

Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2016

Attendees: Carol Hutchins, Belinda Ray, Travis Wagner, Michael Mertaugh, Dory Waxman, Meri Lowry, Jaime Parker, Cynthia Loebenstein, Craig Lapine, Steve Morgenstein, Laurie Mondor

Citizen Comment: George Rowe, bayside property owner, stated that he found Ethan Hipple's memo helpful. He is concerned about the lack of public awareness and states that this Parks Commission is set up differently than most and does not have the same function as other places. He stated that very few people have even heard of the Bayside Phase II project and it seems like this has been a very long process and things are moving far along. He is urging Parks to have a greater public transparency. He mentioned that Friends of Deering Oaks Park received grant, which was a good thing, to do work on playground but again where did they public get involved in that process. He believes that the public should be told things ahead of time as nobody has had a chance to get involved and this reflects poorly on Parks Commission. Ethan Hipple did state that a designer is being selected on the Bayside project and this process will include a lot of public input.

Minutes: June and July Minutes – Belinda motioned to accept both months minutes. Cynthia did want to mention that under the communication of July 7th meeting minutes where it states that she is hoping to put this to a bigger scale, her comment was that she is hoping to get input from landscape architects on a regionally or national level. Jaime seconded and all were in favor.

New Business: September meeting; Dory stated that she met with Diane earlier this week regarding the date and Labor Day Weekend. It was agreed that a doodle poll should be sent out.

Rob Mattes our new Recreation Director, was introduced. He is coming to Portland from New York where he was the Parks and Recreation Direct for the last 9 years.

Communications: **Danforth St:** Lori Paulette from the City's Economic Development Department stated that the city received an application to purchase a portion of city property which is also a Land Bank property. Meri did question why this is coming to Parks Commission now as usually Land Bank sees after Parks Commission has put their input in and this seems to be reversed. Lori stated that a departmental survey was to keep the property in Land Bank. The ultimate recommendation to give a drainage easement. Jaime asked might we consider adding this to the Western Prom Park as Portland Trails sees trail potential here and it makes sense to envelop this within western prom. Ethan stated that when he and staff looked at this site they were opposed to selling because of the future potential. Michael questioned what is the drainage potential and what would allow them to do and he was answered that this would able them to repair the drainage

easement area. The City would have access to this property. Belinda stated that the property owners requested a silver for setbacks for a garage and she wanted to make sure that this is just a drainage easement being granted which she was answered yes. There is a deed restriction stating that is to remain an open space but this piece does not have a deed restriction. Meri stated what the Land Bank feelings on this when it was brought before them and they did approve this. It was then questioned what Lori was looking for from the Parks Commission to which she answered that she was just looking for a vote. Dory so moved, Jaime seconded, as long as just a drainage easement, Travis abstained from the vote and the rest were in favor.

Parks Update: Ethan went over Baxter Woods which has already been before both commissions. This has been temporarily postponed as concerns were raised by some property owners about allowing tree cutting. We had supported this project for storm water treatment but also where work is going to take place there are nonnative Norway Maples which were going to be cut down. The area was going to be restored to its original landscape. In short term, yes, it will look pretty raw but trees and shrubs will be replanted. The city attorney is looking at the deed to see if this can go forward. If it is determined that we can a public meeting will be held. Michael questioned if there would be replacement to the Norway Maples. Ethan responded yes immediately and that the Baxter Trust does have funds for replanting trees and shrubs. All Norway Maples would be removed in that project site. Belinda questioned what is native and Ethan said Pine and Oak. This area is heavily dominated of Norway Maples. Cynthia asked if this will be posted on Next Door, social medial site, and Ethan said yes. Jaime mentioned that forest management projects are getting better and better about notifying the public.

Jaime wanted to know if there have been any rule changes with dogs. Ethan replied no but we are trying to better educate people as far as the rules to each park with dogs. Making postcards stating where areas are and having Park Rangers hand these out when questioned.

Michael questioned when the maintenance plan would be ready. Ethan stated that they are going park to park, property to property so it will take a while. He stated that here is no time line and this is a long term project. He was questioned if it would be done to be put in for budget request, yes. Michael questioned if they would be making criteria or standards and Ethan said yes there would be weekly, biweekly, monthly maintenance standards and they would be prioritizing things. There will be a list of what we are doing and things that need to be done proactively. With this we will be able to identify what is not being done. Cynthia mentioned that she is very excited about this and she believes it is a good thing to address the maintenance issue and to have a plan. It was also stated that with this in place we would have a way to defend the cost to city council when asking for funding.

Belinda questioned about the homeless encampments and asked if we have a city policy as to when and how they get cleared. Ethan did state that the parks are closed from 10pm to 6am so we do ask them to move if sleeping, but the rangers do not work at night. Police are aware, they do patrol and do ask them. If an encampment is found the rangers

have a calling card and ask them to leave or leave the card asking them to remove their things if nobody is there. Ranges do not patrol other areas. We do get involved in the cleanup if it is a simple clean up, just trash, but sometimes this does require a larger scale clean up. Ethan stated that overall, he has been told by his staff, that it has been lighter this year than in years past.

Belinda asked about the Land and Water Conservation Fund and how to qualify for future funding. Ethan stated that it is a quite a process and it does have a lot of restrictions. Basically this land becomes permanently protected and does need to have public access. We are currently in violation as Hadlock Field had this funding in the past, when it was a ballfield in the past. When it became home to Sea Dogs and charging for entrance it no longer qualified. Because of this we need to find a land of equal recreational value to use in its place. This will have to hold the same value; does not have to be the same size. Doug Roncarati has been working on this. LWCF is a large funding source and the goal is to protect new land; new recreational. City does own Hadlock with a lease agreement to the Sea Dogs.

Unfinished Business: **Green Space Gathering**; committee has had a couple of meetings. Dory mentioned that they have had no feedback regarding the draft letter. Dory read the letter to everyone; Meri would like Land Bank be referenced in this letter. Dory did state that we need to nail down the location and went over the choices of the Expo, King Middle School, Ocean Gateway, East End School, and we have also used Ocean Ave in the past. Craig stated that he is not sure if King makes sense. Unsure if Ocean Gateway was available and we will check on the availability. The letter will go out to Friends of Parks, Trail organizations and neighborhood organization. Diane also wants us to do a postcard for a save the date. Letters will go out electronically. Cynthia stated that she received a call last year regarding the presentation portion stating that it was way too long. She suggested that maybe not go through that in great detail like last year or have the report there available for people to have. Jaime asked about a keynote speaker but the thought right now is not to have one. There was a thought to honor Rick Knowland, and have him speak. Diane would also be speaking. The City manager is planning to attend the gathering. We would like to highlight Lincoln Park and the great work at Congress Square. Michael then mentioned that possibly the City Manager could release the plan for Amethyst lot.

Parks Initiatives Steve we have been working pretty hard on signage. They have focused on five different parks within the city and also worked with a few friend's groups. He mentioned that Ethan has been very helpful. Steven has worked with Mike King a landscape architect with sighting of signs. He did bring some drawings for the group to look at. They are planning to have icons on the bottom of the signs to give a general of idea what you can do at that particular park. They are looking at material to make the signs attractive and long lasting and also are trying to make a total menu database. They picked five parks picked because they knew this would be expensive with each sign costing \$3,000 to \$5,000 to make it long lasting. We are going to look for grants to help with this and also work with friend's groups to see if they can provide some financial support to get the signs in. Two tiers of signs, historic parks and other

parks not deemed to be historic. The next step after Mike is to meet with the planning board to discuss setbacks and codes. Payson Park, Dougherty field, Riverton Trolley Park, the beginning of the Back Cove trail and Lincoln park are the five. Some parks already have signage and we have adopted that template for historic parks and some parks have no signage. Signs will say welcome to Portland Park System. It was then asked if we could request someone from the city planning office to come to Park Commission meetings. Travis did state that there are a lot of small parks and possibly adding another tier for these small parks. We will adapt these and adopt them to the size of the park. Historic preservation will have to be contacted on these signs as well.

Finance - nothing to report.

Annual Report – Travis said that things have been quiet. This is due on the 18th and we are only missing one piece from finance committee. Once we have that in we will be in good shape. He asked if you have any suggestions or changes please let him know with a draft since we are running out of time. This does not need to be approved by city council but it will be submitted to them before the GSG. He is looking for someone to be copy editor. Dory, council piece I believe the best way for us to do this, can check with mayor and council but this can go as a communication. Then maybe at some point look to adopt down the line as a possibility.

Handbook: Meri proofread it and came forth with edits which have already been incorporated. In order to standardize friends' groups, we need a handbook. Several examples from organizations with collection of what groups needs to do so we can formally recognize them before they stand before this committee. Diane and Sally have done a lot of work with this, Steve has been in the background. A group getting starting would find this very helpful if you have no idea of how to put something like this together. Steve would ask everyone to look through this and see if it makes sense. Cynthia stated that bylaws part on page 6 – incorporation talk, delegates a lot of responsibilities to officers, this could get topsey turvey. It was noted that this is not an endorsement, just saying this is how some do it. Meri stated that this it is a good inclusive, it is not a policy but handbook. Gives indication of ways of partnering. Michael seems to describe requirements which formally collaborates with the city to some extent it reads like that but also general advice to friends groups; could be clearer. Some might not be seeking a formal understanding. Craig mentioned that this is perhaps more editorial than this documents wants to be. He stated that personally if he was the one speaking he would encourage people to try and get work done through an existing entity. Ethan agrees completely but a section in handbook states existing group, see if neighborhood organization already exists. Meri said that maybe on page 3 might be best place for this; simply open parenthesis particular reference to neighborhood organizations. Jaime agrees with Craig, it is a little too inclusive and vague to be instructive. Maybe start with introduction with existing friends of groups, if you want to form your own group then if needs are not being served. A little more of an order of operations. Meri disagrees and says that we want to lay it out. Belinda does not want people stepping on others toes. Meri feels this is a way of partnering. Steve feels people will find a way to do that. Jaime stated that the usability and organization of the

document could be structured better. It is a lot of information. Agreed to have everyone look at this and get their feedback.

Cynthia motioned to adjourn, Belinda seconded all in favor