



Sally L. DeLuca
Director

Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Ethan Hipple
Deputy Director

Department of Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Memorandum

TO: Parks Commission and Land Bank Commission

FROM: Ethan Hipple, Deputy Director, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department

SUBJECT: Parks Division Update

DATE: September 2018

Park Manager Hiring Process

After a national search, we have hired Matt Coleman as our new Park Manager. Matt will be managing the day to day operations of the Parks Division (Parks, Athletic Facilities, Playgrounds, Forestry, Horticulture, and Cemeteries) and will be overseeing the implementation of Parks projects. He spent 14 years with the Monmouth County Parks System in NJ, and we are very excited to have him here in Portland.

CIP

Parks CIP priorities have been established by Parks Staff and recommended by the Parks Commission. Staff are now busy gathering quotes, plans, photos and other backup documentation for submission to City Manager and Finance Director.

Park Projects Update

Staff are working on the following funded CIP/Park Improvement projects:

- Cousins Memorial Reconstruction: Pedestrian plaza at Cutter/Eastern Prom. Plaza, memorial, and landscaping are 100% complete. Awaiting delivery of seven benches.
- Deering Oaks Playground Improvements: Zip line and net climber coming Fall 2018.
- Futsal Court, Fox Field: Funded by CDBG, planning for Fall construction
- Hall School Playground: Design complete, staff will be managing construction. October/November install planned.
- Island Playground Improvements: funding secured, bid awarded. August/September install.
- Lincoln Park Fence Restoration: Project was sent out to bid summer, 2018. Due to busy construction season and bonding requirements, no bids received. Staff are working on options to put it back out to bid for winter completion.
- Lyman Moore Athletic Facility Drainage and Reconstruction: In progress, 75% complete. This \$900K project will result in fields that are well-drained and irrigated, making them much more playable through the three seasons.
- Park Signs: funding secured, summer/fall install.
- Payson Softball Title IX restroom and locker room improvements: funding secured, spring installation
- Dougherty Field Playground: Design phase and community input to start Fall 2018.



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Unauthorized Tree Cutting

Staff are working on revising city code to specify fines for illegal/unauthorized tree cutting. Will require Council approval. We have had numerous cases lately of unauthorized cutting of city street trees and the City Code is not strongly worded enough to enforce fines that are a deterrent.

Deering Oaks Pond Water Quality

Sought proposals to install pond aeration system to reduce algae growth in Deering Oaks Pond. Possible spring 2019 install, pending funding.

Baxter Trail

Baxter Trail project is progressing. Route is finalized, signage text is drafted, photos collected. We will now be contracting with interpretive sign company to do final edit and produce signs.

Eastern Prom Trail Repairs Due to Wastewater Spill

Coordinated public communications and repairs to Eastern Prom Trail due to 1.6M gallon wastewater spillover. Trail was closed and repairs were made within 4 days.

Skate Park Skate-A-Thon

Successful Skate-A-Thon event at Portland Skate Park. 100+ attendees, 2 live bands, portable lighting for skating till midnight, food carts. Participants got pledges from family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, teachers and raised over \$5,000 for the skatepark expansion. One 9 year old participant single handedly raised \$660. Proceeds go towards Skatepark Expansion Project with \$350K budget (\$250K from City CIP, \$100K from private fundraising). Online contributions can be made here:
<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/2176/Fundraise>

Mt Auburn Cemetery Field Trip

Parks and Cemetery Staff made field trip to Mt Auburn Cemetery to meet and share information with their operations, education and marketing staff.

SCA Conservation Crew

Hosted 3 week SCA Conservation crew working on Land Bank properties. They completed projects at Ft Gorges, PATHS property, and Evergreen Cemetery.

Winter Lighting at Pleasant St Park

Working with Portland Downtown, Pandora and CMP to add power to Pleasant St Park for Pandora lights.

Back Cove Signage

Working with Public Works and Casco Bay Estuary Partnership to replace aging ecology interpretive signs



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along Back Cove Trail. These signs are seen by 350,000 users per year and help tell the story of the city's efforts to improve water quality in Back Cove.

Preble St Fields

Stormwater project at Back Cove will take Preble Fields out of commission for a season while 3 million gallon stormwater storage tank is installed under the fields. After completion, the elevation of the field and surrounding area will be 3-5 feet higher, which will greatly reduce saltwater intrusion and winter flooding. Project expected to start spring 2019.

Parks Conservancy Update

Staff made presentation to Parks Conservancy on long range park planning, 10 year CIP, new park projects, and Portland Youth Corps concept. PPC board is actively interviewing candidates for Executive Director, hoping to have someone on board in October. Board is also seeking to add members with fundraising experience. Board President is Andrew Magoun, Vice President is Kate Malin.

Lincoln Park Fountain

Extended Lincoln Park Fountain run times to increase public enjoyment of the newly restored fountain. Previously, the fountain was running for 2.5 hours during three different periods in morning, afternoon and night. Now we will have two 3-hour running periods in morning and afternoon, and a 4 hour run period in the evening. Water expenditures were under budget in the past, so this should not have a major impact on the budget.

Instagram Scavenger Hunt

Initiated instagram parks scavenger hunt in Portland Parks. Participants get clues through our Parks, Recreation and Facilities Instagram account, then race to various Parks to retrieve a toy lobster that has been hidden. The first to find the lobster receives comp tickets to concerts at Maine State Pier and Merrill Auditorium. Sign up at <https://www.instagram.com/portlandmepf/>

Park Signs

- Large Park entrance signs to be installed at Payson, Lincoln Park, Riverton Trolley Park, Back Cove, Dougherty Field in September.
- Small park signs (pedestrian size) to be installed in 15+ parks in September/October.

MDOT Coordination

Working with MDOT on repairs to fences along Tukey's Bridge and Dougherty Field.

Pianos in the Squares

Successful first season of Pianos in the Squares. Pianos were donated and tuned, and the Parks Division installed them on dollies, had custom covers made, and transported to Monument, Congress, Longfellow and Bramhall Squares. There, they were left in the square for the public to play. Local



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businesses were recruited to adopt the pianos and keep them out of the elements at night. Pianos were out for the month of July and part of August.

Negative and Illegal Activity in Parks

Convened meeting of Parks Staff, Police, TIQA Cafe, Friends of Deering Oaks, and Social Service providers to discuss homeless encampments, drinking, drug use in Deering Oaks Park. Increasing Park Ranger and Police patrols of these public spaces to decrease amount of public drinking, drug use, defecation, urination, etc...

"A Walk In the Park" Series

Good attendance at bike rides and tours in Parks as part of our Walk In the Park series. Upcoming trips include a Peaks Island Bike Tour and City Tree Bus Tour. More info at:

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/1990/A-Walk-In-The-Park-Tours-and-Talks>