Commission Members:
Chair Michael Mertaugh, Vice Chair Jaime Parker, Amy Segal, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Zack Anchors, Maya Lena, Beth Rabbitt, Stephen Bentsen, Michael Catania and Mayor Kate Snyder.

City of Portland
Parks Commission Agenda
December 2, 2021
5:00 PM

Due to the existence of an emergency or urgent issue, the Parks Commission will conduct this meeting by remote methods/technology at the Zoom link provided below, in accordance with the requirements of 1 M.R.S. section 403-B and the Parks Commission's Remote Participation Policy.

Please use the link below to join the webinar:
https://zoom.us/j/91710859101?pwd=MUVLWTVFRG5jUFNxSHlEcTFlSk8wZz09
Passcode: P3pperm1nt
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: November 4th, 2021 **Action Item**
   b. New Business
      i. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples History- Presentation
   c. Old Business
      i. Update on Public Access to Committee Activity
   d. Communications/Updates
      i. New Parks Commissionors
      ii. Parks Report
      iii. Land Bank Commission Report

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.

III. Adjournment

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Commission Members:

Chair Michael Mertaugh, Vice Chair Jaime Parker, Amy Segal, Jon Kachmar, Marie Gray, Zack Anchors, Beth Rabbitt, Stephen Bentsen and Michael Catania. **Staff:** Alex Marshall and Samara Ray.

City of Portland
Parks Commission Minutes
November 4, 2021
5:00 PM

Due to the existence of an emergency or urgent issue, the Parks Commission conducted this meeting by remote methods/technology at the Zoom link provided, in accordance with the requirements of 1 M.R.S. section 403-B and the Parks Commission's Remote Participation Policy.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

George Rheaul noticed that the big metal swings in Amythest Park disappeared and he heard they were being repaired. He was not sure if they ever came back or came back after they were fixed and then were taken down again. Alex said that the swings were vandalized and poles were snapped, they were removed and repaired and put back and they were vandalized again. They were taken down for a second time a couple of weeks ago. The Department is seeking an alternative solution for the next swing installment.

George brought up the fact that the Department has submitted two grant applications this year, one was for land acquisition in the North Deering area and the other was for recreational improvements at the Riverton Trolley Park. He would like to see copies of those grant applications to see what story is being told to the Federal government about what the grant will be used for.

The Commission Chair Michael noted that Nan Cumming, Parks Conservancy Director informed him that the $250,000 Land Water and Conservation Fund grant for the Riverton Trolley Park improvements was approved on the state level and is pending Federal approval. This grant would be contingent on Parks Conservancy raising matching funds and money raised through CIP.

Jon Krachmar said that the other grant was also with the Land Water Conservation Fund and the City was working with the Trust for Public Land on this project. The project included the area behind 1931 Washington and Haverty field which is presently a privately owned ballfield. The project is being called North Deering Park.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: October 7th, 2021

Michael Catania moved to approve, Marie seconded. Michael took a roll call vote and the Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

b. New Business

i. Discussion on Proposal to Rename Bedford Park as “Noyes Park"- Action Item

The Chair shared that he would like to get the Parks Commission support prior to the November 15th City Council meeting where this name change proposal will be on the agenda.

Anna Noyes Benoit addressed the PC to share her family's perspective on this. The triangle of

land in 1928 was given by her grandfather to the City of Portland to be used as a park. Sometime around the 1950's it took the name of the developer Mr. Bedford.The family did not know of the name change until the sign went up in about 1980. This area used to be farmland which included an orchard that extended to what is present day Deering Oaks. Her dad lived there with his sister in the Deering mansion that was built in 1804.

Her family's request is that the Council correct the mistake of naming this park after the developer. This requested change has gone to the City council for the first reading already and the second reading will be on November 15th. Historian Herb Adams has researched this area and written letters of support for this change. The family did not call attention to this until 2017.

Beth Rabbitt commented that she thinks that after reviewing the documents provided that the way we are telling the history of Portland is insufficient. She thinks it is important to ask for deeper analysis. The Chair said that the Parks Commission does need to dig deeping in pursuing this matter, but he thinks the naming of the new waterfront park could be a chance to look at names that came from the people indigenous to this area. He also shared that the Parks Commission could look at how the Native Americans relied on the natural bounty and how we could model this to be good stewards to this land. Beth said it is important to acknowledge that any recommendation th Parks Commission would make with regards to naming parks would not be a certification of the way the history has been presented in the documents. Anna expressed that she is in full agreement with this and thinks that native names could be used more often in naming public places.

Michael made a motion to bring the Parks Commission support of this proposed name change from Bedford to Noyes Park to the City Council reading on Nov 15th, Marie seconded and Micheal conducted a roll call vote. The Commission voted unanimously for this motion to pass.

ii. Deering Oaks Master Plan Presentation - Anne Pringle

Anne Pringle addressed the Parks Commission; she is the co- founder of Friends of Deering Oaks and former Portland mayor. Anne gave some prepared remarks about the Deering Oaks Master Plan. The park is 54 acres that has been acquired by the City over time. City Engineer William Goodwin designed the park. The overarching principle was to preserve this park as common ground of the community for all. "A public breathing space", said Goodwin. Over time improvements have been added like the duck house, fountain, the playground. By 1889 $3,150 was put in place for the park, over half of the park's budget at that time. Deer Oaks declined in the 1970's some of the park was lost for the construction of 295. In the 1980's Deering Oaks, like many parks around the country, was poorly maintained and deemed unsafe by many. The Friends of the Parks Committee was established in 1989 (presently known as Parks Commission) by the City Council to be a citizen's oversight. A Master Plan Committee was appointed in 1993 by the City Council with representatives from all over the city. 4,000 surveys were given out with an 11% response rate. Results of this survey showed that passive use of the park was a priority, activities such as sunbathing, picnic, and rose circle. The survey also reflected safety concerns of the public. The Master plan was created based on these results and it was vetted in numerous public meetings. It received unanimous support of the City Council in 1994. There were three tiers of priorities: high priority, moderate priority and longer term projects. Anne believes the Deering Oaks Master Plan is 85-90% complete and is the most complete of all the Master plans.

The essential recommendation of the Master plan was to create a Friends Group. This Friends group serves as a partner of the City to generate private donations to support the park and serve as a watchdog for the park and make it an inviting place for the visitor. The Friends of Deering Oaks was established in 1997 and will be 25 years old next year.

Friend of Deering Oaks has partnered with the City on many projects: the ravine rehabilitation, castle restoration, fountain replacement, playground improvements, signage and the rose circle redesign. They have raised over 900,000 in private donations for these and other projects. The Friends Group has also advocated for two way traffic on state and high street and for safety in the park. Anne feels the 27 year old Master Plan is still relevant.

Anne thinks that Alex and Ethan and the parks crew have been dealing with the Parks issues very well. There is a lot to celebrate right now in the park like the park activation by Park Rangers this summer and many physical improvements. There are some serious concerns within the park. She would like to see a year round Park Ranger in the Park. We cannot let it slide back into having some of the issues that were commented on in the 1993 survey. Alex said that the relationship between the Parks Division and Friends of Deering Oaks is strong and he appreciates the partnership. He believes it is an important space and there is a lot to do. The Department will submit funding for sidewalks on Tennis Park Road and pond wall and ravine repairs in this year's Capital Improvement Plan requests. Ann said she is an insistent Friends Group, sometimes the Friends Group and the Parks staff disagree but they are glad for the engagement because they bring perspective.

Marie wanted to comment that a Friends group can provide an on the ground analysis of what is going on in the park. This can be like grassroots information you can feed to staff. Alex said that it is great to have the visitor's perspective.

Michael asked Alex, what could the Parks Commission do to make the Friends Groups and Parks Group relationship grow?

Alex said it would be great to have the Parks Commission and Friends Groups to advocate and mobilize trash clean ups. Trash clean up is an effort that seems to be always needed in the parks.

Is there any way to ask for more on the ground Park Rangers in Deering Oaks, how can they ask for more money in the budget to the City Council for more money to police the Parks. Alex would like to continue this conversation in the future.

Anne mentioned that they as a Friends Group will advocate to the Finance committee on occasion for their priorities since the Parks staff may be more restrained. She mentioned there is a Green Space Coalition of Friends Groups which meets and can share experiences as Friends Groups outside of the public process..

Michael C asked if it was time to think about a new master plan? Anne responded that she would like to finish the original master plan first.

Beth asked how does a citizen get connected to the Friends Group? Anne said their website is out of date but the website will be getting improvements soon.. So stay tuned as the website will be getting improvements will be a better way to connect with the Friends of Deering Oaks and they do have a Facebook page.

c. Old Business

i. Committee Membership

Stephen B. has agreed to be on the Outreach committee and Jon k has agreed to be on the annual report.

The Chair said he wanted to go over the State guidelines on how Committee membership should be followed for the Parks Commission. Alex stated that we have to post and allow public access to any meetings over 2 people. He thinks it may be a good idea to seek an extension to the monthly meeting so Committee members can check in with their group while it is accessible to

the public and then assign tasks to do on their own. Michael was wondering if a meeting requires public notice does it also require public comment? Samara, Parks admin staff will find out and report back. Michael said that emails and documents could be shared freely, Alex noted that this is not the case and any information shared between Committee members such as emails and documents must be limited to 2 Commission members or less. Samara will check with Legal to confirm this is the case and report back.

ii. Committee Communications - No communications at this time.

iii. Parks Commission Annual Timeline

Beth has mentioned it would be great to have a preview of what is coming in the next year. Michael said that a retreat or Strategic Planning meeting is held in February. A series of activities related to the CIP budget process will resemble next year what we just went through this year. In December there will be an Indegenous People's presentation, In January a Land Bank presentation by Jon Krackmar in January. Ideally a timeline of annual activity for the Parks Commission will be shared with the Commission in the coming months. A draft timeline has been started.

d. Communications/Updates

i. Parks Report

Alex confirmed that the Stroudwater bridge is a new bridge. This is a partnership project to connect Portland Trails Fore River trails to the Unum property. Jaime said that they are working on a revised easement with Unum. It will not be a cheap project. Maybe 3 years out we could look at CIP for this once the City owns the land.

Alex said that the Parks Division has been short staffed for many months now and as of today they are recommending a few people for hire which is exciting. In the Springtime Alex brought up the idea of a portable toilet design to the Commission. There is a need for public restrooms. How do we make our current porta potties safe for users. Now we are in the process of getting 3 of these pilot porta toilets fabricated. They will be built very rugged. They will go to Fox Field, Eastern Promenade and Deering Oaks Portland. This pilot program will determine how the Department moves forward in public restroom placement and design.

ii. Land Bank Commission Report

Jon had to leave the meeting early. He told Michael he would forward written copy of Land Bank happenings to Samara and Samara could add to the minutes.

III. Adjournment

Michael C made a motion to adjourn, Marie seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

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: December 2021

Parks Division Staffing

- Vacancy: Athletic Facilities Steward

Monument Square Christmas Tree

The annual placement of the Monument Square Christmas tree took place on Thursday, November 18th this year. The 40' Balsam Fir was donated from a home on Epping Street and escorted all the way to Monument Square where it sits today. For the second year in a row there was a wonderful story of how the original homeowner planted the tree in hopes it would be the Monument Square Tree someday. On Friday, November 26th, the tree was lit at 4pm during the annual tree lighting ceremony sponsored by Portland Downtown and all their partners. A special thanks goes out to Shaw Brothers Construction, Keeley Crane, Portland Forestry Division, Portland Police, Portland Parking Control and Portland Downtown for all their help in coordinating this wonderful event each year.

Annual Meadow Mowing

Many have seen the various meadows that have been popping up across the city. The most recognizable ones being the Franklin Street Meadow, The North Street Hill on the Eastern Prom, The Deering Oaks Meadow, and the Western Prom Meadow. There are also meadows in parks such as Payson Park, Riverton Trolley Park, Baxter Woods, PATHS and Harbor View, just to name a few. These spaces are not only beautiful in their representation of a natural landscape but beneficial in ways like they provide pollinator plants for bees, butterflies and birds as well as they are carbon emission free with no regular mowing required. Each year these spaces requires an annual mowing to keep the grass and wildflower growth healthy as well as to suppress any invasive growth that may be eager to take over. This process takes about 6 weeks in totality to execute but well worth the time for the beauty and benefit they bring

Winter Operations

Winter is upon us as some have seen their first snowfall of the year. Our Parks Maintenance Crew morphs into a sidewalk clearing operation during the winter months with the help from Horticulture, Ballfields and Cemeteries. That team covers over 100 miles of sidewalks and trails each storm with a handful of them working on heavy snow load, heavy ice, pinch point 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 then helps with sidewalk pinch points during the day. The Playground Division keeps City Hall Plaza and the Police Station

open while also clearing and maintain the ice on three citywide ponds (Payson Park, Ludlow and Deering Oaks). Finally, our Park Rangers help with shovelling various city buildings and will also help keep the cross country ski trails open at Deering Oaks this year.

Park Projects and Department Updates

Staff are working on the following Park Improvement projects:

- Dougherty Field Playground: We are finalizing the stormwater design and creating the site work bid documents to be advertised later this Winter. Playground equipment has been purchased. Construction and installation Spring 2022.
- Park Walkway improvements: Deering Oaks bid documents are being finalized and reviewed by the Planning Department.
- Fitzpatrick Drainage Improvements: Drawings are complete. An RFP is ready to be advertised in the Fall to seek bids for Spring 2022 construction
- Talbot School Basketball Court Reconstruction: We have reallocated site specific CDBG funds to help us bridge the gap in the construction market and plan to have this bid out in the beginning of the year.
- Lyseth Playground: This project is in the design phase now that groups have been offered the opportunity to weigh in.
- Skate Park Expansion Phase II: Preliminary RFP for design development is being finalized and will be advertised when funding is in hand.
- 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. Grant funding will be essential as City funds are limited.
- 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. If construction stays on schedule, the field should be restored in fall of 2022, with play resuming Spring of 2023.
- 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.
- Riverton Trolley Park: The LWCF grant has been submitted. The City Council gave their approval for the City to proceed with the grant application. Project budget will be an estimated total of $500,000 ($250,000 PPC/Private/City and $250,000 LWCF)
- Western Promenade Welcome Signs: Three new historic Welcome Signs are being ordered and installed as the weather permits. Spring may be the desirable time for this
- Lower Western Prom Park Improvements: Final design improvements have been made and construction/bid documents are to follow in the coming months.

- Community Garden Fence and Gate Installations: We will be replacing 6 Community Garden fences and 3 sheds. A fencing bid document will be advertised this Winter and installation is planned to begin in the Spring.