



CITY OF PORTLAND

Parks Commission

In attendance: Commission Members: Chair Dory Waxman, V. Chair Nathan Robbins, Cynthia Loebenstein, Meri Lowry, Michael Mertaugh, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez and Marie Gray. City Staff: Sally DeLuca, Matt Coleman, and Alli Carroll.

Presenters: Ethan Hipple, Parks, Recreation & Facilities Deputy Director, Councilor Belinda Ray, Diane Davison of Avian Haven and Friends of Deering Oaks, and Jill Mulkern, Parks, Recreation & Facilities Park Ranger.

Members of the public: Tim Smith of Wingate Drive, Jim McCallum of Barrett Street, Chris Chop of Revere Street, Randolph Helm, Ben Shambough of Clinton Street, Deborah Gorno, Norm Buttrick of Clinton Street, Audrey Bergeron of Florence Street, Marc Lesperance of Candleneck Terrace, Allyson Ridge of Lawn Avenue, David Victor of Brook Road, David Spilsbury of Woodford Street, Paula Hill of Leland Street, Anne Robinson of Sheffield Street, Chris Patera of Stevens Avenue, Peggine, Clara Horder, Kristin Smith of Stevens Avenue, Amy Homens of Praybee Street, Joanna Hart of Concord Street, Diane Davison of Munjoy Hill, Jason Caplin of Austin Street, and Dawn Leland owner of the Responsible Dog Owners of Baxter Woods Facebook Page.

Parks Commission Minutes

April 4, 2019, 5:00 PM

**Portland City Hall, Council Chambers
389 Congress Street, Portland, Maine**

The meeting began at 5:04 PM.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

No public comment at this time.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

i. Parks Commission March 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Michael moved to accept the meeting minutes of March 7, 2019. Marie seconded. All in favor. Passed unanimously.

b. New Business

i. Black Hawk Sculpture and Interpretive Sign

Diane Davison, representing Avian Haven and Friends of Deering Oaks, presented this proposal to the Parks Commission. Goal is to have an educational tribute that speaks to the rarity of the Great Black Hawk in this city. She has already brought this to the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department who has spoken with Maine Audubon regarding the same request. This will be a very accurate life-size bronze replica of the hawk. A site meeting is scheduled for the location of this sculpture in the park and to make a decision on mounting materials. This will be a gift to the city through private fundraising through Friends of Deering Oaks. Content of the sign is still under review. Commissioners shared their support of the project and excitement for the awareness and education it will bring forth.



CITY OF PORTLAND

Parks Commission

ii. Boyd Street Update

Last month, Councilor Belinda Ray presented a proposal to amend City Code Chapter 18. This amendment would formalize the boundaries of Boyd Street Gardens and add “John Menario Plaza” to Lobsterman Park. This will prevent future confusion regarding the parcels. Commissioners thanked her for the time and effort involved in creating this proposal.

Meri moved to recommend that this amendment to formalize of the Boyd Street Garden boundaries and add “John Menario Plaza” to Lobsterman Park in City Code Chapter 18 be brought to City Council for approval. Amy seconded. All in favor. Passed unanimously.

iii. Proposal for Baxter Woods Leash Change in City Ordinance Chapter 5

Ethan Hipple, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation & Facilities, presented a proposal to change City Code Chapter 5 to include Baxter Woods as a maximum 25-foot leash only park in order to respect a condition in Governor Percival Baxter’s deed to keep the space a bird sanctuary.

He described the park and shared the history of Baxter Woods and Governor Percival Baxter’s deed. He explained the ongoing usage of the park including dog walking, stormwater absorption, wildlife habitat, pedestrian commuting route, daily outdoor play space, outdoor classroom, etc. Currently, this park is a voice control area which means the dog can be fifty-feet from their owner but has to come back immediately when called. He introduced Jill Mulkern, Park Ranger of the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department and discussed the Department’s choice to educate rather than ticketing owners. She or a seasonal park ranger is in the park daily for only one hour as there are over sixty parks and open spaces that also need their attention. Educational signs are also placed in the park to help control the situation.

The Forest and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan dated May 18, 2018 shares many recommendations but one of which is to adopt a on leash law so that birds can re-inhabit the park. There are 495 acres of voice control parks and open space in Portland for dog owners to use. This is 61% of our parks. This proposal is to change 32 acres.

Dory asked for members of the public to share their thoughts before Commissioners discuss and place a vote.

Tim Smith of Wingate Drive, Jim McCallum of Barrett Street, Chris Chop of Revere Street, Randolph Helm, Ben Shambough of Clinton Street, Deborah Gorno, Norm Buttrick of Clinton Street, Audrey Bergeron of Florence Street, Marc Lesperance of Candlenyck Terrace, Allyson Ridge of Lawn Avenue, David Victor of Brook Road, David Spilsbury of Woodford Street, Paula Hill of Leland Street, Anne Robinson of Sheffield Street, Chris Patera of Stevens Avenue, Peggie, Clara Horder, Kristin Smith of Stevens Avenue, Amy Homens of Praybee Street, Joanna Hart of Concord Street, Diane Davison of Munjoy Hill, Jason Caplin of Austin Street, and Dawn Leland, owner of the Responsible Dog Owners of Baxter Woods Facebook Page, spoke. The majority of the public were against this



CITY OF PORTLAND

Parks Commission

proposal and wished it to stay a voice control area.

Dory closed public comment. Commissioners thanked the public for voicing their concerns. They discussed many changes that the Department could make, including making the park an eight-foot leash only space instead of a twenty-five-foot for safety, more enforcement, hours for voice control, blocking off a section of the park to be voice control, creating dog license fees to provide more rangers, and adopting a similar program to Boulder, Colorado's Voice and Sight Tags. Many Commissioners felt the weight of upholding the deed, however some wished for a compromise between the Department's proposal and some of the public's desire to keep Baxter Woods a voice control space.

Dory thanked everyone for their heartfelt comments. She had questions that she asked staff to research more on and bring back to the Commission at a later date. These questions included:

When did Baxter Woods become voice controlled?

What is the cost for a ranger to be there for a significant period of time?

What is the cost for Boulder, Colorado's Voice and Sight Tag Program?

What would it look like if they allowed hours of voice control?

In the meantime, they would like the Department to ticket more because they still need to protect the habitat.

Meri moved to table this decision pending clarifications of other options that lead to best use of Baxter Woods until the June meeting. Nathan seconded. All in favor. Passed unanimously.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Subcommittee Updates

Annual Report Subcommittee: They are making more specific recommendations to the annual report. Would love more from Commissioners. They would like to finalize it by June.

Outreach Subcommittee: Had a great meeting with Alli, Sally and Matt regarding the Green Space Gathering next month. Will send everyone an updated agenda.

Finance Subcommittee: Had a meeting regarding craft gifts and decided to wait until they have more experience with their current roll out of the gift catalog.

Ana moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. Amy seconded. All in favor. Passed unanimously.