



In attendance: Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, V. Chair Michael Mertaugh, 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. Members of the public Carol Schillar and Mark Lesperance.

City of Portland Parks Commission Minutes

September 5, 2019, 5:00 PM

Portland City Hall

389 Congress Street, Room 24

I. General Citizen Comment Period

Carol Schillar of the University Neighborhood Association shared that the 2nd Annual Longfellow Park Art Festival will be on September 15th, 2019 from 11:00AM – 4:00PM. Also, the Halloween Fire Prevention Festival will be on Sunday, October 27th, 2019 from 11:00AM – 4:00PM. She also informed the Commission that she has submitted another CIP request for electricity in Longfellow Park.

Mark Lesperance came to encourage the Commission to allow groups and organizations to present at meetings. He also shared his concern regarding how the last meeting was conducted and how when Amy was speaking the former Chair interrupted her and moved to a vote. He requested a new vote and that the Commission's rules and procedures be posted online.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

Zack moved to accept the meeting minutes of July 18, 2019. Amy seconded. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

b. New Business

i. Recap of Parks Commission Fort Gorges Trip

Commissioners had a tour by Ethan Hipple and Friends of Fort Gorges Executive Director Paul Duran on August 15, 2019. During the tour, Paul shared the history of the Fort and showed the hazard mitigations the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department and Army Corps of Engineers commenced to increase safety and accessibility.

ii. Recap of Parks Commission Fort Gorges Forum with Portland Parks Conservancy

The Commissioners discussed the public forum they held on September 4th, 2019 at East End Community Center with the Portland Parks Conservancy. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department and Friends of Fort Gorges did presentations on the Fort. Commissioners shared the results of the survey that those who attended the public forum participated in. The largest number of participants voted for a combination of City funding and private funding to preserve the Fort. Some voted to allow events to support the Fort. About ten people voted to allow commercial activity. Three voted to leave it alone.

Ethan Hipple explained that City Council will ultimately decide on what to do with the Fort. There are no proposals currently. There was someone who brought an idea to the City, the City did not pass judgement on that topic but it did raise the question as to what should be done with the Fort. He assured everyone that there are degrees of commercial activity and there is a Request for Proposal process. Currently the City allows a degree of commercial activity through the Friends Group's Memorandum of Understanding. Currently, concert events, plays, etc. occur at a limited capacity; two per month to be specific. Casco Bay has been made aware of the possibility of other events. The Portland Parks Conservancy's major task is fundraising. Nan Cumming is going to follow up with Cynthia in the near future.

iii. CIP Presentation

Overall the City's target goal for Capital Improvement Plan spending is \$12 million which is lower

than what it has been, \$18 million. Ethan Hipple went down the CIP list presented and briefly explained the requests with the Commission.

Due to how extensive the CIP process is, the City Manager is trying to be more efficient. So, the Parks Division is requesting the Commission designate two years of CIP instead of only one. City Council will only look at the first year though. Next year, the Division will pull the 2nd year off of the shelf, dust it off, adjust it if anything unforeseen happens between now and then, and present it to Council. Amy asked what the Parks Division is expecting to receive for CIP funds if the total amount is less than years past. Ethan is expecting about \$750,000 this year. Caitie asked what percentage of this list is serving lower income neighborhoods and is it an even distribution. Ethan said that their goal is to try to spread the projects across all of the districts and balance it between them.

The Commissioners will take this CIP draft and review it before their workshop to discuss it further on September 19th, 2019 at 5:00 PM at City Hall Room 24. Then they will vote on it in the October meeting.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Department Re-Organization

Sally explained that there are new vacancies in the Division including a Project Manager position that is currently open. Parks Director position is still not filled.

ii. Subcommittee Update

Cynthia announced who will be in which subcommittee this year.

Annual report will be Nathan, Ana and Dory

Finance will be Michael, Marie and Craig

Initiative will be Amy, Caitie and Colette

Outreach will be Zack, Ana and Colette

Sally explained that Subcommittee meetings should be public and a staff person needs to be involved.

Commissioners discussed the potential of Sea Level Change being the Green Space Gathering theme this year. They decided that it will be on May 6th at Ocean Gateway.

iii. Website

Cynthia asked Commissioners to send Alli their brief bios so they can put them on the Parks Commission webpage.