



Commission Members:

Chair Michael Mertaugh, **Vice Chair** Jaime Parker, Amy Segal, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Zack Anchors, Beth Rabbitt, Stephen Bentsen and Mayor Kate Snyder. **Staff:** Alex Marshall, Ethan Hipple and Samara Ray

City of Portland **Parks Commission Minutes** **September 2, 2021**

5:00 PM

Due to the existence of an emergency or urgent issue, the Parks Commission will conducted this meeting by remote methods/technology at the Zoom link provided below, in accordance with the requirements of 1 M.R.S. section 403-B and the Parks Commission's Remote Participation Policy.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

George Rheault- There is a King Crimson tree in Deering Oaks that is to be cut down as part of ADA improvements that the Parks Commission approved funding for. A lot of thought was put into the location of this ADA route and the King Crimson is being removed as it is in the route. He would like to see a comprehensive tree policy that treats trees equally. Ethan explained that if a tree is healthy generally they are not removed, this tree is only being removed as part of park improvements. George's audio was lost during the meeting and he said he will send a follow up email to the Commission.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: August 5th 2021 -Action Item

Beth Rabbit moved to approve the minutes, Stephen seconded. The performed minutes were approved unanimously by the Commission.

b. New Business

i. Friends Groups CIP Priorities Summary

Ethan gave an overview of the 2022 Parks Capital Improvement Project list to the Parks Commission and provided a summary of each item.

ii. Commission discussion on CIP Priorities

Ethan shared that for the last two years the Department has received about 1 million dollars of CIP funding each year but had requested around 1.5 to 2 million. It is common to get less than what was requested, that is why there is a 10 year plan to spread costs out over time.

The process for Parks CIP is that Parks Commission members will share their project priorities this evening, the Department will take these into consideration and Ethan will submit a prioritized list to the City Manager and the Finance Director, alongside this list will be a memo with the Parks Commissions priorities. The City Manager and the Finance Director will then submit this list to the Finance Committee who will submit it to the full City Council.

Ethan explained that the columns on the CIP sheet show the year the funds would be approved, for instance column labeled 2022 will be funds approved in 2022 but used in fiscal year 2023. Zach asked about non city funding listed for other projects. There are some placeholder projects on the list that are not actively funded through CIP but they are on our radar, for instance the Cutter Street Parking Lots and Lights at Fort Sumner.

Funding for the Riverton Trolley Park Recreation Improvement project is as follows: if awarded the LWCF grant will be for 250,000 requiring a 1:1 match. The City would provide half of the grant match (\$125,000) and the Parks Conservancy would be fundraising for the other half of the grant (\$125,000).

For the Longfellow Playground project, the school is undergoing renovations for the next two years, funding would come spring of 2023 and we would take that summer and fall to work out designs and have it in line for the start of the fall 2023.

iii. Vote on CIP projects - **Action Item**

The Commissioners shared their top three priorities for Parks CIP projects. They were as follows:

Mayor Kate Snyder chose not to weigh in as a Parks Commission Rep as she will end up voting for them. She stated that investing in parks is really important.

Beth	Riverton Trolley Park	Skate park	Deering Oaks Restrooms
Amy	Skate park	Payson Bollard/Back Cove	Riverton Trolley Park
Zach	Skate park	Riverton Trolley Park	Fort Gorges-Preservation Plan
Stephen	Skate park	Riverton Trolley Park	Update for Payson Park Master Plan
Michael M	Retaining Wall at Deering Oaks Pond	Update for Payson Park Master Plan	Replacing Trees at Evergreen Cemetery
Jamie	Riverton Trolley Park	Skate park	Fort Gorges Preservation Plan
Jon	Deering Oaks Bathroom	Skate park	Fort Gorges
Marie	ADA Walkways at Deering Oaks	Deering Oaks Restroom	Skate park

iv. **Tree Planting Update**

Recently hit a Forestry milestone, planted over 200 trees this spring and early summer. This includes trees from the tree trust and cop-op planting program as well as trees from the operating budget. This was a huge effort and the weather helped the crews start earlier than usual. Typically 150 trees are planted during this season The planting was focused on East Bayside and West Bayside, 30 of those trees were in that neighborhood.

There is a significant operating expense to planting these trees; it requires year round and seasonal staffing and watering. Beth praised the Forestry Co-op tree program.

v. **Committees Update**

No committees have met since the last meeting. Amy is looking forward to reforming the Parks Initiatives Committee.

There are four Parks Commission Committees: Parks Initiatives, Finance, Annual Report, and Outreach (includes the Greenspace Gathering).

The Chair noted that the Commission may want to restructure the Committees to support the Friends Groups in developing strong CIP proposals.

The Chair expressed he would like to attend all of the Committee meetings.

Beth expressed she would be interested in the Outreach Committee. Zach is interested in staying on the Parks Initiatives and Outreach Committees. Stephen expressed interest in the Outreach committee. Amy and Marie will let the Chair know what their Committee Participation interests are..

c. Communications

i. Parks Report- no discussion

ii. American Rescue Plan Act - City Workshop - 5pm 9/13/2021 - Action Item

There is a public hearing on the use of ARPA funds on Sept 13th at 5pm. The Parks Department is planning on requesting funds for tree planting. There is a survey on the City Website about this funding and public input is encouraged. About 14 million dollars of ARPA funds will be allocated. This funding needs to be used on physical improvement projects. The Chair requested a vote of support for tree planting activities under ARPA at the public hearing. He would bring this message of support on behalf of the Parks Commission to the public hearing. The Commission voted in favor of the Chair bringing this message of support to the public hearing.

iii. Portland Common Harbor Meeting #2 - 5pm 9/22/2021- Action Item

The City is undergoing a planning process to convert the queuing lanes by the Ocean Gateway into a green space. This is the second public input session to share the feedback from the first public meeting. The transformation would happen in phases. The first step is to create basic green space where there is currently a parking lot and then move into more detailed planning in later phases. The Park's Conservancy will be a fundraiser on this project. The chair requested the Commission vote on support for this project to be shared at the meeting. The Parks Commission voted unanimously to support this project and have the Chair communicate this support at the meeting.

III. Adjournment

The Parks Commission voted unanimously for the meeting to be adjourned.