

City of Portland
Land Bank Commission Agenda

The Land Bank Commission is responsible for identifying and protecting open space resources with the city of Portland. The Commission seeks to preserve a balance between development and conservation of open space important for wildlife, ecological, environmental, scenic or outdoor recreational values.



Commission Members:

Alaina Chormann, Ardath Dixon, Daniel Herzlinger, Jon Kachmar, Joshua Barber, Michael Carey, Michael Scrameyer, Robert Foster, and Simon Thompson.

City Staff: Alex Marshall (Parks Division Director), Doug Roncarati (Public Works-Stormwater Coordinator), Jessica Teesdale (PRF Sr. Executive Assistant)

April 8, 2026

5:00 PM

On the second Wednesday of the month at 5:00 pm, the Portland Land Bank Commission will hold a meeting at Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, 212 Canco Rd., Suite A conference room.

The Land Bank Commission will conduct this meeting in-person. Public comments may only be submitted in person or in writing. To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email landbank@portlandmaine.gov. Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm the day before the Land Bank Commission meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the person'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).

To view this meeting please visit the Livestream link: <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/8250/media>

- I. Call to Order
- II. Citizen Comment Period
 - i. Public Comment Emails 2.11.2026 through 4.7.2026
- III. Agenda Items
 - i. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: February 11, 2026
 - ii. New Business
 - a. Secretary's Report
 - b. Treasurer's Report
 - c. FY2024 Foreclosure List for Review
 - d. Outreach Flyer
 - iii. Old Business
 - iv. Communications and Parcel Updates
 - a. Parks Division Report
 - b. Parcel Updates
 - c. Annual Field Trip

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v. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

IV. Adjournment

Land Bank Public Comment: Follow-Up on Stroudwater Bridge Inquiry

George Rheault <george.rheault@gmail.com>
Reply-To: george.rheault@gmail.com
To: landbank@portlandmaine.gov

Tue, Apr 7, 2026 at 11:58 AM

After I sent my initial emailed public comment earlier today, I received feedback that suggested some in city leadership are wholly unfamiliar with this project's details.

I wanted to make sure that the Land Bank Commission, at the very least, is seeing what the public has available to it.

For YEARS, the Parks/Recreation/Facilities Department has hosted a fundraising page for this project:
<https://engage.zencity.io/portland/en-US/projects/stroudwater-bridge-fundraising-project>

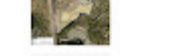
For convenience, I have attached some of the materials from that fundraising page to help highlight why I have budget questions and to help orient those unfamiliar with the landscape here (literally).

It appears that fundraising is SHORT of the established goals (and those goals have been a moving target for years - I believe the initial fundraising goal circa 2022 was around \$125,000). It is also very misleading because A LOT of the fundraising was accomplished with public funds though that is not particularly clear.

The Portland Press Herald also recently ran a story about the bridge project (see attached). The author did not bother to do a deep dive on the actual contributions made by various parties but was competent enough to note how many stakeholders were involved and gave out a total project cost of \$700,000 which is a very DIFFERENT figure than the fund-raising page amount.

The PPH did make it clear that much more trailwork needed to be done here AND that this work would extend into 2027 at THE EARLIEST.

2 attachments



Stroudwater Bridge Fund-Raising Page - 04-07-2026 Screenshot.jpeg

• 723K



pressherald.com - New Stroudwater Trail Crossing.pdf

601K

4 attachments



IMG_4171.jpeg
3091K



IMG_4170.jpeg
4709K



IMG_4165.jpeg
4577K



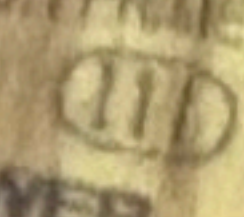
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SP1B No. 1 FINE
KD19 HT 
BREWER
LUMBER

Land Bank Public Comment: Questions about Stroudwater Bridge Project

George Rheault <george.rheault@gmail.com>

Tue, Apr 7, 2026 at 10:19 AM

Reply-To: george.rheault@gmail.com

To: landbank@portlandmaine.gov

Cc: Danielle West-Chuhta <dwest@portlandmaine.gov>, "Hipple, Ethan" <EHIPPLE@portlandmaine.gov>, Mark Dion <mdion@portlandmaine.gov>, Pious Ali <pali@portlandmaine.gov>, April Fournier <afournier@portlandmaine.gov>, bgrant@portlandmaine.gov, Kate Sykes <ksykes@portlandmaine.gov>, Anna Bullett <abullett@portlandmaine.gov>, Regina Phillips <rphillips@portlandmaine.gov>, Wesley Pelletier <wpelletier@portlandmaine.gov>, smichniewicz@portlandmaine.gov, Michael Goldman <mig@portlandmaine.gov>

While it is appreciated that the promise of a stream crossing behind the "Camelot Farms" subdivision has finally been achieved after more than a decade of anticipation, there are some outstanding issues which should be explained and sorted out for the citizens of Portland.

A big pitch for this project was that it would connect and allow for more functionality to various Portland Land Bank parcels across parts of Western Portland, even if the private Portland Trails organization has primary authority as holder of the bridge easements and overseer of the stream crossing. So that is why I believe the Land Bank Commission is the proper place to make an inquiry in hopes its members will see it as their duty to educate and inform the Portland community.

BUDGET

What is or will be the final budget for this entire project? Will there be a final accounting of "budget vs. actual construction" costs including soft costs and breakdowns of funding sources including private and public revenue streams? How much of a tax write-off did the donor of the metal bridge receive for their philanthropy? The shape-shifting presence of Portland Trails is often used to obscure the true public subsidies behind these kinds of projects - Portland Trails gets a huge PR boost but while they may be bringing necessary capacity to a project like this, it is NOT sufficient without major public inputs (including the opportunity cost of those inputs not being deployed elsewhere). Also, did the developer of the subdivision provide ANY actual cash contributions to this effort which principally benefits their development before anyone else in Portland.

TREE LOSSES

As is clear in some of the attached photos, this project necessitated quite a few tree removals. Exactly how many trees in all were cut down? For the mature trees, was any effort made to catalogue their size (DBH) and species? And the ramps to the bridge of course required a great deal of lumber (probably not sourced in Maine). The old cliché that "you have to break some eggs to make an omelet" applies here but the Land Bank and its partners should be clear-eyed that even so-called "conservation" projects create permanent disturbances just like housing creation or commercial construction projects. Presumably the wood ramps will also have to be replaced in some timeframe. Does Portland Trails have a sense of the life-cycle so that the City of Portland can budget for a replacement plan in a decade or so in order to keep this amenity available to the public?

ACTUAL TRAIL USE & FUNCTIONALITY

Anyone trying to access the bridge on the subdivision side of it will immediately notice that the "meadow" that one traverses is a very wet spongy landscape (see photos), especially in the springtime. In fact, in order to install the bridge, a huge temporary timber road was laid down to allow heavy equipment access without getting stuck in the muck. This required a big investment and was probably a big line item in the budget. (See here for an example of this kind of crane mat process: <https://vikingmat.com/services-provided/>).

The big question is whether any part of the timber road will remain in place permanently. It is hard to see how trail users, particularly mountain bikers, will make use of the bridge without an additional "bridge to the bridge" pathway. Either timber cribbing OR a built-up gravel path with proper drainage will be needed in order to encourage regular use in all seasons and conditions and in order to avoid permanent damage (erosion/rutting/washouts) to whatever path is to exist if the timber road is removed post-construction. A trail that "looks nice" but is mostly off-limits to those who don't want to get messy just to get to it is not really a big win especially after a half million dollars or more of public investment.

Hopefully the Land Bank Commission will thoughtfully engage with these topics and get adequate and satisfactory answers so that the citizens of Portland can understand what we are getting and how we got here after a very VERY long LONG wait...

Thank you.

Two popular trail networks in Portland will soon be connected

pressherald.com/2026/03/20/two-popular-trail-networks-in-portland-will-soon-be-connected

March 20, 2026



Jon Kachmar, executive director of Portland Trails, walks across the new bridge that will link the Fore River Sanctuary and the Stroudwater River Trail. (Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Staff Photographer)

PORTLAND — A new bridge over the Stroudwater River is a critical milestone in a plan to connect the Fore River Sanctuary and the Stroudwater River Trail.

The bridge waited on the ground next to the river for years while the nonprofit Portland Trails completed fundraising and permitting for the project. Now, it stretches across the water with accessible ramps on each bank.

It won't officially open until later this spring — signs warn "Please Use Bridge At Your Own Risk" — but it is traversable.

"It's a major link," said Jon Kachmar, executive director of Portland Trails. "It will really connect the city in a way that it's never been connected before."

On one end of the bridge, stakes with pink ties marked where an accessible gravel path will extend down the hill from a nearby development. The nonprofit still needs to build the rest of the connector on both sides of the river. Work won't be done until 2027 or later.

This bridge is a step forward, however. Kachmar said the nonprofit wants to eventually build or upgrade a dozen similar connectors between existing trails in the region. Those new paths would be at least 8 feet wide and accessible to many more users.

"We're not about creating trails just to meander," Kachmar said. "We do have some of those. Everybody loves a nature trail. We can slow down and relax. But we also use trails for transportation and for getting from A to B. That's where these connector trails evolved."



The new bridge that will connect the Fore River Sanctuary and the Stroudwater River Trail. (Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Staff Photographer). [Purchase this image](#)

The [Stroudwater River Trail](#) is 3.3 miles through the woods from the Stroudwater Village area in Portland to Smiling Hill Farm in Westbrook. The [Fore River Sanctuary](#) is an 85-acre preserve with 5.6 miles of trails and home to Jewell Falls.

The connection between the two has been in the works for years. In 2018, Ethan Hipple got a call from a local developer, who wanted to know if the city would be interested in the donation of a 90-foot pedestrian bridge he no longer wanted on his property.

“We quickly said yes,” said Hipple, Portland’s director of parks, recreation and facilities.

Hipple made a plan with Portland Trails, and the city bought the bridge for \$1. He said they’ve been “hand and hand” with the nonprofit through the entire process.

“Trails are great,” Hipple said. “But trails that are connected to other trails are even better.”

Kachmar said the rest of the work to install the bridge cost \$700,000. The money came from the state, the city, Portland Trails and individual and business donors, he said. The nonprofit is still working on estimates for the rest of the project and is hoping to do a capital campaign to pay for more connectors.

On Friday, Kachmar surveyed the bridge. On one side of the river is a weathered bench, where a passerby could sit and observe the surrounding nature.

“Part of the inspiration was people sitting here and saying, ‘I wish I could get across,’” he said.

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Stroudwater Bridge Fundraising Project



Residents of the Stroudwater Neighborhood of Portland, along with visitors from the surrounding areas, have long enjoyed easy access to great, multi-use recreational trails, including the network of trails in the Fore River Sanctuary, and the Stroudwater River Trail. Now, the City of Portland, Portland Trails, the developer of the Stroudwater Preserve and the Unum Corporation, are working together on an exciting new opportunity to link all of these trails into one huge network by installing a bridge across the Stroudwater River.

The proposed bridge would link the existing Stroudwater River Trail, as it winds its way along the south side of this scenic river corridor through the Unum campus, to a new 22-acre open space parcel within the Stroudwater development project on the north side of the river. From there, a new trail system would link to the current trail-head on Westbrook Street and tie into the extensive network of trails in the 200-acre Fore River Sanctuary, through parcels owned by both the City and Portland Trails.

The goal is to install the bridge as soon as we can, hopefully in 2023 or 2024, once permits are obtained and the necessary funds are raised. Please help make this project a reality by making a tax-deductible contribution through this website. We thank you in advance!



Facilitating Donations for Stroudwater Bridge

\$209,503 Total Raised

\$363,000 Goal

26 Donors 0 Fundraisers

Make a Donation

DONATE

SUBMIT



Stay Informed

Get notified on upcoming engagements and the latest project related news.

Sign up for notifications



Commission Members:

Alaina Chormann, Ardath Dixon, Daniel Herzlinger, Jon Kachmar, Joshua Barber, Michael Carey, Michael Scrameyer, Robert Foster, and Simon Thompson.

City Staff: Ethan Hipple (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Director), Doug Roncarati (Public Works Stormwater Coordinator), Jessica Teesdale (PRF Sr. Executive Assistant)

Land Bank Commission Minutes
February 11, 2026
5:00 PM
Parks, Recreation, and Facilities
212 Canco Rd. Suite A
Portland, Maine 04103

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

I. Call to Order- J. Kachmar called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

II. Citizen Comment Period-No public comment

III. Agenda Items

i. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes January 14, 2026- Motion to accept the minutes made by S. Thompson and seconded by M. Scrameyer. Passed unanimously 6-0, with 3 arriving after the vote took place

ii. New Business

a. Secretary's Report

Annual Report: Motion to approve the 2025 Annual Report made by R. Foster and seconded by M. Scrameyer. Passed unanimously 9-0

b. Treasurer's Report

Annual Budget: Motion to accept the budget as drafted, subject to \$10,000 Davis Pines due diligence expenditure and \$50,000 placeholder for FY23 expenditure

c. North Deering Park Endowment- E. Hipple provided a verbal update regarding potential funding through the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) grant program. The update focused on a specific opportunity to support North Deering Park through a newly available funding source.

Key Details:

- Purpose: To establish a required stewardship endowment for the park.
- Funding Requirement: A \$12,500 contribution is needed to seed the endowment.
- Match Requirement: The grant operates on a one-to-one match basis.
- Restriction: Funds must be used exclusively for the endowment to ensure long-term maintenance and protection of the property.

A motion was made by S. Thompson and seconded by R. Foster to authorize the use of Land Bank funds as the source to seed the \$12,500 contribution toward the North Deering Park endowment. Passed unanimously 9-0

d. Identify Parcels for Capital Improvements-The commission discusses ways to collect feedback from the public to help identify Land Bank parcels in need of improvement.

Outreach recommendations:

- Portland Trails land stewards program
- Parks Department See Click Fix data
- Outreach to neighborhood associations
- Park Ranger input
- Parks Commission and Green Space Gathering

Suggestions of what can be done:

- Trails
- Kiosks
- Picnic tables
- Signs
- Conservation/habitat restoration
 - D. Roncarati identified Presumpscot River Preserve erosion as a potential area for ecological restoration. Planting dogwood and diverting foot traffic at the site were a couple of ideas.

Reilly Parcels-J. Kachmar provided a comprehensive background on the Reilly parcels, which have been identified as high-priority for the Land Bank. The discussion covered the necessary considerations and estimated costs associated with the due diligence required for a potential acquisition.

Status: The seller has officially responded to the Land Bank's Letter of Interest. Acquisition will be

based on fair market value as determined by a professional appraisal. Initial costs for a professional survey and appraisal are estimated at \$2,000. A formal letter will be sent to the owner outlining the Land Bank's process and the specifics of the due diligence phase. The Planning Department will conduct a review alongside the survey to determine the land's developability. It was noted that any final acquisition must receive formal approval from the City Council.

Motion made by M. Carey and seconded by A. Dixon to pursue acquisition of the Reilly parcels up to \$2000 toward initial due diligence. Passed unanimously 9-0

iii. Communications and Parcel Updates

a. Parks Division Report: E. Hipple provides an update on the Stroudwater Bridge project to connect Unum trails with Fore River Preserve trails.

b. Parks Commission Report- R. Foster provides an update on Party in the Park plans. Location Payson Park, Date June 16th.

iv. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

- Communication with the Sustainability committee
- Davis Pines letter of intent
- Promotion brochure for Land Bank
- Hope Ave
- Add parcel updates as an item under the communications & parcels item
- Field Trip planning

IV. Adjournment: 6.25 pm

Let's Turn Unused Land Into Community Value

The Portland Land Bank Commission works with developers, real estate professionals, and property owners to find smart uses for parcels that aren't ready for traditional development.

- OPEN SPACE
- SMART GROWTH
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
- CONSERVATION

✦ Got a parcel sitting idle — too constrained, too wet, or too irregular to develop? We want to hear from you.

HOW WE CAN HELP

We're a Resource, Not a Roadblock

The Land Bank Commission works alongside developers, nonprofits, and city boards — not in opposition to them. We help identify parcels where conservation makes more sense than development, and make that transition smooth for everyone involved.

Developer with a constrained remnant lot? Agent navigating a tricky transaction? Property owner with land that hasn't found its purpose? Let's talk.

THE BUSINESS CASE

Open Space Drives Real Estate Value

Proximity to parks, trails, and waterfronts is one of the most consistent value drivers in real estate. Green, livable communities attract tenants, support higher rents, and strengthen neighborhood appeal.

Identifying land that belongs in conservation creates cleaner paths for development everywhere else — fewer planning surprises, better project outcomes.

WHY PARTNER WITH US

We Help Projects Move Forward

Wetlands, irregular remnants, and constrained lots can hold up timelines or complicate permitting — or become protected open space that adds value to surrounding projects.

01

SMOOTHER PERMITTING

Clear conservation priorities mean fewer planning surprises and shorter timelines.

02

STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS

Open spaces improve health, recreation, and quality of life — things the market increasingly demands.

OUR MANDATE

About the Land Bank Commission

The Commission identifies and protects open space within Portland — preserving the balance between development and conservation for wildlife, ecology, recreation, and scenic value. Our responsibilities include:

- Acquisition and conservation of open space within the city
- Advising the City Council on priority acquisitions
- Pursuit of gifts and funds from private and public sources
- Proactive protection through easement or deed restriction
- Ongoing citywide open space inventory
- Collaborative review of development projects and parcels

Let's Keep Portland Special — Together

We're ready to collaborate on your next project or any parcels you have questions about.

✉ landbank@portlandmaine.gov

🌐 portlandmaine.gov/715/Land-Bank-Commission

📍 City of Portland, Maine



parks,
recreation
& facilities

CITY OF PORTLAND
Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
Ethan Hipple, Director

CITY OF PORTLAND
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: April 2026

Parks Division Staffing

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

Citywide Unhoused Report

At this time, there are 21 encampments citywide, which is roughly the same number as this date in 2025. Of the 21 active tent sites, 2 of them are located on City property. Overall, in 2026, City Staff (primarily Rangers) have tagged and removed 104 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.

Seasonal Positions Advertised

The Parks Division is actively seeking applicants to join the team in a variety of capacities. Whether folks are interested in the maintenance of the City's Cemeteries, Ballfields, Parks, or Playgrounds we have a role for you. There are also Summer employment options to help water trees, work with our forestry team, plant and maintain flower beds, or work with our Park Ranger Team. There are a number of great ways to be out in nature and give back to this city we all love.

The Great Portland Pick-up

The Portland Parks Conservancy and the City of Portland are teaming up to host the second annual Great Portland Pickup Event on Saturday, April 25 from 10am - 12pm. Gather your neighbors and come out for a morning of outdoor cleaning. The Winter tends to bury a great deal of debris which collects for months and is exposed on the streets, in peoples yards and in our beloved Parks. This event is a way to bring people together to give back to their city. Please visit the website below for more details on how to participate as they are released.

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1600/The-Great-Portland-Pickup>

Forestry Spring Planting & Co-Op Program

The Forestry Team has been planning the Spring planting regime for the last few months so the team can be ready to get trees in the ground come mid-late April. They continue to focus on low tree equity score neighborhoods with viable planting locations and work out from there. Citywide plantings this spring will be focused more on park open spaces with upwards of 50 co-op plantings included. This Fall, there will



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Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
Ethan Hipple, Director

CITY OF PORTLAND

Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
Alex Marshall, Parks Director

be a large push for the Right-of-way (ROW) plantings citywide. The co-op program is a way for homeowners to see a tree planted sooner than later within their adjacent ROW or in close proximity to the ROW on their own property if they purchase the tree. The Forestry team will then pick up the tree and plant it in a mutually agreed upon and Dig Safed location. The application for this can be found at the link below:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1319/Co-op-Tree-Planting-Program>

East End Beach Seasonal Rack Rental

April 1, 2026, marked the opening for registration to secure a kayak or dinghy rack down at the East End Beach. There is a current inventory of 129 kayak and dinghy rack spots available to residents and non-residents to rent for the boating season. This is one of the few revenue sources Parks has each year that also provides a great convenience for folks to gain access to the water for personal or business use. There is annually a wait list for this amenity, so get your application in.

Community Garden Raised Beds

Community Garden raised bed construction will continue this Spring as the City partners with Cultivating Community. Raised beds are being installed at 7 out of 11 community gardens in response to contaminated soils found during soil testing. Casco Bay Garden is the next on the list. Leveling and preparation work will be happening later in April followed by the placement of landscape fabric, building the new raised beds and adding woodchips in the walking paths. All work is anticipated to be completed in late May or early June.

Park Projects and Department Updates

Staff are working on the following Park Improvement projects:

- Stroudwater Bridge: The Stroudwater Bridge has been completed. Final site work disturbance restorations will occur when the weather improves.
- 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, has been bid and is currently under review for potential construction in the Summer 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 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



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Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department

Ethan Hipple, Director

CITY OF PORTLAND

Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department

Alex Marshall, Parks Director

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.
- Riverton Trolley Park Recreation Improvement Project: The bid documents for the Riverton Trolley Park Parking Lot improvements are being finalized 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.