



Kassia Randzio, Chair
Andrew Brewer
Lincoln Frasca
Emily Donaldson
Jessa Barnard

Alec Ellsworth, Parks Director

Parks Commission
Tuesday, May 27th, 2025 / 6:00 PM
Location: Zoom and City Hall

***Mission:** The Parks Commission advances a long-term vision to ensure that parks, gardens, greenways, and natural areas are vital to Montpelier's community identity and are forever available for the enjoyment of all.*

Commissioners: Kassia, Jessa, Andrew, Lincoln, Emily

Staff: Alec, Keir

Public: Jim Coppock

Meeting Minutes

- 6:09 Commissioner Introductions
- 6:10 May 27th Agenda, April 15th Minutes. Lincoln motions, Andrew seconds. Passes unanimously.
- 6:11 Public Comment for items not on the agenda – N/A
- 6:12 Staff Update, Review Incident Reports –
- No incident reports
 - Hubbard to North Park Dr. work will get underway in a couple weeks (everything except N. Park Dr. boardwalks will happen this year)
 - EcoAmericorps – everyone is DEC employee
 - VHCB Americorps – carrying on
- 6:12 Stonewall Meadows Management Plan update
- Three field walks completed. Quick themes:
 - Lincoln, Jim, Keir with 8-9 people from immediate neighborhood. A lot of people want no change at all. Brought up parking and boundary challenges. Elizabeth Circle development has influenced how people want to engage with the park process. Feels like there's a lot going on.
 - Jessa, Keir, and Jim with 2 people from adjacent condos. Seems challenging to plan for the park without fully knowing what's going to happen with the development. Lots of ideas from the neighbors (picnic table, gazebo, trails, etc.) also balanced with questions about parking, etc.
 - Emily, about 10 people mostly neighbors. Because most of the former park is now part of the new development, people wanted some trails, a couple benches as a destination to walk to. A little concern about parking.
 - Andrew leading the walk Sunday. Alec will be there.
 - About 50 survey responses. Needs an end date.
 - Jim is creating a self guided map.
 - Opportunity to try to reach out to the developer again? Andrew will try again.

- Open House June 17th, 6:00 - 7:00 pm at Stonewall Meadows
 - Enter from corner of Hebert into park
 - Printout of development map in case people are unaware of developers' plans
 - Breakout into topics: Parking, boundaries and connectivity (between condo, private houses, new development), trail network and maintenance/accessibility
 - Snacks
 - Three dots? Big paper where people can write their own ideas/comments?

6:39 E-Bikes discussion

- Intro/background (Andrew):
 - 2024 request from resident interested in e-bikes on North Branch Park trails
 - Not allowed on East Montpelier Trails
 - Consideration for Class 1 (pedal assist up to max speed of 20mph)
 - Consideration for ADA mobility disability challenges
 - Kingdom Trails used to allow ADA e-bike access only, now switched to allow all Class 1 e-bikes
 - Need for signage / education for people who see others on e-bikes
- Discussion:
 - Where? All trails? Just North Branch River Park trails?
 - Flat trails vs. hills?
 - Possible to enact a speed limit?
 - What would a process look like? Would a person need a sticker (like a placard) to display?
 - Would staff need a sense of who's allowed / now allowed to ride e-bikes?
 - Would need clear signage that e-bikes are *not* allowed. *Except* for people with disabilities.
 - E-bikes are significantly heavier. Not great for going over jumps. Also auto-slow above 20mph, so slower going downhill. Go uphill faster than a regular bike, but not downhill.
 - Concerns: safety, trail degradation, experience
 - Could potentially significantly change user experience. If e-bikes are going faster uphill, they'll be passing other people more frequently, would create a sense of busier trails.
 - Necessary to email/notify Parks in advance? What if people are visiting? What if it's a temporary situation like an injury? Benefits to reducing barriers? Or helpful to have a sense of who and how many people are accessing trails via e-bikes?
 - If for disability uses only, how would it be implemented?
 - What about ages? If someone can't get up trails because they're older or younger, does that mean they could use an e-bike? But shouldn't kids be using regular bikes?
 - What about the range of types of electric motor bikes? How do you define what an electric motor is, and what a bike is? What about the smaller dirt bike style e-bikes? Would they be allowed? What would that mean for trails?
 - Generally leaning towards: Self-identified mobility disability, Class 1 e-bike
- Next steps: Andrew will bring draft policy language to consider at July Parks meeting.

7:16 Mud Season Access discussion

- Challenge: When some trails are closed for mud season, the off leash area is farther from parking. Would it be appropriate to come up with a mud season off leash dog zone plan, potentially allowing dog us up to the baseball field area?
- Hemlock Hill trail was closed this year for mud season, but don't anticipate it would be closed as much in future years after it cures.
- Would we need to also accommodate swapping trail uses when there's construction or other disruption happening at other times on other trails? Difference: Mud season happens every year, can plan for it.
- → Keep on radar for fall 1-year dog policy check-in conversation

7:30 Ongoing Projects Quick Updates

- Hubbard Park Multi-Use Trail: Construction will start next week.
- FEMA Projects: Contractors were awarded bids, but no start dates yet
- Pump Track Expansion/Cumming St. Engagement plan:
 - Jessa shared draft engagement plan. Will also try door knocking and flyering.
 - Survey, open houses, etc. targeted to neighborhood but open to all
 - Engagement: More about targeting the adjacent neighbors than city wide. Yes, anyone could fill out the survey, but neighborhood needs additional outreach. Primary purpose is to target outreach and engagement of the Cummings Street neighborhood.
- Abenaki Land Use Agreement – Question around online reservation logistics around waiving fees
- Summer Street Park – There have been a couple more neighborhood meetings in the last month

7:57 Agenda items, date, and location for next month's meeting. – Adjourned by unanimous consent