



Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, Vice Chair Michael Mertaugh, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Nathan Robbins, Zack Anchors, Shaylyn MacKinnon, Maya Lena, Jaime Parker and Mayor Kate Snyder.

City of Portland
Parks Commission Agenda

March 4, 2021

5:00 PM

On Thursday, March 4th 2021, at 5:00 pm, the Portland Parks Commission will conduct a virtual meeting using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online.

Please use the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/91710859101?pwd=MUVLWTVFRG5jUFNxSHIEcTFISk8wZz09> Passcode:

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Or Telephone:

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099

Webinar ID: 917 1085 9101

Passcode: 480730

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.

- I. General Citizen Comment Period
- II. Agenda Items
 - a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: February 4th, 2021
 - b. Guest Visitors
 - i. Portland Youth Corps
 - ii. Friends of Lincoln Park
 - c. Old Business
 - i. Commissioner Terms- Subcommittee Assignments -June 2021 Elections
 - ii. CIP Updates
 - iii. Review Strategic Planning Meeting
 - iv. Green Space Gathering Update
 - d. New Business
 - i. Brown Tail Moth in Deering Oaks

City of Portland Commissions are not required to take public comment under FOAA and our Ordinance is silent regarding the duties of the Commission. The Commission has the discretion to not allow or allow public comment during its meetings, including the authority to limit the duration of comments. Since the Commission makes recommendations to the City Council, public comment is available at that level.

- e. Communications/Updates
 - i. Riverton Trolley Park Update
 - ii. Baxter Woods Update
 - iii. Land Bank Commission Report
 - iv. Parks Report



In attendance: Commission Members: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, V. Chair Michael Mertaugh, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Nathan Robbins, Maya Lena, Shaylyn MacKinnon and Jamie Parker. City Staff: Ethan Hipple and Alex Marshall and Samara Ray.

City of Portland

Parks Commission Minutes

February 4th 2021, 5:00 PM

On Feb 4th 2021 the Portland Parks Commission conducted a virtual meeting using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online. This meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

No public comment.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: January 7th, 2021 5:00 PM

Michael moved to accept the meeting minutes of January. Marie seconded.
Motion passed unanimously.

b. Welcome New Commissioners

Cynthia welcomed two new Commissioners Maya Lena and Shaylyn MacKinnon. They both shared a bit about themselves and Cynthia invited the other Commissioners to share a bit about themselves as well.

c. Old Business

i. CIP Update

The Parks Recreation and Facilities Department submitted requests in January 2021, if the Finance Committee approves the City can proceed with planning and bringing aboard engineers and architects. Ethan hopes projects will be approved in March. The Department will be submitting an operating budget to the Finance Committee in April.

ii. Strategic Planning Meeting Discussion (Feb 18th)

The focus is on creating a general Memorandum of Understanding for Friends Groups. This meeting will focus on Mission, Representation and Accountability for Friends Groups. The plan is to hold the virtual meeting on Thursday Feb 18th from 4 PM to 6:30 PM.

iii. Green Space Meeting Discussion

Ana Lagunez shared with the Commission that the focus for this meeting will be, "Building and Sustaining an Effective Friends Organization". The meeting date and time is May 6th from 5:30-7:30pm. Ana has been communicating with Anne

Pringle, Frank Riley and Nan Cummings and is waiting to hear back from others that may want to contribute to this meeting. The first half hour of the meeting will be a dedicated business meeting for the Parks Commission and then go into the Green Space Meeting at 5:30pm.

d. New Business

i. Portland Youth Corps

Ethan reported this is a project that the Parks Division has been working on for years and recently received funding for it through the Portland Parks Conservancy. The program is a youth career development and service program that will take place in Portland's Parks. The goal is to engage older middle school and younger high school age kids to take part in a summer volunteer program with a stipend awarded to them at the end of their service. The session will be 4 weeks long and there will be two sessions going back to back, 12 kids in each session with a total of 24 kids total. These children will gain hands-on experiences in the Parks Department with the hope of some of them returning to work in this field. The Parks Division has partnered with the Parks Conservancy in getting the program running. The Parks Conservancy has fundraised to staff the program with an Americorps member Megahn Loury who is the Team Leader for the program. This funding also helps purchase tools and other materials to get the program running. The Maine Audubon is also part of this partnership by setting up training and environmental education at the beginning of the program.

e. Communications/Updates

Cynthia shared with the group that some Commissioners do not have a bio listed on the Parks Commission website. She encouraged Commissioners to send this bio to Parks Admin, Samara before the March Parks Commission meeting.

i. Subcommittee Reports

Initiatives Committee: Amy Segal gave an overview about what this committee has been working on. They have been exploring installing interpretive signage at a few parks locations such as Deering Oaks, the Eastern Promenade and near Stevens Ave Tavern and developing a narrative for these locations by checking in with local historians to get a more honest story of our parks. Amy will be writing up more detail about this and is looking for feedback on these ideas. Maya, Jaime and Shaylyn have expressed interest in this committee.

Annual Report Committee: Nathan noted that we need to add the most recent Annual Report to the Parks Commission webpage. Ana and Dory have been members of this Committee in the past. The Annual Report was envisioned to come out in May but it has been coming out in October. Nathan will be sending the Commission documents on the Annual Report that he would like the Commissioners opinions on.

Green Space Gathering: Ana previously reported that the Green Space Gathering will be held virtually on May 6th.

Finance: Michael said there would be a meeting on 2/5/2021 to focus on the discussion for the Strategic Planning Meeting on 2/18/2021. Michael has mentioned that this committee has been looking into other parks friends groups across the country have been doing in terms of MOU's. He thinks we may have an opportunity to be pioneers in developing a uniform MOU that would align parks Friends Groups with

Parks Management in Portland.

ii. Land Bank Commission Report

Jon Kachmar reported that the Land Bank has filled all of its vacant seats. Andrew Zarro City Councilor and Baxter Miatke were recently appointed. The Rand Road property has not closed, the City has been doing an environmental review but it has to close by the end of Feb 2021. The Land Bank is waiting on the appraisal for the Riverton Trolley Park 1 acre parcel, and should be getting it any day. There is an effort by the City and the Trust for Public Land to discuss the property at 1831 Washington Ave, between Auburn and Washington it is 9-10 acres. Lastly Jon mentioned that Jeff Tarling and him were discussing the City owned 30 acres Riverside Preserve Property that abuts Falmouth Spur as a potential transfer into the Land Bank.

iii. Parks Report

Alex reported that he has two Athletic Maintenance worker position openings. The lack of snow in January has allowed for crews to work on invasive clearing on the Eastern Prom Hillside and Fish Point. Crews have removed the Boyd Street fence that runs between Franklin and the Boyd Street gardens. Alex shared he is working on a Recreation Improvement Plan for Riverton Trolley Park. The goal for this project is to do some public outreach and activate it again. Alex shared his team is focusing on administrative and planning work for a few projects right now for example Fitzpatrick drainage and Talbot School Basketball Court reconstruction. Ethan shared that Instagram, Facebook and our Departmental Newsletter are great ways for Commissioners and the public to keep up with Parks news and updates.

Amy made a motion to adjourn. Michael seconded. Meeting adjourned.



In attendance: Chair Cynthia Loebenstein, Vice Chair Michael Mertaugh, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Dory Waxman, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Nathan Robbins, Zack Anchors, Shaylyn MacKinnon, Maya Lena and Jaime Parker. City Staff: Ethan Hipple, Alex Marshall and Samara Ray

City of Portland
Parks Commission Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2021
5:00 PM

On Feb 18th 2021 the Portland Parks Commission conducted a virtual meeting using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online. This meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom.

I. 5:00pm 5:15pm Welcome Game Two Truths and a Lie

A virtual hug and farewell was given to Dory Waxman. This is her last meeting because her term as a Commissioner has ended. A few members of the commission shared a bit about themselves in the game called Two Truths and a Lie.

II. 5:15pm 5:25pm General Discussion and Background Information on MOU

Cynthia shared that Portland has quite a range of friends groups. She said the discussion tonight will be whether there should be a general Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for friends groups. The findings of this meeting will go to the finance sub-committee and they will add it to the Friends Handbook. Ethan shared that Portland has an array of people that are passionate about parks. He said the Parks Department needs Friends Groups. He works with them daily and they bring many resources to the parks. He gave a handful of examples such as the Friends of Lincoln Park helping to restore the Parisian fountain and the Friends of Deering Oaks investing tens of thousands of dollars in playground equipment and the commissioning of the Great Black Hawk statue. He noted the list of groups is quite extensive. Friends groups add immeasurable programming and value to Portland Parks. Many of these efforts are guided by MOU's. He estimates there are 15 dedicated Friends Groups in addition to many neighborhood associations. Cynthia shared that tonight's discussion will be limited to dedicated friends groups. Presently there are only a few MOU's and there is not a blanket MOU for all friends groups.

III. Group Discussion on MOU:

a. 5:25pm 5:40pm Mission

· Does the Friends Group (FG) have a mission that protects and improves a Park?

Michael stated that it would be good for friends groups to formalize some best practices. Ethan stated that to him, a friends group should represent a broad group of users and to make sure the mission of the group is not the mission of a special interest group. Cynthia said if there was an MOU then the mission would be inclusive of all users and it would protect and improve the park. Part of the reason for this discussion now is to professionalize and define friends groups so they

represent all users of a park.

• **What should the PC do if the FG mission is not compatible?**

Cynthia clarified that if we decided to enter into a MOU with a friends group then we would expect that they have a mission that is inclusive of all users and that its mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the park. The idea is that the Parks Commission would encourage friends groups to represent all users of a park. A general MOU would professionalize the relationships between friends groups and the City.

• **Does the FG have a Master Plan?**

Michael thought we should encourage Friends Groups to develop and focus on their Master Plans and to follow the sequence to create a Work Plan. Jaime mentioned that encouraging a Master Plan (or organizations plan) is great but groups should not be penalized if the group has not developed an official plan yet. Amy shared that Ann Pringle wanted to address the fact that one size does not fit all in terms of Friends Groups and this should be taken into consideration. Marie asked for clarification on when is a Master Plan to be developed. Ethan clarified that the City can initiate a Master Plan but that they are often initiated in conjunction with a friends group.

• **Should the FG be asked to develop Work Plans that are to be agreed upon with the Department of Parks Rec & facilities?**

Could there be a way to develop Work Plans for friends groups, agreed upon by the Parks Department, that reflect the priorities of the Master Plan? Cynthia said a Master Plan can be useful in getting a big picture for a Friends Group and then from there a Work Plan can be developed. Work plans should be developed in conjunction with the Parks Department.

b. **5:40pm 5:55pm Representativeness**

• **What constitutes a FG?**

Is a friend group committed to the broad interest of the park or does it have a special interest? What is the interest for the friends group? What could be offered to them? Are there any incentives? What's in it for the City and the friends group? Could there be a subset of friends groups that is a model for others to aspire to?

• **Do FG need to be a nonprofit?**

If a group is not a non-profit, Amy sees that it could be an advantage for them to have an MOU with the City, since the City could help them potentially connect with another group as a fiscal agent to raise money. Jaime mentioned that in some cases the Parks Commission acts on behalf of smaller parks that either don't have a friends group or is just beginning.

• **Which FG's need an MOU?**

There are cases where it is hard to find consensus within a friends group on a specific issue. The Parks Commission needs to work to find out what the friends group is representing and if it aligns with the will of all its constituents. If we have general policies, it could make it easier to reduce controversies over what interest the friends group has.

• **Why would a Friends group want an MOU?**

A MOU would allow for better communication with the Parks Department. It would help identify roles and responsibilities of the friends group and Parks Department. Jaime says if the City and the friends group are willing to sign an MOU, then they are stating they will work together and improve communication. Nathan would like the Parks Commission to consider a shared resource model, but agrees there are benefits of an MOU in terms of increased communication.

c. 5:55pm 6:10pm Accountability

- **Should FG's be asked to provide financial reports to the Department of Parks Rec & Facilities? How often?**

Michael stated that some Friends Groups may be raising funds to improve the parks but end up using the money for overhead instead. Would a MOU provide accountability for the use of these funds? The National Park Service requires financial reporting and auditing for friends groups within the National Park System. There are not many examples of this requirement for smaller municipalities. Do we feel it would be helpful for Portland or counterproductive? From a donor perspective, it could be helpful to have financial transparency in how friends groups are using funds.

- **If FG is fundraising, how much can be used for FG overhead vs direct park improvement?**

Cynthia asked if financial reporting could be set for friends groups who have large annual budgets.

- **Should there be any limitations on solicitations for fundraising?**

Fundraising money for Capital Improvement Projects already goes through the Parks Department.

- **Is financial reporting necessary if the FG is not raising money?**

Commissioners mentioned they do not want to overburden smaller friends groups with this type of reporting. Ethan shared he has those same concerns, as it is a time-consuming process. It could take away from other Park projects

IV. 6:10pm 6:30pm Conclusion and Next Steps

When there is a significant project involving a large amount of fundraising, a formal MOU makes sense, but does it make sense to have a general MOU? What is the criteria? A cookie cutter MOU would be easy, but it seems like a tiered approach is preferable since customization is desired. Is there another way to get the same result? Amy shared that Anne Pringle brought up the idea of a Partnership Agreement. A Partnership Agreement could have a tiered approach and it could be diagrammed in the Friends Handbook. With a Partnership Agreement there would be no enforcement or barriers, but it would communicate mutual intentions. The next step would be for the Finance Committee to take these ideas and add it to the Friends Handbook.

V. 6:30pm Adjourn

Michael made a motion to adjourn. Nathan seconded. Passed unanimously, meeting adjourned.



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Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department
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: March 2021

Parks Division Staffing

Openings for the following positions:

- Parks Maintenance Supervisor
- 2 Athletic Facilities Maintenance Worker III's

Browntail Moth

Browntail Moth Caterpillars have presented a challenging situation within Deering Oaks. 313 of 316 trees surveyed have winter nests in the canopy with some having as many as 1,000+ nests. There is a major concern for the health of the Heritage White Oak trees that reside within the park as the tiny caterpillars feast on all the leaves as soon as they pop in May. Multiple years of this defoliation will cause branch dieback and will eventually kill the tree. Human health is also a concern with this quantity of nests as the hairs the caterpillars shed from May through June will cause a dermatitis like reaction of varying severities on many individuals. We will be closing the park for 2-3 days in May as we treat the infestation and then will be limiting activity within the park for the following 6 weeks when caterpillar hair exposure is at its peak. The city is working with leadership of the Farmers Market to move them to Payson Park for the 6 week window that Deering Oaks is a concern.

Congress Square Park

The Planning and Urban Development Department submitted a request for \$50,000 and the Public Works Department submitted for \$1,200,000 in this year's CIP to the Congress Square Park Redesign project rolling. DOT will provide matching funds for a portion of this project along with the Friends of Congress Square Park who have been raising private money for this project.

Western Promenade Revegetation and Vista Clearing

Western Prom has seen some major changes over the past few months. With the invasive removal work mostly complete, we are now in the process of devising the revegetation plan for the Spring. Soon there will be a forest mulcher on site to clean up the stumps and debris leftover by the Forest Management Company who removed all the Norway Maples. Following that there will be additional cleanup and contouring of some prominent slope benches to achieve satisfactory grade for trails and plantings. Revegetation will consist of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. All improvements will be in conjunction with initial vista clearing and lower Western Prom edge improvements.

Baxter Woods Leash Laws

On October 6, 2020 the City Council approved new leash rules for Baxter Woods which took effect on November 6, 2020. Since that time new rules and Habitat restoration signs have been installed. Starting on March 1, 2021, our Park Rangers will be spending multiple days each week inside the park to educate



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folks on the new rules. Starting April 1, 2021 they will begin enforcement of the ordinance as on that date all dogs are to be leashed at all times.

- Dogs must be on 8ft leash at all times between April 1st and July 31st -
- Dogs must be on 8ft leash from August 1st to March 31st between the hours of 9am and 3pm
- Dogs must be on 8ft leash at all times throughout the year while on the Northern Carriage Path and all areas north inside the Habitat Restoration Area.

Portable Toilet Enclosure

Staff are following through with designs for a portable toilet enclosure trial at a location yet to be determined. With the need for portable toilets always there, it presents an opportunity for a safe and aesthetically appealing design to enclose them and turn them into a structure that appears to be a permanent fixture. The design will include an entrance space before stepping into a typical portable unit. Other features will include lower side louvers for visibility, a roof, rear access door and potential decorative features to give it visual appeal. The City will also be piloting a pit toilet design at two locations TBD--typically off-peninsula in less dense settings.

Park Projects and Department Updates

Staff are working on the following Park Improvement projects:

- Dougherty Field Playground: The equipment supplier and design has been selected and we are working with them to finalize the equipment. The next step is to create a bid document for the site work and installation.
- Park Walkway improvements: Deering Oaks bid documents are being finalized
- Futsal Court at Fox Field: Construction has begun and final work to be completed in the Spring of 2021
- Fitzpatrick Drainage Improvements: Drawings are complete. We will advertise an RFP this Spring for a Summer construction
- Talbot School Basketball Court Reconstruction: The RFP is being developed in hopes of advertisement in the next month or two for a summer 2021 construction timeline. This project will be combined with a drainage swale project at the Softball Field within the Talbot School complex
- Lyseth Playground: Feedback has been received from Playground Techs, Lyseth Teachers, Parks and Recreation Rec staff, Lyman Moore Breathe Program and Lyseth Special Ed program. Neighborhood group and PTA outreach is the next step.
- Skate Park Expansion Phase II: Preliminary RFP for design development is being finalized and will be advertised shortly.
- Stroudwater Bridge: City Parks and Planning staff are working with Portland Trails and the Stroudwater Preserve Development Team to develop the plan for installation of the bridge that sits on the side of Westbrook Street before the I-95 bridge.
- Preble Street Field & Stormwater Project: Final design and landscaping plans are being finalized. 2022 is looking to be the summer where we get the elevated natural turf field back.



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- 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.