

**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, 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)

**March 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM**

**On the first Thursday of the month at 5:00 pm, the Portland Parks Commission will hold a meeting at Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, 212 Canco Rd., Suite A conference room. 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/8259/media>**

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email [ParksCommission@Portlandmaine.gov](mailto: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
- III. Agenda Items
  - a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: November 6, 2025
  - b. New Business
    - i. Portland Parks Conservancy Strategic Plan
  - c. Communications and Updates
    - i. Committee Updates
      - Annual Report
      - Special Projects
      - Party in the Park
    - ii. Parks Division Report
    - iii. Land Bank Commission Report
  - d. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items
- IV. Adjournment

**City of Portland | Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management**

Ethan Hipple, *Director*

Alex Marshall, *Director of Parks*



**Commission Members:**

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

**City Staff:** Alex Marshall (Parks Director), Amber Brooks

Guest: Jack Phillips (Portland Parks Conservancy)

**Parks Commission November 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

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

<https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7494/media>

I. Call to Order B. Rabbit called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm

II. Citizen Comment Period–none

III. Agenda Items

i. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: September 4, 2025– Motion to accept meeting minutes: J. Clark; seconded by M. Gray, passed: unanimously

ii. New Business

a. Back Cove Festival Contributions– A. Marshall, J. Phillips, and J. Parker provide updates and answer questions from commissioners.

- Park safety improvements
- Traffic Calming and Speed Bumps
- Front Street side Access improvements
- Arboretum Drive parking buffer improvements
- Additional crosswalks and enhancements

b. CIP discussion and vote–

- B. Rabbit-1.Portland Harbor Common Phase II, 2.Community Garden Beds, 3. Riverton Trolley Park trail connections
- J. Parker-1.Portland Harbor Common Phase II, 2.Back Cove trail, 3. Riverton Trolley Park

fencing

- M. Gray- 1. Deering Oaks Pond Wall, 2. Deering Oaks Baseball Lights
- A. Del Vecchio - 1. Western Prom retaining wall, 2. Back Cove trail, 3. East End Playground
- D. Gartland- 1. Community Garden raised beds, 2. Portland Harbor Common phase II, 3. Back Cove stabilization
- J. Clark- 1. Back Cove Stabilization, 2. Valley Street/Western Prom retaining wall, 3. Community Garden raised beds
- S. Michniewicz- 1. Portland Harbor Common phase II, 2. Community Garden beds, 3. Cutter Street
- David Little - Abstained

### iii. Old Business

- a. Officer elections- Motion to keep Beth Rabbitt as chair and Will Elting as co-chair, J. Parker seconded by D. Gartland. Passed 8-0 with 1 abstaining.

### iv. Communications and Updates

- a. Committee updates

### Special projects

Tentative date for the Green Space Gathering set for Thursday, June 18th

- Street Painting
- Friends Group and Neighborhood Association tables

### Outreach

- b.Parks Division Report- A. Marshall provided an overview of the Parks Division report and answered questions from the commission.

- c.Land Bank Commission Report-R. Foster was not present to provide a Land Bank Commission Report.

### v. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

- Shelters and grills at Eastern Prom

### IV. Adjournment



parks,  
recreation  
& facilities

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Ethan Hipple, Director

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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:** January/February 2026

#### **Parks Division Staffing**

- Total Budgeted positions in Parks Division: 50
- Vacancies:

#### **Citywide Unhoused Report**

At this time, there are 25 encampments citywide, which is actually 4 more than this date in February of 2025. Of the 25 active tent sites, 7 of them are located on City property. Overall, in 2026, City Staff (primarily Rangers) have tagged and removed 35 tents citywide. Park Rangers continue to tag and remove between 5 and 20 tents from City land each week and conduct a thorough clean-up afterward with the help of other Parks staff or contractors. There continues to be a steady capacity available at the Homeless Services Center.

#### **Frozen Funk Skating Event**

Community Partners and City Staff organized another successful year of the Frozen Funk Skating Event at Deering Oaks in January, where the largest turnout yet was seen. 500+ people stormed the ice to skate, dance, and sing. There were rental skates, hot cocoa, lights, music, and excellent energy. Thank you to all those who worked to make this event happen again.

#### **Stroudwater Bridge Installation**

The Stroudwater Bridge was installed on Friday, the 30th. The next aspects of the project are to construct the wooden ramps leading up to the bridge, which currently sits 5' above ground level due to the required height of installation over the river and 100 year flood levels.

#### **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 going out to bid for Winter for Spring or Summer 2026 construction.
- 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

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**Alex Marshall, Parks Director**

within the allocated budget, so it will be revised and re-advertised in the coming months.

- Longfellow Elementary School Playground: Playground Equipment has been selected. The project went out to bid in the Spring of 2025, only to receive one bid substantially over the budget for the project. It went out to bid again this Winter and staff again will be reviewing bids shortly for a potential Summer 2026 construction project.
- Reiche Elementary School Playground: The bids went out in the Fall of 2025, and a contractor has been selected to perform the work during the summer break of 2026.
- Portland Harbor Common: Groundbreaking will happen in the Spring of 2026
- Public Restrooms: So far, the city has installed 15 new public restrooms citywide over the past 3 years. Recent modifications were done to the units at The Eastern Promenade, Commercial St/Fish Pier, and Fox Field to include a vault for increased storage capacity. 4 more public restrooms are on the way, with one at Lower Western Promenade, 1 at the Spring and High Street parking lot, and 2 at the Eastern Promenade near the existing bathhouse.
- Tyng-Tate Playground: Final designs are being completed, and the project bid documents are soon to be submitted to the Purchasing Department for review. With the help of a CDBG grant allocation in July of 2025, the project should have enough resources to be completed to the design's satisfaction.
- Community Garden Rebuilds: Casco Bay Community Garden is next on the rebuilding list, which is being planned for the Spring of 2026. This requirement to rebuild the garden by raising each bed and installing a fabric barrier follows the CDC guidelines set forth from soil testing in 2024.
- Riverton Trolley Park Recreation Improvement Project: The bid documents for the Riverton Trolley Park Parking Lot improvements are being finalized and are scheduled to be advertised later in January for an anticipated Spring 2026 construction schedule. Once complete, the final step in completing the LWCF project requirements would be installing the remaining signage that has already been fabricated.
- Fore River Kayak Launch: The Land Bank has allocated funding to install a kayak launch at the head of the Fore River in Stroudwater Park at the corner of Congress and Waldo Streets. Parks Staff are exploring the options for this launch to help formalize and improve an existing use in this space.
- Trinity Park Reconstruction: Trinity Church Representatives and City Staff have been working to finalize the construction documents and design for Trinity Park. The next step is to create bid documents and work through the private contribution acceptance process before we are able to go out to bid on the project.