Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 5, 2017
5:00 PM
City Hall, 389 Congress Street, Room 24

In attendance: Commission members Diane Davison, Cynthia Loebenstein, Craig Lapine, Meri Lowry, Councilor Belinda Ray, Jaime Parker, Travis Wagner, Steve Morgenstein, Dory Waxman, Michael Mertaugh, Carol Hutchins, and Nathan Robbins. City Staff Members: Sally DeLuca, Ethan Hipple, and Alli Carroll.

Diane called meeting called 5:10pm

I. **Citizen Comment Period**
   a. George Rowe mentions the public comment issue that has come up in recent Parks Commission and Land Bank meetings. He states that the Land Bank Commission received advice which was different from what Parks Commission obtained. Mr. Rowe just wants to be clear and that he thought it to be a very simple matter and that committees should require to observe the public comment. Besides that, he is very interested in Peppermint Park. He believes leasing is off the table and hopefully that is in Sally's update. Diane pulls our attention to the agenda and states that both issues are on their radar.

II. **Motion to accept December 6, 2016 Meeting Minutes.**
   a. Belinda motions to accept the December 6, 2016 meeting minutes and Michael seconds. Travis states that his intent during that meeting was not to change the ordinance but to adopt it as a policy in Parks Commission as a request to lease the land at Peppermint Park. He requested to strike the misleading sentence, 6th line down from the top of the page. Meri also pointed out the 11th line down that states "very short open spaces" and asked to strike "very short" from the sentence. Diane asks, all in favor of accepting minutes as amended. Passed unanimously.

III. **Agenda Items**
   a. **New Business**
      i. Diane begins the new business portion of the meeting with issue of public comment on action comments and proposes that they table this until the Land Bank and Parks Commission meeting. There was then a small discussion on the matter. Michael supports public comment due to his personal experience. Steve, however, is worried that too much public comment can cause meetings to get bogged down. Diane suggests the three-minute rule to try to control the meeting more and to avoid discrepancies. Travis suggests accepting written comment but the group believes that their meeting is too tight to accept all written comments and that it puts a lot of pressure on staff. Finally, they decided to table it until they speak with Land Bank.
      ii. Caitlin Cameron joins us tonight regarding the Congress Square Redesign. WRT presented on December 15th during a public meeting. Traffic will be reworked with project to improve accessibility. Ideally would like to create an identity due to it residing in the arts district. Also, would like to create an open space for citizens. This is a schematic design but there is a lot of steps to go through still. Materials and such for example are not selected yet. Caitlin is interested in obtaining feedback and thoughts on how the schematic meets the vision for the space and how it will improve accessibility. Cynthia suggested very durable materials such as granite and states that she is very excited about the plaza in front of the art museum. Michael is very pleased with its simplicity. Nathan enjoyed seeing it come together but wonders what they plan to do with storm water? Caitlin says they haven't gotten to that yet but they will be using local plants that will be naturally watered by rain. Travis is nervous that it may be high maintenance cost. Ethan says that now that this is designed, we are meeting with field staff to discuss what to expect. Everyone continues to praise Caitlin on the great design and she finalizes

this agenda item by asking everyone to please reply online or to email her directly. Everyone thanks her.

IV. Communications/Updates

a. **Fort Sumner Moratorium update (future view protection for Portland's green spaces):** Councilor Ray says that Michael was fantastic with bringing ideas from other communities. She then directed members to view the picture of the progress and stated that in the overlay zone a development could not rise over 160.27 feet. So, it keeps everything below the viewing area of the plaza. Therefore, the roof, AC unit and everything else needs to go below this height. When you move from the plaza, that height goes down so that the view stays optimal. They are still on track for this project. Jaime wonders if future green spaces will be addressed more generally or city wide. Belinda states that different parks have different needs, so we need to go place by place. Michael questions what happens if the schedule is not met; Is there something where the developer can move ahead? Belinda says that she doesn't believe so but she has double checked and this can be retroactively enforced. I can't see it not passing. Very confident. Nathan suggests that it might be good to reference the date of the data. Michael states that it was a remarkable effort and model of what cities should do when a precious resource is under threat. Kudos to the planning board and city council. He suggests that a formal letter of gratitude be written and given to the parties involved. Diane, Alli and he will work on it.

b. **Amethyst Lot note:** Ethan says a design team has been picked and it is Stantec which has a team over 200. They have done some amazing waterfront projects and have a really strong local office. Contract needs to be finalized and then it will move forward. Jaime asks if there will be a rep for Parks Commission on it. Diane says that Doreen and her have tag teamed on it.

c. **FY18 CIP Process update:** Sally wants to share with you the CIP updated list. She asked each division what they need, listed it, and then finally, the bold and italicized is what made it through. She worked with each division manager and then had to go back and prioritize. When she thought about how she should prioritize, she tied with whether it would bring in revenue and which ones were old requests that kept being put off. Sally asked for $4.1 million last year we got over just over $2 million. If you go down to #8, that's the $2 million mark, showing you which projects that Ethan asked for that made it into the list. Also, just because it's on her list doesn't mean it will be on Jon Jennings list. It will be finalized soon because Jon wants it before the city council so that projects can get it started in the Spring.

d. **Peppermint Park (lease update):** Meri asks if it is the departments preference that the ally way gets removed. Sally says it is our preference to sell it. Ethan says the departments looked at it very carefully and talked with staff and police, and we think it won't be a loss to the public since it's not in use anyways. Meri believes a sale might make more sense. Sally says that this is a playground for children but it was being used by those who are doing a lot of drugs. Now that we have closed it off, we haven't seen as much of the issue. Meri states that Land Bank had a discussion last month and they haven't made a recommendation yet. Jaime disagrees. We need to take everything into consideration. I understand staff and police concerns. It's a problem area and it has been for a long time. But we need to think long term. He believes it's short sighted to sell it and that leasing is a better option. There was more discussion regarding which was best but nothing was decided.

V. Unfinished Committee Business

a. **Finance Committee:** Michael said they discussed in particular five options for financing. One: general obligation bonds. Two: Support investments as park infrastructure. Three: Increase property taxes. Four: citizen initiatives and impact fees. Finally, five: TIFs (tax increment financing). Would love to improve the quality of parks because they are capital investments. They could be valuable if the city has major acquisitions. Conclusion, the best would be to improve ongoing budget process and do a better job of documenting needs.

b. **Annual Report/Inventory Committee:** Jaime motions for the inventory to be adopted at the same time as the report. Craig seconds. Cynthia would like cemeteries to be protected as well. Meri says cemeteries are not parks. There are properties that deserve the protection of parks. What Parks

Commission is doing now is not that. It is just a current parks inventory list. Meri also thinks that Parks Commission should wait until their meeting with Michael for legal advice and to set a definition of parks for future use. Travis thinks we should move forward with a new definition and that this is an organic list that's going to change. We shouldn't delay it any more. Craig asks if there is any back up documents that define these properties. Ethan says there are bounds and parcel definitions. Also, Nathan says Obrien street: last page should be spelled "O'Brion Street". Belinda says that University Park may be better listed below rather than on the top list due to it being a Land Bank property.
Motion passed as amended with one descending.

Motion to adjourn at 6:57pm.