

City of Portland Parks Commission Agenda



The mission of the Portland Parks Commission is to advocate for the enhancement and stewardship of our parks and open spaces. Review and propose projects that impact parks and open spaces and recommend action. Foster collaboration among park users and the City. Promotes public access and enjoyment. Advocate for public and private funding for parks and open spaces. Enjoy Portland for life.

Commission Members:

Alexis Lopez Del Vecchio, Ashley Burdick, Beth Rabbitt, Donna Gartland, Elizabeth Pagan, Griffin Bourassa, Helen Coyne, Jaime Parker, John Clark, Marie Gray, Robert Foster, Sarah Michniewicz (City Councilor), William Elting.

City Staff:

Alex Marshall (Parks Director), Jen DeRice (Parks Assistant Director), Jessica Teesdale (PRF Sr. Executive Assistant)

January 9, 2025 at 5:00 PM

The Parks Commission will hold its January meeting outside the regularly recurring meeting schedule.

The January 2nd meeting has been rescheduled to January 9, 2025.

The Portland Parks Commission will meet at

Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, 212 Canco Rd. Suite A conference room, Portland, Maine 04102.

The Parks Commission will conduct this meeting in person. Public comments may only be submitted in person or in writing.

Livestream link: <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/6750/media>

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email ParksCommission@Portlandmaine.gov. Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm the day before the Parks Commission meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the commenter's name and legal address. To help ensure your comment is submitted for the correct item, please include the name of the agenda item (see below).

- I. Call to Order
- II. General Citizen Comment Period
 - a. Public Comment emails 11.7.24 to 1.8.25
- III. Agenda Items
 - a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: November 7, 2024
 - b. New Business
 - i. Committee work session reports
 - c. Communications and Updates
 - i. Parks Division Report
 - ii. Land Bank Commission Report
 - d. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items
- IV. Adjournment
- V. Committee breakout session



Fwd: Lack of Response

1 message



Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 2:09 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: kcap...@maine.rr.com <Unknown>

Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 at 12:37:34 PM UTC-5

Subject: Re: Lack of Response

To: Ethan Hipple <Unknown>, Danielle West <Unknown>, dion...@me.com <Unknown>

Cc: ParksCo...@portlandmaine.gov <Unknown>, Alex Marshall <Unknown>, Jen DeRice <Unknown>, Jessica Teesdale <Unknown>

Are you saying that you don't make exceptions for specific requests? Ever? So even if a historical organization asked, you would give them the same response? Nada? Aren't there some potential Native Indian sites that have been excavated? Or that might have value in an archeological dig? Half of Portland is built on trash - especially the park lands.

I have to believe you would make or have made exceptions under specific requests.
I also wonder if you are aware that 6 inches is far short of most detectable artifacts.

Kenneth A. Capron, ret. CPA, Systems Engineer

[1375 Forest Avenue D-11](#)

Portland, ME 04103

207-797-7891

kcapron1@maine.rr.com

maglev@maine.rr.com

[Southern Maine Research Institute]

[SkyWay by MicroRail]

[Hope Harbor]

From: Ethan Hipple <ehipple@portlandmaine.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 6, 2025 8:40 AM

To: kcapron1@maine.rr.com <kcapron1@maine.rr.com>

Cc: ParksCommission@Portlandmaine.gov <ParksCommission@portlandmaine.gov>; Alex Marshall <amarshall@portlandmaine.gov>; Jen DeRice <jderice@portlandmaine.gov>; Jessica Teesdale <jteesdale@portlandmaine.gov>

Subject: Re: Lack of Response

Hi Ken,

On September 11, 2024, you inquired via email about doing metal detecting and digging on City property.

I responded to you on September 12 that we do allow metal detecting in forested areas and beaches, with minor digging (under 6") to retrieve items. We do not allow metal detecting and the associated digging in other park areas for safety and aesthetic reasons.

Staff will not be adding this as an item on the Parks Commission agenda, but you are free to attend to give public comment.

Take care,
Ethan

Ethan Hipple

Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department
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www.portlandmaine.gov

On Sun, Jan 5, 2025 at 2:45 PM kcapron1@maine.rr.com <kcapron1@maine.rr.com> wrote:

A couple of meetings ago, I requested the opportunity to take on archeological digs in public parks deeper than the 6 inches in the ordinance. Specifically, I was looking at the old tavern site on Stevens Avenue. I have had no response to that request. Why would it be unreasonable to expand the ordinance to allow deeper digs with proper notice (permission) to Parks and Rec on a location by location request.

I would also ask the Commission to consider requiring any construction within the City that encounters historical dump sites to be reviewed for potential content of historical value.

Kenneth A. Capron, ret. CPA, Systems Engineer
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Notice: Under Maine law, documents - including e-mails - in the possession of public officials or city employees about government business may be classified as public records. There are very few exceptions. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.



Jessica Teesdale <jteesdale@portlandmaine.gov>

Fwd: Skatepark Lighting Follow-up

Alex Marshall <amarshall@portlandmaine.gov>

Wed, Jan 8, 2025 at 2:36 PM

Reply-To: amarshall@portlandmaine.gov

To: srandall207@gmail.com

Cc: parkscommission@portlandmaine.gov

Hi Sean,

Thanks for touching base on this. My apologies on the delayed response as well.

The topic was discussed at the meeting briefly but only as an update to the group on the status and projected timeline. At this time, the lighting project is still a few years out if the city were to be responsible for funding it. We have too many priorities that have been on the list to move it forward unless there is a significant match from the community or any grants as seen with the expansion project.

Thank you for your work raising the \$2,000 so far. That is wonderful and really appreciated. The fundraising page for the skate park expansion is still open and can be used for this initiative if you want to find a way to transfer the funds over?

Let me know if you have any further questions

Alex

On Wed, Dec 11, 2024 at 8:34 AM Sean Randall <srandall207@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello again,

Sean Randall here- I spoke at the commission meeting in October about getting lights installed at the Portland Skatepark. It was my understanding that the skatepark project was to be a topic of conversation at last week's meeting, which I was unfortunately unable to attend. I therefore wanted to ask if any discussion took place regarding the project. After speaking with Alex Marshall in November it sounded like completion would be some years out, but I'd at least like to get the ball rolling.

I also was hoping to connect with the city about our fundraising efforts. The skate community has been chipping away by means of grassroots events and word of mouth. We have about \$2000 so far, some of which is in a Gofundme. Is there some way to set up an account with the city where we can deposit this money? Or better yet, could we use the same city account and donation link from past skatepark fundraising? I need to link a bank account to the Gofundme by February 25th or else our donations will be refunded so I was hoping to get it sorted by then.

Thanks so much and Happy Holidays!

-Sean

[Quoted text hidden]

City of Portland | Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

Ethan Hipple, *Director*

Alex Marshall, *Director of Parks*



Parks Commission November 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded and is available to watch on the Agendas and Meetings Portal

Here: <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/6748/media>

Present Commission Members: Donna Gartland, Griffin Bourassa, Jaime Parker, John Clark, Marie Gray, Robert Foster, William Elting, Alexis Del Vecchio

Not Present: Ashley Burdick, Beth Rabbitt, Elizabeth Pagan, Helen Coyne, Victoria Pelletier (City Council)

Staff: Alex Marshall (Parks Director), Jen Derice (Assistant Parks Director), Andy Downs (Public Assembly and Facilities Director), Jessica Teesdale

Call to Order

W. Elting called the meeting to order at 5pm

General Citizen Comment Period-

W. Elting opened the floor for public comment on non-agenda items. No one came forward.

Emailed comments-included in agenda packet.

Agenda Items

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: October 3, 2024

Motion to accept meeting minutes: Motion made by Donna Gartland, seconded by Marie Gray passed: 7-0

New Business

Portland Music and Arts Festival

Presentation by Permit Applicants: Tyler Grill and Jordan Wolowitz

W. Elting opened the floor for public comment. The following individuals spoke: Erin Mussenden District 4, Teyonda Hall Portland Housing Authority, Anne Pringle District 2, Suzanne Burdick 11 Johansen St., Nancy Shaw, Miles Smit 36 Pitt St., Gary, Devin Green, Kathy Ramshell District 4, Ashley Schmidt District 4, Carl Collins, Westview St.,

Katherine Glick District 2, Peter McLaughlin Peaks Island.

W. Elting opened the floor for Commission discussion.

Motion to recommend approval of the Portland Music and Arts Festival Permit to the Portland City Council. Committee will construct a letter of advisory opinion within seven days.

Motion made by J. Parker, seconded by J. Clark

Passed 5-2; 1 abstain

Yes votes; D. Gartland, G.Bourassa, J. Parker, J. Clark, W. Elting.

No Votes; M. Gray, R. Foster.

Abstain; A.L. Del Vecchio

Communications and Updates -Tabled until next meeting

Commissioner Requests for Agenda Items-Tabled until next meeting

Adjournment



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Ethan Hipple, Director

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Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
Alex Marshall, Parks Director

Memorandum

TO: Parks Commission and Land Bank Commission

FROM: Alex Marshall, Parks Director, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department

SUBJECT: Parks Division Update

DATE: December 2024 / January 2025

Parks Division Staffing

- Total Budgeted positions in Parks Division: 43
- Vacancies:
 - Arborist III
 - Park Maintainer x2

Citywide Unhoused Report

At this time there are 35 encampments citywide which is consistent with the November numbers. Overall, in 2024, City Staff (primarily Rangers), have tagged and removed 827 tents citywide with the first record being the January resolution of Harbor View's 92 tent sites. Last year at this time there were 127 tents citywide. Park Rangers continue to tag and remove between 10-30 tents from City land each week and conduct a thorough clean-up afterward. There continues to be steady capacity available at the shelter.

Winter Operations & Recreation

We have been geared up and ready to roll once winter officially hits us. Our Parks Maintenance Crew morphs into a sidewalk-clearing operation during the winter months with the help of Horticulture, Ballfields, and Cemeteries. That team covers over 120 miles of sidewalks and trails each storm with a handful of them working on heavy snow loads, heavy ice, pinch points, and tip-down locations. The Forestry Division diverts from tree work during each storm to focus on Public Safety Buildings, on-peninsula School parking lots, snow-ban parking lots, and various other city parking lots. Our Ballfields division participates in overnight sidewalk clearing in the Downtown District and helps with sidewalk pinch points during the day. The Playground Division keeps City Hall Plaza and the Police Station open while clearing and maintaining the ice on three citywide ponds (Payson Park, Ludlow, and Deering Oaks). Finally, our Park Rangers help with shoveling various city buildings and will also help keep the cross-country ski trails open at Deering Oaks and Payson Park as conditions permit. The Winter Operations video is attached separately.

Land Bank Signs

Parks Staff have begun installing 'Welcome to' signs at the entrances to Land Bank properties such as Canco Woods, Presumpscot River Preserve, and North Deering Park. Each of these posts will receive a 'Welcome to' sign and a 'park rules' sign. Additional signs to be installed in 2025 are: University Park, PATHS Open Space, Virginia Woods, Pine Grove Park, and Evergreen Woods

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Alex Marshall, Parks Director

Boyd Street Garden Rebuild

As a result of the soil testing for community gardens, it was determined that Libbytown, Clark Street, North Street, Payson Park, Casco Bay, Boyd Street, and Valley Street needed to have raised beds due to elevated levels of contaminants found in various locations. The Maine CDC recommended having these beds converted to raised beds within the next 5 years. As a result, Cultivating Community has been partnering with the City to start that process which was initiated at Libbytown Garden earlier in 2024. A second build occurred at the school garden at North Street in the Fall of 2024 along with new bed space at Payson Park. Most recently, half of the Boyd Street garden beds were rebuilt by a group of 60 volunteers on a frigid Saturday in December. Preparation work was conducted via the Parks Division's Horticulture Team with contractor help filling the beds from Seaside landscaping. The second half of the beds and remaining finishing touches will be done before the 2025 season begins. Planning for the next rebuild is ongoing.

Project Manager Hiring

In 2024, the Parks Division was able to add a Project Manager to the Team to help tackle the 50+ active projects in the division, for a total of 3 Park Project Managers. With projects such as Portland Harbor Common, Kiwanis Pool Replacement, Deering Oaks ADA Improvements, Lower Valley Street Improvements, Riverton Trolley Park Recreation Improvements, Longfellow/Rieche Playground Replacements, Public Restrooms, Talbot Pickleball Court Improvements, etc. all in process, there was a need for resources to manage them.

Park Projects and Department Updates

Staff are working on the following Park Improvement projects:

- Deering Oaks Park ADA Walkway improvements: Phase 3, providing ADA access to the wading ravine was completed in the Summer of 2023. Phase 4, which is the sidewalk along Tennis Court Drive, is under design development currently in hopes of going out to bid later this Winter for Summer/Fall 2025 construction.
- Preble Street Field & Stormwater Project: The final design and landscaping plans have been finalized. There have been some construction delays that will push the installation of the field back to the Spring of 2025 with field play to begin in the Fall of 2025 or Spring of 2026.
- Riverton Preserve: Recreation improvement plans are in progress and will consist primarily of a trail network with other improvements. This project is intended to fulfill LWCF conversion requirements, and final approval of the improvement plan rests with the state and National Park Service, which has a public engagement process.
- Lower Western Prom Park Improvements: This project has been bid out and did not receive a bid within the allocated budget so will be revised and re-advertised in the coming months.
- Longfellow Elementary School Playground: Parks Staff are working with a design consultant on the construction drawings and bid documents for a Winter 2025 bid and Summer 2025 construction. Playground Equipment has been selected.



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Alex Marshall, Parks Director

- Portland Harbor Common: Bid documents are being prepared and the project should go out to bid in the month of January, with construction potentially starting in the spring of 2025.
- Stroudwater Bridge: Fundraising and permitting is still ongoing for this project to proceed. So far we have raised \$210,000 of the \$365,000 needed to continue bidding.
- Public Restrooms: So far, the city has installed 15 new public restrooms citywide over the past 3 years. There are another 3 new vaulted toilets to be installed this coming Winter/Spring at Preble Field and Valley Street along with vault modifications being done at Eastern Prom, Fox Field, and the Fish Pier.
- Talbot School Court Reconstruction: This project will be converting 2 of the tennis courts into 6 pickleball courts while leaving one multi-use court still in place. This project went out to bid with anticipated ground breaking in the Spring of 2025 for a Summer 2025 completion.