

City of Portland | Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

Ethan Hipple, *Director*

Alex Marshall, *Director of Parks*



Parks Commission March 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

There were technical issues in the recording of this meeting. The first 40 minutes were video recorded live. The video recording was uploaded to the Agenda Portal. Halfway through the meeting the wifi and Zoom went out and could not be restored. The meeting was paused in the middle. The second part of the meeting was recorded by these written minutes.

Call to Order:

Jaime Parker called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

Present Commission Members: John Clark, Ashley Burdick, Beth Rabbitt, Jaime Parker (Chair), Robert Foster, Alexis Lopez Del Vecchio, Helen Coyne, Stephen Bentsen, Katie Mears, Kristen Fulmer, Marie Gray, William Elting

Not Present: Donna Gartland, Victoria Pelletier (City Councilor),

Staff: Alex Marshall Parks Director, Jen DeRice Assistant Parks Director, Jessica Teesdale Senior Executive Assistant, Rachel Millette Corporate Counsel

General Citizen Comment Period:

Jaime Parker opened the floor to citizen comment. The following individuals spoke: George Rheault

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes February 1, 2024 ; Motion to approve by Katie Mears seconded by John Clark; 8 approved 1 abstain

New Business

Special Projects – Battle of Deering Oaks signage:

Alex M. provided an overview of the need for the Parks Commission to provide volunteers to create the new interpretive signs for Deering Oaks Park. Commissioners discuss several ideas about how to go about the project. Rob Foster and Beth Rabbitt volunteered to get the interpretive sign project underway. The Parks Commission will review the project during the process. Interpretive signage attention citywide was discussed.

Old Business

Meeting Schedule and Calendar:

The proposal is for the full commission and staff to meet every other month for an agenda Parks commission meeting. In the off months the commission will meet for workshop meetings that would be publicly noticed but not recorded. At any time if a full meeting is needed the chair can propose the commission meet for a full meeting if it happens to be a workshop month. Starting April 2024 would be the first workshop meeting month.

Alex M. provided a preliminary Calendar outline. All months need to be publicly noticed.

Vote: Motion to approve suggested calendar change by Beth Rabbit seconded by Alexis Lopez

Del Vecchio. Motion approved Unanimously

Committee assignments:

Community outreach: Donna, Will, Helen, Katie, Alexis, Stephen and Marie

Annual Report: Jaime and Beth

Parks initiative: John, Beth and Robert

Finance Development: rolled into report. Parks conservancy does fundraising. Determined not needed. Could be a vacant committee until it becomes necessary.

Green Space Gathering:

Date: May 2nd 2024

Location: Talbot School

Topic: Accessibility-what does it mean for parks to be accessible?

- park accessibility and goals such as 10 minute walk to a park.
- Guest speaker.
- Alternate transportation and prizes.
- Park and friends neighborhood groups. Opportunity for panel conversation. Also identify neighborhoods without friends group
- Alex suggested NOT using RTP for mapping parks because it is not updated
- Can See Click Fix data be used for determining park equity and accessibility. What parks are getting the most attention?

Friends Group List:

Friends and neighborhoods contact list emailed to everyone. Work on this list will be conducted by the community outreach committee. The Committee can use the existing lists as a starting point and then update or build on them as needed.

Communications and Updates

Parks Division Report:

Emerald Ash Borer Memo is included in the Parks Division report attachment. EAB has been the sole focus of the Forestry team. Alex M. provided an update about the infested tree removal process and answered questions from the commission. Huge losses to the city canopy. Beth R asks how the community can help? Be proactive on private property. Direct questions to trees@portlandmaine.gov. Be kind to city staff. Diversify tree plantings.

Land Bank Commission Report:

No updates.

Stroudwater Preserve: Camelot farms has a recreation easement.

North Deering Park: Approved by City Council at the March 4th City Council meeting, and has been added to chapter 18

Thomas Park: Approved by City Council at the March 4th City Council meeting, and has been added to chapter 18

Emerald Ash Borer:

topic was covered in the Parks Division Report

Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

Committee assignments

Biodiversity standards for future tree plantings

Stroudwater Preserve

Adjournment