



In attendance: Commission Members: Dory Waxman, Chair, Councilor Belinda Ray, Carol Hutchins, Craig Lapine, Cynthia Loebenstein, Michael Mertaugh, Nathan Robbins, Chelsea Malacara, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors and Amy Segal. Staff Members: Ethan Hipple and Alli Carroll. Members of the Public: Alex Pozzy and George Rheault.

Parks Commission Minutes
November 02, 2017, 5:00 PM
Portland City Hall
389 Congress Street, Room 24

I. General Citizen Comment Period

Alex Pozzy of North Deering began the public comment period. He was here last month and brought up the fact that the City of Portland needs a lot more athletic fields. He believes very strongly that this is not an optional thing. The longer the City waits the harder it is because the population is growing. He brought 63 acres in the Stroudwater area to the Commission's attention. With new fields, he would like to bring disc golf to Portland.

George Rheault requests that the Commission's email gets put on agenda and that the meetings should be recorded. He said 22 Hope Avenue is a large subdivision on the planning board level but he is concerned that this has not been presented to the the Parks Commission members. He then went on the discuss the "10 Minute Walk to a Park" campaign. He said that not every 10 minute walk is equal and he would like to see the methodology behind this released to the public. Finally, Bayside Learning Community serves about 30 children and has been without a playground since the school has been relocated. The City should consider creating a playground for them.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes October 05, 2017

Michael gave Alli minor corrections. Belinda Ray moved to accept the minutes as amended of the October 5th, 2017 Parks Commission meeting, Dory seconded. Passed with 8 in favor. Craig, Cynthia and Nathan abstained.

b. New Business

i. Rake and Bake Invite

Ethan described the event as a team building exercise for the employees. This event occurred many years ago and now the City is bringing it back. It would be nice to see the Parks Commission there. It will be at Western Cemetery. RSVP with Alli.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Subcommittee Reports

The Community Outreach Subcommittee (Zack, Jaime, Amy and Sally) met. Their focus is on the months ahead and engage with the friends groups. They had drafted a letter to them inviting them to a meeting for an opportunity to present particular issues or ideas, and to remind them of what the Parks Commission does and how they can work together. They would like the Commission's input on the letter. Amy is working on the email list to check that they have every group. Alli will put both onto Google Drive for everyone to access easily. The Commission showed concern of the groups expecting them to fix all of their problems. Ethan said that it is always important to hear from the groups but to balance that with the bigger picture. It would also be important for the groups to present what they are currently doing in the parks.

The Parks Initiative Committee (Cynthia, Carol, Jaime, and Ethan) met. Ethan had an idea for an initiative and they would like the blessing before it goes off. They would research different places that have a correlation to Baxter Trail and develop an online trail similar to the Forest City Trail.

Michael reported that the Finance Subcommittee did not have a chance to meet as a whole but Dory and he met to discuss the focus of the group. There are two broad missions: one is fundraise and the second is to make changes in the mobilization of funds. Haven't had a meeting but met with dory about the focus of the group. Dory and Chelsea will help with fundraising. They are adding Craig to the subcommittee.

Dory mentioned Meri's letter that she had emailed to the Commission since she couldn't attend this month's meeting. She had suggested that the Parks Commission create a moratorium on raising money or writing grants while the Parks Conservancy gets their feet on the ground. Potentially a two year waiting period. Dory has sat at a few of the Blue Sky Commission and says it may be premature to make that kind of decision. She believes that they should wait until the Blue Sky Commission comes to the Parks Commission with a presentation of their definite plan for the future. Councilor Ray said the ordinance would have to be changed in order for them to create a moratorium.

Nathan reported that the Annual Report & Inventory Committee has not met. He has marked up the 2016 annual report and sent it to everyone. He did meet with Travis Wagner to get an understanding on how to go about this. The ordinance says they need to submit it to City Council so that should be our main focus. Councilor Ray proposed that because this report should be done now that we go to council and present last years and focus on one for next year. Questions came up about lining up the annual report with the budget and CIP process. Councilor Ray said that September would be a good time to present it so that the Council has a packet of information to be prepared for the CIP and budget process.

ii. Pesticide Update - Ethan

This is at Council level now. Right now, there are three year exemptions for public safety at high use athletic facilities. The golf course still has an exemption. Some of the practices, though, the City is already doing. Takes more time and labor so the City is looking at additional labor costs. This will first affect the City and then later, the citizens. Ordinance will not impact sales of pesticides but it will impact citizen use.

iii. Monthly Parks Report - Ethan

The Parks Division is cleaning up after the storm on Monday. There are 175 known locations where they are cutting down trees, and a lot of those locations have multiple trees or wires tangled up in them which means we need CMP to help but they have a lot of other priorities right now. Parks will hit the City district by district. This will take about a month. Priorities are streets, sidewalks, school routes, and then parks.

Fort Gorges project may need to go into next week. Getting closer and closer to finishing.

The City is 87% in compliance with the “10 Minute Walk to a Park Initiative” with the Trust for Public Land (www.10minutewalk.org). This refers back to the Open Space Study (<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/14562>). 100% is the goal. We are currently working with Portland Trails on how the metrics were done and if it included trails. The Redlon Woods acquisition, if passed by City Council, would help increase our percentage, and fill in a gap that will help some of the Libbytown Neighborhood.

iv. Blue Sky Commission Update

Sally is currently at the Blue Sky Commission’s meeting. Ethan said that they have gone through bylaws and memorandum. They have been working on a lot of technicalities but things are moving along smoothly.

d. Commissioner requests for Agenda Items

Councilor Ray suggested adding Alex Pozzy and will get his contact information to Ethan.