



Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, V. Chair Michael Mertaugh, Dory Waxman, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Caitie Whelan, Jon Kachmar and Marie Gray

City of Portland Parks Commission Minutes

May 7, 2020, 5:00 PM

On Thursday, May 7, 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 workshop was conducted remotely using Zoom.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

George Rheault jokingly asked Sally not to retire. He asked why the Stroudwater Bridge has not been constructed over a river yet. He expressed how much the bridge would help while construction is happening under the turnpike. It would create a connection back to the Fore River Sanctuary. In addition to this, he expressed his concern regarding the financial impact Amethyst Lot has on the budget and how that money could be used to keep employees on payroll for the next year instead.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: December 2019, January & February 2020

Michael moved to accept the December, January and February minutes. Dory seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

b. New Business

i. COVID19 Staff Update

The Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department has had to close many facilities in response to the pandemic. Many signs have been placed throughout parks, on courts and along trails to help advise people on how to keep safe through this time. Recreation and aquatic programs have stopped. The Golf Course, however, is opening back up this week with new restrictions in order to still abide by the CDC guidelines. The Farmers Market is still going to occur. Everything will be prepackaged and/or preordered.

During this time of recreation and aquatic programs being cancelled, the programmers have either started working in the parks and open spaces or have contributed to creating a virtual recreation webpage to contribute to their standard hours. Everyday there is “Crafternoon” at 2:00 PM with Mr. Jim and Storytime at 7:00 PM. There is a conversation occurring regarding the possibility of a Summer Camp. Staff is currently surveying parents/guardians to see how they feel about it.

There is still no news about Sally’s position.

ii. COVID19 Leash Law Update

The Department’s only Park Ranger is working at part time. They are currently unable to hire seasonals. We are doing our best to make sure all dogs are staying on leash during this pandemic.

iii. Baxter Woods Communication Sally DeLuca

Several dog owners voiced their concern during the Sustainability and Transportation Committee Meeting. Due to the pandemic and public safety, Baxter Woods has been put on

hold. Sally doesn't think it will be taken back up before she retires. Next is public comment at Council level.

iv. CIP Update

Currently in the final stages of Riverton playground project. Very close to breaking ground.

v. Green Space Gathering Cancellation

The Commission cancelled the Green Space Gathering for the year considering their preference to have it in May as it is a fun time of year to kick off the Summer.

vi. Reschedule Strategic Planning Workshop Cynthia Loebenstein

The Commission rescheduled the Strategic Planning Workshop for the Fall. As of right now, they will plan for October.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Subcommittee Reports

- Annual Report: Dory will reach out to Ana and Nate and complete something in June. They would like to emphasize on what the Parks crews have done throughout this pandemic.
- Park Initiatives: Some research has been done. They are slowly trying to collect data to go onto the panels. Paul Drinan did try to go after grant funding for 10 smaller signs to emphasize some features but was unable to get the funding.
- Finance Subcommittee: Has gathered some information from Friends Groups but will have to wait on others. The Commission discussed how the 501c3 groups are supposed to be raising money and should be accountable to the Parks Commission.

ii. Land Bank Commission Report

The Land Bank Commission (LBC) is interested in the Hale property by Riverton Trolley Park. City Staff is doing their due diligence to proceed.

Davis Family Pines is a property partially in Falmouth. 10 acres in Portland that are Industrial Zoned are under the interest of the LBC.

Rand Road is a property that the LBC is looking to negotiate a price for. Portland Trails already has some trails across the property.

Rowe Ave. is a parcel by Stroudwater Preserve and Jewell Falls. It has been deemed undevelopable and is already City property. There is just a matter of deeming it in the Land Bank.

Finally, the LBC has changed their monthly meeting time the Third Tuesday of every month from 11:30 AM until 1:00 PM.

iii. Parks Report

The Parks Division's Operations Coordinator has resigned. In the interim, Jeff Tarling, the City's Arborist, has stepped into that role. In addition to that position, the Division has a vacant Maintenance Worker I, Athletic Facilities Supervisor, Arborist position. Also, the Parks Supervisor is retiring soon.

Recreation and Aquatics staff have done an incredible job preparing our parks for the mowing season.

Franklin Meadow will continue to have the black sheet over it throughout the summer since the bicentennial events have been pushed off.

Amethyst is a \$0.25 million dollar project that is on pace to start shortly. Just waiting on

some permitting.

Some clearing has begun on Western Promenade. Thirty feet of initial brush has been removed. It is currently selective clearing to give a better idea on where the view sheds should be.

The Zipline at Deering Oaks is going in very shortly. This is no longer a custom zipline due to having difficulty finding soil that would support the structure. It is now a three rail ADA accessible manufactured zipline. Should be delivered next week.

The crew has installed the duck house at Deering Oaks Pond. It should be filled tonight.

The Futsal Court is currently delayed.