

1. Parks Commission Meeting

Documents:

[PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA 11022017.PDF](#)
[PARKS COMMISSION MINUTES 10052017.PDF](#)
[PARK COMMISSION AND LAND BANK REPORT 2017-11.PDF](#)



Commission Members: Dory Waxman, Chair, Jaime Parker, Vice Chair, Councilor Belinda Ray, Carol Hutchins, Craig Lapine, Cynthia Loebenstein, Meri Lowry, Michael Mertaugh, Nathan Robbins, Chelsea Malacara, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors and Amy Segal.

Parks Commission Agenda

November 02, 2017

5:00 PM

Portland City Hall

389 Congress Street, Room 24

The Mission of the Portland Parks Commission is to advocate for the enhancement and stewardship of our parks and open spaces. Review and propose projects that impact parks and open spaces and recommend action. Foster collaboration among park users and the City. Promotes public access and enjoyment. Advocate for public and private funding for parks and open spaces. Enjoy Portland for Life

- I. General Citizen Comment Period (5 min)
- II. Agenda Items (*public comment taken on action items only*)
 - a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes October 05, 2017 (5 min)
 - b. New Business (10 min)
 - i. Rake and Bake Invite - Sally
 - c. Communications/Updates (30 min)
 - i. Subcommittee Reports - *five minutes each*
 - ii. Pesticide Update – Ethan
 - iii. Monthly Parks Report – Ethan
 - iv. Blue Sky Commission Update - Sally
 - d. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items (5 min)

City of Portland Commissions are not required to take public comment under FOAA and are Ordinance is silent regarding the duties of the Commission. The Commission has the discretion to not allow or allow public comment during its meetings, including the authority to limit the duration of comments. Since the Commission makes recommendations to the City Council, public comment is available at that level.



In attendance: Commission members Dory Waxman, Chair, Jaime Parker, Vice Chair, Councilor Belinda Ray, Carol Hutchins, Michael Mertaugh, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors and Amy Segal. City Staff Members Sally DeLuca, Ethan Hipple, Alli Carroll, and Bill Needelman. Members of the public include Diane Davison, Carol Schillar, Lynne Panico, Cynthia Cochran, Alex Posey, Chip Cooper, Pete O'Donnell and George Rheault.

Parks Commission Minutes

October 5, 2017

City Hall, Room 24

389 Congress Street, Portland, ME

Meeting began at 6:02 PM.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

Carol Schillar began the public comment by reading a document she wrote regarding the University Neighborhood Organization's submission of a Longfellow Park CIP application for lighting, electricity, water and American Disability Act improvements. *See attached document.*

Alex Posey of North Deering spoke next. He runs ultimate frisbee leagues with hundreds of participants but they play zero games in Portland. Alex believes there are not enough athletic fields and that the City should obtain a dozen more. Alex said that this is a public health concern. Population is increasing and exercise is a must. Plus, adults shouldn't have to fight children to play on a field. Alex strongly believes that the City needs a field complex. He wanted to get on the Commission's radar because he has a presentation. He would like to present that to the Commission on a future agenda.

Lynne Panico then took a moment to raise her concerns with the waterfront presentation that EEWAP has come to share with the Commission. She is curious to how it came to this degree of development when this is the first she's heard of it. She said that there should be focus on improving other parts of the area rather than adding a fifth means of access to the water.

Cynthia Cochran from the East Bayside Neighborhood Association explained that the association has been trying to manifest Fox Field Food Forest. They thought this project was ready to go this fall but were handed an MOU from the Parks Division asking for them to have liability insurance coverage. Now they are exploring their options. Cynthia has attended a CDBG Meeting, Blue Sky Commission meeting, Land Bank Commission meeting and now she is here trying to learn and see what options they have available. They would like guidance and support. Also interested in the City's LED Initiative but aren't sure how to get a part of that.

George Rheault finished the public comment period by stating that he is glad that the public comment period is working out. On the agenda the Commission does not have an email address listed. Also, he has been watching the process of making improvements to the CIP process but



would like to see it go further to include more of the public. Finally, on the CIP, the Columbarium. This project was expected for a marketing plan and other projects didn't have a marketing plan or need analysis. Longfellow park, for example, a modest investment would allow it to get more use. The playground for Cliff Island is on a place that is its own playground and he doesn't agree with that decision. He would like to see an equity analysis.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes September 7, 2017

Belinda moved to accept the minutes of the September 7th, 2017 Parks Commission meeting. Jaime seconded. Alli will fix the minor edits that Michael had emailed her. Passed with seven in favor. Amy abstained.

b. New Business

i. East End Waterfront Access Project (EEWAP) Proposal

Diane Davison began the presentation by explaining that East End Waterfront has gone through changes over the years; including increase racks in 2008, rowing coming on scene, and rearranging the area to increase access. Any opportunity to get out to Casco Bay in a safe way is important. This proposal is to improve access and safety.

Bill Needelman, the City's Waterfront Coordinator, thanked everyone for adding them to the agenda to present. He explained that this area is so well used that there is now capacity and safety issues. This will increase accessibility for human-powered watercrafts, minimize long term maintenance costs, and add a fresh water wash down station. Working groups with the City include Portland Paddle and the Friends of Eastern Promenade. Had a public forum in April and took comments from the public very seriously. Now we are ready to fund the project. The City was awarded a \$22,500 grant from the Maine Coastal Program. Also, the Friends of the Eastern Promenade is currently in the process of raising funds to satisfy the required 1:1 match to DOT's Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP) grant. Right now, there is an assumed \$250,000 budget but hopefully they will need less.

Bill showed existing conditions over projection.

Ultimately, when they went to the public, many said that the original dock was unattractive and too expensive. They were more interested in a ramp. We took those considerations seriously.

Michael wanted clarification because he thought a ramp was already there. Bill said that that is a commercial barge landing. The idea of putting a ramp to the right of the existing boat launch would allow maximum use because of the wind direction and tide. They are proposing a stair ramp with a drag rail because that area is too steep for a slope ramp.



Michael is concerned with dolly users and those with heavy kayaks. Bill said that there is hazard with a slope ramp because of how steep that area is. This will serve many but not all. concerned with the hazard of the steep. Michael asked if the ramp could be placed at the west end. Bill said that would involve more extensive permits, money and a much longer ramp. He said that east end beach is still available and west end is at high tide.

Amy asked about a pully system being incorporated. Bill said this wasn't planned to be a pully system. Ethan added that the overall idea is to be an addition and add capacity. Jaime thanked Bill and Diane for the presentation and asked if they are looking for a recommendation. Bill said that this is informational and they are just looking for feedback.

Councilor Ray wondered what the dimensions of steps were and if they were worried about children playing on them. The steps will be 1 foot by 2 feet and they wouldn't stop children from playing on them.

Lynne Panico spoke again to reiterate her concerns and suggested that the money be used to make improvements in other areas rather than creating a fifth access to Casco Bay.

Chip Cooper, of Portland Rowing, then spoke. Their concern is developing the beach access and the placement of the fresh water wash down system. They have sixty feet long boats to get them from the higher level to the lower access is difficult. If you block that area we will not be able to access that beach. They would prefer a dock to get access and open up a youth program. If that is not feasible, he just asks that they consider that when designing where the fresh water wash down system goes.

Pete O'Donnell, a board member and finance committee member of the Friends of Eastern Promenade, recognized that there are a lot of issues that are complex. This is really an effort to open up the beach and create an area for those launching kayaks and paddleboards. To reduce congestion.

Once funds have been raised to match the SHIP grant, then the project will go to design and permitting. Looking at having all funds raised by the end of 2018.

Dory finalized this agenda item by stating that the Parks Commission supports the East End Waterfront Access Project and continuing how it goes.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Subcommittee Structure – Dory

Dory said park initiatives and annual report subcommittees will continue from last year. Michael agreed to finance chair. Chelsea will work with him on that. Zack and Amy agreed to be on the community outreach subcommittee. Most important is meet before

next monthly meeting and create a mission and goals to move forward. Then we will go from there.

ii. Monthly Parks Report – Ethan

Portland Opportunity Crew is going great. Weekly updates from crew leader. Picked up many bags of trash and needles. If anyone wants to donate to that, text crew to 91999. Would like to build up funding to bring more people on or add more days. Sally said we are working to get signs out to text to donate. Portland Ballet is doing a play for panhandling issue and we asked to put an ad in their pamphlet for donations. Amy asked where the donated money goes. Ethan said basically wages. Michael asked if they are tracking participants to see if it helps them long-term. Ethan said they are. It is the ultimate test of the program.

October 11th, 2017 at 4:00pm is the Lincoln Park Restoration Reveal.

Ethan met with the Trust for Public Land to follow up on the Open Space Vision Plan. He reported what the City has accomplished, and what they are doing now.

There is a national campaign to pledge that citizens live a 10 minute walk from a park. The City of Portland is at 87%. Excited about that.

iii. Blue Sky Commission Update – Sally

Dory and Ethan went to the Blue Sky Commission two weeks ago. The Commission is just starting but will work closely with the Parks Commission. They agree with the Parks Commission Chair and Parks Director being voting members. Councilor Ray is working on a proclamation showing that the Council supports. Portland Parks Conservancy has been decided as the name. It is unique and Portland, Oregon already has a foundation. Different Division Managers have been brought to meetings so that the Commission has a better understanding of the Department and how all of the Divisions work together.

Dory said the idea of having a moratorium on raising money within us has been brought up but at this point it is premature considering the Blue Sky Commission is just starting. Sally added that the Parks Conservancy thinks it's really important to continue raising money.

d. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

Jaime suggested the Fox Field Food Forest. Ethan said he has been working with East Bayside Neighborhood Association. He said it is great in concept but legal council would like them to have insurance so the City isn't liable. This would be an operating agreement rather than a group giving us money to do a City project.

Michael asked how expensive this would be for them. Cynthia does not have quotes yet.

Jaime suggested it should be an agenda item for next time to decide if the Parks Commission should support or endorse it. Dory agreed.

Jaime moved to end the meeting, Councilor Ray seconded. Passed unanimously.

October 5, 2017

Park Commission Meeting @ City Hall, RM 24

Public Comment Submitted by Carol Schiller as follows:

The University Neighborhood Organization submitted a Longfellow Park CIP application for lighting, electricity, water and American Disability Act improvements to make Longfellow Park accessible for all, including residents living with disabilities that wish to use the park when the sun goes down and for events that require electricity use. We were disappointed that the Park Commission during September 19, 2017, workshop meeting approved the Park Departments recommendations not to fund Longfellow Park lighting and electricity improvements. We request a written explanation for this denial and an explanation for how and when you will address ADA improvements in Longfellow Park that you approved.

I am here on behalf of residents living with disabilities, the University Neighborhood Organization and residents to appeal your decision. It's deeply troublesome for us to understand how you could ignore letters of support and video "Longfellow Park in the Dark" watched by over 320 people that documents the park is used in the evening and warrants lighting to make it safe and enjoyable. Isn't that the purpose of our public parks?

We are not talking about flood lights, but minimal lighting that will illuminate the center of the of the darkness. Swaney Lighting Consultant suggested three small LED downward directed lights. This is a small investment out of Park Department \$2 Million Dollar budget.

Will Jon Jennings, City Manager's include Longfellow Park lighting in his \$7.5 Million LED lighting plan? If not, why? We are dismayed that a small group of people may have influenced your decision not to fund public safety improvements in Longfellow Park at the expense of the public's larger voice.

Longfellow Park is a public park. This parcel of land was designated as a public park when the Noyes family sold it to the city in 1927. It was the first time in the city's history for residents to contribute \$2,000.00 towards the purchase of a public park. Never was it the intent to keep the public out of the park. It's upsetting to the Noyes Family and to us.

We are requesting written documentation explaining why the Park Department made this recommendation not to fund lighting and electricity. We need to fully understand the rationale behind the decision. We want to know how and when the Park Department will add ADA improvements to the park, that you approved.

We look forward to reading your explanation. If there are questions or concerns we'd like to address them. We offer to host a public meeting whereas none were held regarding Longfellow Park improvements. We suggest the Park Department consider adding persons living with disabilities to join the Park Commission.

Thank you.
Carol Schiller



Sally L. DeLuca
Director

Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Ethan Hipple
Director
Parks Division

Memorandum

TO: Parks Commission and Land Bank Commission

FROM: Ethan Hipple, Parks Director

SUBJECT: Parks Division Update

DATE: November 2017

Small Tree Pruning

Our Horticulture crew is poised for the first time in seven years to begin the important 'Small Tree Maintenance' or STM pruning as we refer to it, for our newly planted trees. This corrective pruning really sets the tone for future tree growth and removing the small problematic tree branches reduces future big tree pruning later on. This work also helps improve sidewalk clearance due to low branches and pruning away from buildings. Our alternating pruning cycle focus of East End / West End and then the rest of the park/public ground spaces every year really helps improve tree conditions for the future.

Fort Gorges Army Corps Project

Army Corps contractor estimates project will wrap up in early November 2017. Project consists of safety and access improvements: gates, railings and a new rooftop viewing area to the East. Fort will be closed to public 10/31--11/4.

Fort Gorges Preservation Plan

Planning is complete for Preservation Plan. City hired Resurgence Engineering to develop plans and construction drawings for repair of Fort Gorges casemates and to stabilize the historic structure. Funding will likely come as a 50/50 split between Capital Improvement program and private fundraising.

Maine Conservation Corps Crew

Maine Conservation Crew (MCC) is on site week of October 23. The city funds a week's hitch for this crew to do trail projects on city land. This college-aged crew will be working on technical trail projects at Evergreen Cemetery, with technical assistance from Portland Trails.

MCC Environmental Steward

Have put in an application for a 5 month intern who will assist with public outreach, volunteer engagement and event planning, Adopt-A-Spot program development.

"A Walk In the Park" Series

Upcoming tours and lectures in Portland Parks:

- Winter program finalized: XC Ski through Evergreen, Snowshoe through Presumpscot River Preserve, Portland Parks History Lecture at Ocean Gateway.
- More info at: <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/1990/A-Walk-In-The-Park-Tours-and-Talks>



Sally L. DeLuca
Director

Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Ethan Hipple
Director
Parks Division

Lincoln Park Fountain and Walkways

Lincoln Park fountain and walkway project: held celebration on 10/11/17 with over 100 attendees, choir, media, etc... Work is 99% complete, contractor still working on final punch list, restoration of turf, etc...

Lincoln Park Holiday Lighting

Coordinating with Pandora LaCasse on installing holiday lights in Lincoln Park. Friends of Lincoln Park have agreed to coordinate funding for 2017-2018 season. City staff will install light pole and power.

Monument Square Holiday Tree

Tree donations for Monument Square are starting to come in, a sure sign of the season change. The tree goes up on November 16th !

Baxter Woods Dog Owner Signage

Creating new interpretive signage for Baxter Woods and Canco Woods re: responsible dog ownership and cleanup.

Back Cove Public Art, Summer 2018

Field trip with artist Matthew Mazzotta to scout materials and site locations for 2018 public art project at Back Cove.

Park Lighting

Met with Lighting Consultant about city-wide LED lighting improvement plan. Many parks, athletic facilities and trails will be included in the LED upgrade. Priority locations include (but are not limited to) Deering Oaks park and fountain lights, city multi use trails, Athletic facilities.

Spring Bulb Displays

Spring Bulbs have been planted--over 12,000 tulips citywide, with 5,000 tulips in Fessenden Park alone.

Athletic Facilities

Extra landscaping work is being conducted at Memorial & Fitzpatrick Stadiums in preparation for the University of Maine playoffs and State Championships.

10 Minutes to a Park Campaign

Working with Trust for Public Land to engage Portland in their 10 minutes to a Park campaign. This is a national program to have cities commit to having 100% of their population within a 10 minute walk of a park or trail. According to TPL metrics, we are currently at 87% of our population within a 10 minute walk, which is considerably above average. Mayor Strimling signed pledge to achieve 100%.

Deering Oaks Pond

Parks staff have been cleaning the Deering Oaks pond bottom and dealing with the vegetation that grew



Sally L. DeLuca
Director

Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Ethan Hipple
Director
Parks Division

in the pond over the August time frame. Continued vegetative and algae growth will inhibit fountain operation, use of the pond by boats, and will affect skating quality. Staff are working on a plan to decrease abnormal algae growth.

Multi-Use Trail Work

The city maintains the four large multi-use trails in Portland: Back Cove, Eastern Prom, Bayside and Fore River. Staff have been busy removing overgrowth and branches from the Fore River Trail System and Eastern Prom, which hadn't been done in many years. In some cases, we were removing 3" trees that had grown through fences to hang in the trail corridor. This work will now occur on an annual basis.

Bringing Nature Home

Forestry crews worked with Maine Audubon and King Middle School staff to plant a native plant garden in front of the school as part of the ongoing 'bringing nature home' theme.

Cousins Memorial Restoration

Construction drawings are being reviewed by Planning, bid could go out this Fall for Winter or Spring construction.

Skating Ponds

Drains in our skating ponds were closed to begin filling the ponds during this rainy weather in preparation for winter.

Winter Sidewalk Plowing

Parks Division Staff are responsible for clearing of 100+ miles of sidewalks, as well as several school parking lots, fire stations, and city buildings. Preparing route maps and equipment.

National Conference

Staff attended National Recreation and Parks Association conference in New Orleans.

Portland Opportunity CReW

The crew made up of willing panhandlers is going strong and we have full participation every day of operation, twice a week. Crews have picked up hundreds of bags full of trash and debris for parks and trails, dozens of needles, and weekly weeding and maintenance of Back Cove Yardscaping beds. City plans to apply again for CDBG funding to continue this program into 2018. To donate to the program (which will increase the number of days and participants who can participate), **text "crew" to 91999**.