

Parks Commission
Tuesday, July 29th, 2025 / 6:00 PM
Location: City Hall and Zoom

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 Randzio, Emily Donaldson, Jessa Barnard, Andrew Brewer, Lincoln

Staff: Alec, Keir

Public: Jim Coppock, David Delcore (Times Argus), Arthur Folsche (MAMBA)

Meeting Minutes

6:10 Commissioner Introductions

6:011 July 15th Agenda, June 17th Minutes - Lincoln motions, Jessa seconds. Unanimous.

6:12 Public Comment for items not on the agenda – none

6:13 Staff Update, Review Incident Reports

- Connector Trail well underway, past the 50% mark. Seven Fireplaces-South to meadow, Seven Fireplaces-North Park Dr. underway.
 - Very slippery where it parallels the Connector Trail – what can be done now to mitigate the need for seasonal closures in the first year? Fall will help get organic material on the tread. Soils were better than expected, needing less surfacing than originally thought.
 - Deer Yard – will connect along the top of the bank to the new trail
 - Connection to Nature Center Trail – big down/up now, may want to consider a new connector across the slope next year
- Hubbard Road project underway – regrading road and redoing ditches. Info has been shared at the trails (moving closed signs at least once a day, work is moving quickly) and on social media.
 - Opportunity to slightly narrow the road while this work is underway? Ditches were undersized – expanding the size of the ditches – which also shrinks the road bed.
- Sparrow Farm contractor started, river trail contractor started
- Hubbard outhouse is constructed, but won't be finished until 2026. Resulting in expanded parking.
- Updated Hubbard / North Branch map is almost final
- Confluence River Park – Parks staff are there doing maintenance multiple times a week
- Country Club Road – Parks staff are primary people maintaining this property. Turtle Island moving in soon.
- Incident Reports:
 - Request to review off-leash policy for areas near backyards of Dairy Lane area

- Bikers using the new trail before it's open, and the neighboring landowner is not pleased. The trail has been clearly signed.
- State has released parasitic wasps to manage emerald ash borer in Groton State Forest, National Forests, haven't trialed anywhere near communities. Would like to introduce in a natural area in a place where wasps would migrate to a downtown area. Alec will set-up a time for the Parks Commission to learn more.
- 6:43 Stonewall Meadows Open House Debrief, Survey Review, Management Plan Discussion (Lincoln)
 - Open House with good turnout, good feedback
 - Survey closed June 30th with 60+ responses. Scott Richardson helped with analyzing the survey, providing a synopsis. Lack of awareness of the park is the biggest barrier to use. Passive recreation / nature viewing is biggest use. Biggest desire is to keep things the way they are.
 - Actions:
 - Review individual public comments
 - Familiarize yourself with the Hubbard/North Branch plan as a sample of what this will look like
 - Lincoln started actions matrix, will share with Commissioners for additions, ideally review a draft at August Parks meeting
 - Jim is working on the history
 - Objectives/Recommended actions
- 6:55 E-Bikes Policy draft review (Andrew)
 - Language: People with disabilities
 - Location: All trails that allow bikes? Or just the mountain bike trails?
 - Has there been communication with East Montpelier Trails?
 - Signage: Begin with "e-bikes are not allowed." Sub-text: Exception for people with disabilities...
 - → Future topic: sign consistency, multiple messages (bikes, dogs, fires, etc.)
 - Draft Policy Edits:
 - "Class 1 electric bikes" rather than "electric mountain bikes"
 - Remove "mobility limitations" and just keep "disabilities"
 - New Draft: *Class 1 e-bikes are allowed as a reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities on trails where traditional mountain biking is allowed.*
 - → Andrew will edit, bring to next meeting
- 7:20 Cummings Street Community Engagement discussion (Jessa)
 - Alec asked Planning Department what might be allowed in this space. Challenge of floodplain, vernal pools, etc.
 - Concern about budget and staff capacity to take on additional projects
 - Seeing as there are limited options for what *could* happen in the floodplain, does it make sense to ask MAMBA to come forward with a more specific proposal and *then* seek community engagement, rather than seeking community engagement first
 - Also don't want to shoehorn a use into a space that's not right for a pump track. If it doesn't work to do here, consider growing the pump track somewhere else.
 - Can an expanded pump track even be an option? → Check with state wetlands/river corridor scientists.

- If a pump track is indeed one of the best uses of that space, what could *also* be added to make a “place” that benefits the Cummings Street neighborhood. Add shade trees, address invasives, add picnic tables, etc.
- MAMBA has a rough draft proposal now.

7:39 Ongoing Projects Quick Updates

- Abenaki Land Use Agreement – share at next meeting
- Summer Street Park – interim plan for actions there, addressing shrubs and trees, renovate the path

7:42 Agenda items, date, and location for next month’s meeting.

- August: skip
- September 16:
 - Stonewall
 - Abenaki Land Use
 - E-bike policy finalizing
 - Pump Track

7:48 Adjourned by unanimous consent