



In attendance: Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, V. Chair Michael Mertaugh, Zack Anchors, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Caitie Whelan, Dory Waxman, Marie Gray, and Nathan Robbins. City Staff: Ethan Hipple and Alex Marshall.

City of Portland

Parks Commission Minutes

October 1, 2020, 5:00 PM

On Thursday, October 1, 2020, at 5:00 pm, 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

George Rheault asked about a sign in Payson Park and asked commissioners to advocate for the 40-bed renovation of Preble Street Resource Center.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: September 3, 2020

Michael moved to accept the meeting minutes of September. Dory seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

b. New Business

i. Commission Seat Vacancies

This is Caitie's final meeting with the commission and the other commissioners took some time to thank her for her work. This leaves two at large seat vacancies and one for Portland Trails.

ii. Rules of Public Comment & Timekeeper Selection

Marie will act as timekeeper during the public comment period. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes with the opportunity to request a one to two minute extension. Commissioners agreed that to best foster civic engagement, public comment should be taken at the beginning of the meeting whether or not it pertains to an agenda item. The public will also have the option to hold their comments until the relevant agenda item comes up.

iii. Amethyst Lot Park Opening

The Amethyst Lot Park ribbon cutting took place on September 18th. This is Portland's 67th park.

c. Old Business

i. 46 Western Prom License Agreement

The property owner withdrew the original proposed agreement due to concerns raised at the previous Commission meeting. They will be returning with an updated proposal at a future date.

ii. Oct 15th Work Day

Jesse Billingham of the Parks Conservancy will be leading the work day. Alex and Ethan will send out more specific details once they decide on the project.

d. Communications/Updates

i. Deering Oaks Update

Alex shared that Parks and Public Works staff as well as volunteers with the Parks Conservancy have been performing daily cleanup of the Edwards Lot area. Five trash cans were added to the park at the bowling green path, rose garden, and Edwards Lot. Kristen Dow, Director of Health and Human Services, will be coming to the next commission meeting to give an overview of their work.

ii. City Operating Budget

The City Council voted to approve the city budget. An amendment was made to add back an athletic facilities maintenance position. Most of the positions cut from Parks, Recreation, and Facilities were from Recreation and Public Assemblies. A few parks maintenance positions were also cut, and the plan is to make up for this by hiring more seasonals.

iii. Baxter Woods Update

Ethan shared that water tests have been ordered to determine the health of the pond. Upcoming projects include replacing the fence near the newly built trail and improving the outdoor classroom.

iv. Subcommittee Reports

Park Initiatives: Caitie made her recent research available in a shared document, and Amy plans on including Fiona, Wabanaki Studies Coordinator, in an upcoming subcommittee meeting.

Annual Report: Nathan is in the process of completing final edits. He will forward the draft for review.

Finance: Discussed making updates to the friends group handbook to provide more specific guidance. Planning to develop a memorandum of understanding between friends groups and the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department.

Community Outreach: No updates

v. Parks Report

The city will be hiring a second full-time Park Ranger. The futsal court project will begin this fall.