



In Attendance: Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, Dory Waxman, Craig Lapine, Nathan Robbins, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Caitie Whelan and Marie Gray. City Staff: Sally DeLuca, Ethan Hipple and Alli Carroll.

City of Portland Parks Commission Minutes
October 3, 2019 5:00 PM
Portland City Hall, 389 Congress Street, Room 24

I. General Citizen Comment Period

Member of the public, Bobbie Cope, alerted the Commissioners that the owners and developers of 631 Stevens Avenue, formerly known as the Maine Girls Academy, is requesting a zone change to a B2B Community Business Zone. She is concerned that the beauty of Stevens Avenue will be interrupted by a business zone.

Carol Schillar, President of the University Neighborhood Organization, expressed the need for electricity and lighting in Longfellow Park.

Layla Kargar, candidate for District 3 in Portland, questioned the removal of the lights in Longfellow Park. She compared the \$10,000 it cost to remove the lights that once were in the park to the \$25,000 it cost to create and install the street light sculpture on Woodfords Corner. She requested more information regarding the decision to not put electricity and lights in Longfellow Park each year.

George Rheault encouraged staff to post the next public meeting date regarding the Western Prom Master Plan as early as possible. He also expressed the need of a public discussion over the Preble Street fields project that is underway. George wondered why the futsal court doesn't seem to be breaking ground in 2019 and hopes to see a start date soon. Finally, he asked if staff had received a response from the State regarding the City's land protection swap proposal.

The Commission asked staff to elaborate on the topics that were expressed by the public.

Sally began by responding to the electricity and lights at Longfellow Park. She explained the difficulty in this topic due to part of the community wanting them and part of it not. The project is less than \$50,000 which is why it is not in the CIP and not in the Parks Commission's purview. Sally will try to get more accurate information regarding pricing and the history of electricity in Longfellow Park for next month's meeting so members can have the full picture.

As for the Western Prom Master Plan, staff held two public meetings with great turnouts. As of right now, they have an initial draft that is under review. Once it is done with its internal process, staff will share it with the Parks Commission.

Unfortunately, the Futsal Court has been caught up in the loss of three Parks Directors. Within the last few months, the Parks Division has hired Mike Murray as the Director of Cemeteries and Project Management and have Alex Marshall acting as the Interim Parks Director. They are in the process of hiring a Project Manager.

The Preble Street project is Public Works installation of a massive 3 or 4 million gallon tank under Preble Street field. This project will close the field for two years. Staff has already been in contact with those who regularly book the field. The regular public notice will come when Public Works is ready. Staff approached the developers of the Maine Girls Academy to use their fields in the meantime free of charge if we maintain them. It is a year by year agreement since it is an active development.

Finally, as for the Hadlock Field land protection swap. Staff has reached out to the National Park Service regarding an error that was made about twenty five years ago. The City has been out of compliance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund since this error was made. It is a source of funding that can be applied for annually. Because the land issue has not been resolved, the City cannot apply. They heard back from the National Park Service this week and it was very positive.

II. Agenda Items

The Commission took a moment to thank Dory for her dedication as former Chair.

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: September 5, 2019 Meeting and September 19, 2019 Workshop Minutes

Amy motioned to accept the meeting minutes of September 5th, 2019. Nathan seconded. Marie asked to edit the attendance to show that she was not at the September 5th meeting. All in favor to accept the meeting minutes as amended. Craig abstained. Nine in favor. Motion passed.

Colette moved to accept the workshop minutes of September 19, 2019. Zack seconded. Colette would like to change “conjecture” to “conjunction” in the 5th paragraph. Zack asked that the sentence regarding EWAP’s price to be specific; \$250,000 total price tag, \$125,000 obtained from a SHIP grant and the remaining from the Friends of Eastern Promenade and the City. Also, Caitie needs to be added to the attendance list and Nathan removed. All in favor to accept the workshop minutes as amended. Amy and Nathan abstained. Eight in favor. Motion passed.

b. New Business

i. Capital Improvement Plan - *Vote to recommend the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department bring the Parks Division Capital Improvement Plan for 2020 and 2021 to Council.*

Cynthia opened this agenda item to public comment.

Frank Riley of the Friends of Lincoln Park shared the history behind the restorations and renovations that have occurred in Lincoln Park. He expressed their goal to increase usage of the park. He pled to keep all allocated funds for the fence in the CIP.

Anne Pringle of the Friends of Deering Oaks Park explained that they are addressing the retaining wall in Deering Oaks pond. A study was done two years ago and it is projected to be done a few years from now. She is concerned that it will be more expensive then and that the deterioration will increase. She pled for the prioritization in the ADA walkway around the pond and to the ravine.

George Rheault mentioned that the LED replacement lights at Hadlock Field had been brought to Council in recent CIP cycles. He wondered if a decision had been made as to who would be paying for them. He also suggested that the 10 Minute Walk to a Park should be revisited. Sally explained to the Commission that the LED lights at Hadlock Field is under the Facilities Department’s purview.

Ethan Hipple proposed to move the Deering Oaks bathroom forward to 2020. This is a result of a number of issues in Deering Oaks including another tragic overdose fatality in the Deering Oaks porta potty. Staff have been interested in the Portland Loo. Unit costs about \$100,000 but would be about \$200,000 overall.

Cynthia closed public comment. The Commission took time to go over the first two years of proposed CIP projects.

The Commission discussed the amount of money put towards the Lincoln Park fence. \$325,000 has already been allocated to the fence. The \$275,000 being proposed is in addition to that.

EWAP was discussed due to its heavy usage. This project will increase access to a beach that is not available right now.

Marie moved to recommend the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department bring the Parks Division Capital Improvement Plan for 2020 and 2021 to Council. Dory seconded.

Caitie moved to amend the motion by deferring the Lincoln Park fence to the 2021 CIP year. Craig seconded. Caitie, Zack, Ana and Craig in favor. Six opposed. Motion did not pass.

Caitie moved to amend the motion by prioritizing EWAP, making the 2020 total \$1,390,000. Zack seconded. Eight in favor. Cynthia and Nathan opposed. Motion passed.

Nathan moved to amend the motion by prioritizing the picnic pavilion. Caitie seconded. Eight in favor. Craig and Collette opposed. Motion passed.

Nathan moved to amend the motion by taking the bollards of Payson Park off priority. Craig seconded. Collette and Dory opposed. Eight in favor. Motion passed.

Nathan moved to amend the motion by prioritizing the Payson Park Master Plan in 2021. Craig seconded. All in favor. Passed unanimously.

The priority total for 2020 is now \$1,440,000 and \$1,455,000 for 2021.

Dory moved to recommend the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department bring the Parks Division Capital Improvement Plan for 2020 and 2021 to Council as amended. Amy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ii. Annual Report - Vote to recommend the Parks Commission Annual Report to City Council.

Dory moved to recommend the Parks Commission Annual Report to City Council. Marie seconded. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Baxter Trail Event Announcement

Cynthia and Ethan announced the Baxter Trail Ribbon Cutting event on October 25th at Back Cove. They encouraged Commissioners to attend.

ii. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittees have not met yet. Updates will come next month.

iii. Parks Report

Sally and Ethan shared with the Commission that Alex Marshall is the acting Parks Director. They are still in the hiring process for the Project Manager and Operations Coordinator.