

1. Land Bank Meeting Cancelled

Documents:

[LAND BANK CANCELLED.PDF](#)
[LAND BANK MINUTES 04132017.PDF](#)

Portland, Maine



Yes. Life's good here.

Commission Members: Simon Rucker, Tom Jewell, Patrizia Bailey, Meri Lowry, William Mann, Rene Perry, Colleen Tucker, Bryan Wentzell and Councilor Justin Costa.

Land Bank Commission's May Meeting has been CANCELLED.

The Land Bank Commission is responsible for identifying and protecting open space resources within the City of Portland. The commission seeks to preserve a balance between development and conservation of open space important for wildlife, ecological, environmental, scenic or outdoor recreational values.

**Land Bank Commission Minutes****April 13, 2017****5:00 P.M.****Portland, Maine City Hall
389 Congress Street, Room 24
(Basement)**

In Attendance: Commission Members: Tom Jewell, Patrizia Bailey, Simon Rucker, Meri Lowry, William Mann, Colleen Tucker, and Bryan Wentzell. Staff members: Ethan Hipple, Michael Goldman, Doug Roncarati and Alli Carroll.

I. Citizen Comment Period

George Rheault began by saying that the agenda for this meeting was not posted on the City website and thought he would bring it to the Land Bank's attention. Alli did post it on Friday as she was supposed to, so she will look into why it is not visible to the public. He continued by mentioning the public comment dilemma that has been on the Land Bank and Parks Commission table for some time now. He suggested the Land Bank follow in the Planning Board's footsteps. They have a generic email that the public can submit their thoughts and concerns to. He believes it to be a very simple way for everyone to get all of the public input and so that not everything is laying on staff shoulders. Tom said that it does not sound like a bad idea. Ethan agrees and suggested it to be monitored by staff. Everyone agreed. Alli will check with IT to see if it is possible. To finalize this section of the meeting, Meri urged Mr. Rheault to please reach out prior to the meeting if he sees anything missing from the monthly postings. She added that any one of the Land Bank Commission members are available, as is Alli.

II. Agenda Items**a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes- March 9, 2017**

Tom motioned to accept the minutes of the March 9th, 2017 minutes. Colleen moved and Meri seconded. Passed with four accepted and one abstention, Bill Mann.

b. New Business**i. Inquiry on Land Bank parcel by Riverside Golf**

Tom began by stating that the Corporation Council has asked that the Land Bank Commission table this item so that it can go through the proper channels. Michael Goldman sent out a memorandum that was forwarded to all members. The press has contacted Tom asking for his thoughts on the parcel inquiry but he has not made a comment. The members agreed that it is an interesting idea but it will be discussed when or if it ever reaches the Commission. Ethan added that now that we know the process, it is important that we send all future people inquiring items such as this to the right place.

In other news, the question of the status of the development of Congress Square Park was asked. Ethan responded by saying there is another \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year 2018 CIP to continue the development. There isn't any CIP for construction, however, but that could be privately funded or fundraised. Planning and Development has moved ahead. Meri added that grants have been received. Ethan said that the Friends Organization is very involved and the public input is positive, so it is going in a good direction.

c. Old Business

i. Update on Redlon Park Acquisition

Pat said that Greg Mitchell is trying to get a response back from the land owners but they would like a couple of weeks to digest the offers. It is taking longer than expected. They are trying to figure out what to do and their neighbor is trying to help them make that decision. Greg does not want to work on the other parcels until we know what is happening with these lots.

Pat is, however, going to also give the Oat Nut parcel to Greg to try to move that along. Tom asked if the six acres on Oat Nut Park were appraised. Pat replied that they were and it's sitting.

Simon entered the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

ii. Update on CMP License Agreement for Rail Trail

Michael has not gotten to reviewing the CMP license proposal yet but it is getting closer to his front burner. It does have a greater liability than what the City would usually have, but they will discuss that further with CMP. Meri believes that CMP will negotiate and be reasonable. Michael will have a better update next month. Tom asked if we should offer to buy? Colleen said that they are not looking to sell, unfortunately, they will only give us a license to use it. Tom said that Portland Trails has gotten licenses from CMP before and so has Gorham Trails. If the City cannot stretch the liability, would they license Portland Trails? That might be a new way to approach it. Michael said that that makes sense and it might be a possibility.

d. Communications/Updates

i. Report from Parks Commission

Meri explained that at the most recent Parks Commission meeting they addressed everything on their agenda. It went well and then at the end there was a surprise. Ethan presented a very detailed timeline of his proposal for CIP expenditures for parks to allow more time for Parks Commission and Friends Groups input. Ethan also announced new programs such as lectures, like tonight's "Urban Orchards" that Meri is sad to be missing. Then, the surprise: Lucas St. Clair is interested in funding a foundation to support Portland parks. There isn't talk of numbers yet but this is great news! Meri asked if anyone knew of this. Roger said that he had no idea and Mr. St. Clair is a great friend of his. Tom added that Lucas St. Clair has put his hat in for a Land Bank Commission seat. There was a general question of whether or not the foundation would be used to parks only or for all open spaces but there is a lot that is still unknown. Everyone agreed, though, that this is wonderful news and our parks need some tender loving care.

ii. PATHS

Student Conservation Association approached the Parks Division. They are sending a group to Portland this summer free of charge. So, they are going to be working towards PATHS. Tom mentioned that they already approved \$10,000 for this project. Ethan said they would most likely only need money for materials now because work would be covered by the SCA and the help of the Maine Conservation Corp.

iii. New Parks Program

The Parks Division is holding a new summer long program called "Walk in the Park." It is roughly monthly. There are walks, bike rides, lectures, etc. Tonight's lecture, "Urban Orchards" is at East End Community Center. Ethan explained that the City Arborist, Jeff Tarling, is a vault of knowledge. He would like that knowledge spread to our community and think this program will do just that.

iv. New Friends Group Programs

Doug mentioned that the Friends of Presumpscot River will be holding new programs and lectures this summer. Please pay attention to their website for events. He also urged everyone to listen to the news in the upcoming months because the Friends Group may be in it. Tom asked if the Dam in Westbrook was being removed. Doug replied that it was in the process and that by removing some obstacles, it would make a lot of difference for the fish. Roger added that the best way to raise money or awareness is to take people to the river. Tom first took Roger to show him the potential years ago, so that became his strategy to get the Presumpscot River Preserve constructed. After the proposal was first denied, throughout that next year, Roger brought ten Commissioners to the River to show them what could be. The next year, the vote was unanimously in favor of the proposal. Then after that, Roger took five of the nine City Councilors down to the river for the same reason and it is no coincidence that soon \$785,000 of improvements were then approved.

Tom adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.