



In attendance: Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, V. Chair Michael Mertaugh, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Nathan Robbins, Maya Lena, Shaylyn MacKinnon and Jamie Parker. City Staff: Ethan Hipple and Alex Marshall and Samara Ray.

City of Portland

Parks Commission Minutes

February 4th 2021, 5:00 PM

On Feb 4th 2021 the Portland Parks Commission conducted a virtual meeting using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online. This meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

No public comment.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: January 7th, 2021 5:00 PM

Michael moved to accept the meeting minutes of January. Marie seconded.
Motion passed unanimously.

b. Welcome New Commissioners

Cynthia welcomed two new Commissioners Maya Lena and Shaylyn MacKinnon. They both shared a bit about themselves and Cynthia invited the other Commissioners to share a bit about themselves as well.

c. Old Business

i. CIP Update

The Parks Recreation and Facilities Department submitted requests in January 2021, if the Finance Committee approves the City can proceed with planning and bringing aboard engineers and architects. Ethan hopes projects will be approved in March. The Department will be submitting an operating budget to the Finance Committee in April.

ii. Strategic Planning Meeting Discussion (Feb 18th)

The focus is on creating a general Memorandum of Understanding for Friends Groups. This meeting will focus on Mission, Representation and Accountability for Friends Groups. The plan is to hold the virtual meeting on Thursday Feb 18th from 4 PM to 6:30 PM.

iii. Green Space Meeting Discussion

Ana Lagunez shared with the Commission that the focus for this meeting will be, "Building and Sustaining an Effective Friends Organization". The meeting date and time is May 6th from 5:30-7:30pm. Ana has been communicating with Anne

Pringle, Frank Riley and Nan Cummings and is waiting to hear back from others that may want to contribute to this meeting. The first half hour of the meeting will be a dedicated business meeting for the Parks Commission and then go into the Green Space Meeting at 5:30pm.

d. New Business

i. Portland Youth Corps

Ethan reported this is a project that the Parks Division has been working on for years and recently received funding for it through the Portland Parks Conservancy. The program is a youth career development and service program that will take place in Portland's Parks. The goal is to engage older middle school and younger high school age kids to take part in a summer volunteer program with a stipend awarded to them at the end of their service. The session will be 4 weeks long and there will be two sessions going back to back, 12 kids in each session with a total of 24 kids total. These children will gain hands-on experiences in the Parks Department with the hope of some of them returning to work in this field. The Parks Division has partnered with the Parks Conservancy in getting the program running. The Parks Conservancy has fundraised to staff the program with an Americorps member Megahn Loury who is the Team Leader for the program. This funding also helps purchase tools and other materials to get the program running. The Maine Audubon is also part of this partnership by setting up training and environmental education at the beginning of the program.

e. Communications/Updates

Cynthia shared with the group that some Commissioners do not have a bio listed on the Parks Commission website. She encouraged Commissioners to send this bio to Parks Admin, Samara before the March Parks Commission meeting.

i. Subcommittee Reports

Initiatives Committee: Amy Segal gave an overview about what this committee has been working on. They have been exploring installing interpretive signage at a few parks locations such as Deering Oaks, the Eastern Promenade and near Stevens Ave Tavern and developing a narrative for these locations by checking in with local historians to get a more honest story of our parks. Amy will be writing up more detail about this and is looking for feedback on these ideas. Maya, Jaime and Shaylyn have expressed interest in this committee.

Annual Report Committee: Nathan noted that we need to add the most recent Annual Report to the Parks Commission webpage. Ana and Dory have been members of this Committee in the past. The Annual Report was envisioned to come out in May but it has been coming out in October. Nathan will be sending the Commission documents on the Annual Report that he would like the Commissioners opinions on.

Green Space Gathering: Ana previously reported that the Green Space Gathering will be held virtually on May 6th.

Finance: Michael said there would be a meeting on 2/5/2021 to focus on the discussion for the Strategic Planning Meeting on 2/18/2021. Michael has mentioned that this committee has been looking into other parks friends groups across the country have been doing in terms of MOU's. He thinks we may have an opportunity to be pioneers in developing a uniform MOU that would align parks Friends Groups with

Parks Management in Portland.

ii. Land Bank Commission Report

Jon Kachmar reported that the Land Bank has filled all of its vacant seats. Andrew Zarro City Councilor and Baxter Miatke were recently appointed. The Rand Road property has not closed, the City has been doing an environmental review but it has to close by the end of Feb 2021. The Land Bank is waiting on the appraisal for the Riverton Trolley Park 1 acre parcel, and should be getting it any day. There is an effort by the City and the Trust for Public Land to discuss the property at 1831 Washington Ave, between Auburn and Washington it is 9-10 acres. Lastly Jon mentioned that Jeff Tarling and him were discussing the City owned 30 acres Riverside Preserve Property that abuts Falmouth Spur as a potential transfer into the Land Bank.

iii. Parks Report

Alex reported that he has two Athletic Maintenance worker position openings. The lack of snow in January has allowed for crews to work on invasive clearing on the Eastern Prom Hillside and Fish Point. Crews have removed the Boyd Street fence that runs between Franklin and the Boyd Street gardens. Alex shared he is working on a Recreation Improvement Plan for Riverton Trolley Park. The goal for this project is to do some public outreach and activate it again. Alex shared his team is focusing on administrative and planning work for a few projects right now for example Fitzpatrick drainage and Talbot School Basketball Court reconstruction. Ethan shared that Instagram, Facebook and our Departmental Newsletter are great ways for Commissioners and the public to keep up with Parks news and updates.

Amy made a motion to adjourn. Michael seconded. Meeting adjourned.