and destroy part of eelgrass beds in two areas of the Bay. What do we do about the loss of eelgrass? Can remediation happen in Portland Harbor?
- Once the dredging is done, we don’t want to see the piers once again decontaminated by legacy pollutants. Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and stormwater continue to bring contaminated sediments into the harbor. We should use the Integrated Planning Process to eliminate the CSOs along the waterfront and control stormwater runoff.

### **Executive Director Update** — *Cathy Ramsdell, Executive Director*

- Cathy reported that four staff members attended parts of the Gulf of Maine 2050 international symposium last week. We heard that the data globally are daunting; the best approach is to work at the local level, working collaboratively using scientific and communications strategies. Other groups in attendance cited our data and our work and are copying our design for their own continuous monitoring stations.
- Donations from the recent annual appeal are coming in. Thank you for penning notes on letters.
- The stream gauge work has been getting buzz in the community.
- Listen for our one-liner sponsorships (aka ads) on Maine Public Radio over the next two weeks, timed to coincide with end-of-year giving and our annual appeal.
- Cathy serves on the South Portland fertilizer working group, which is making progress on crafting the city’s fertilizer ordinance.
- Staff soon will be moving into operating planning mode for FY21 (April 1, 2020-March 31, 2021).

The meeting adjourned at 7 30 pm.