



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

Alec Ellsworth, Parks Director

Parks Commission
Tuesday, October 21st, 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: Andrew, Lincoln, Jessa, Emily, Kassia

Staff: Alec, Keir

Public: Chief Don Stevens, Bill Stone, Linda Young, Heather Cipolla, Arthur Foelsche, Jim Coppock, Izik Currier, Dan Currier, Heather Cipolla, Carol Gingold, Mattison Brady

Meeting Agenda

6:01 Commissioner Introductions

6:02 October 21st Agenda, September 16th Minutes. Jessa moves, Andrew seconds. Passes unanimously.

6:02 Public Comment for items not on the agenda

- Bill Stone: Concerned about deer yard, especially during hunting season, winter, and also spring. When the city bought the new parcels, viewed as a sanctuary – wetland, deer yard, wildlife habitat. Important that the deer have a home. Would like people to leash dogs on the new path. Eg. Stowe Bike Path – pedestrians with dogs need to walk – would like to see the same thing here in Montpelier.
- Linda Young: Very appreciated of Park Staff work on Summer Street Park. One of the neighbors built a sign, may need some help installing. Neighbors are interested in planting trees this fall.

6:15 Staff Update, Review Incident Reports (Alec)

- Vermont Accessibility Hub is interested in assessing accessible trails. VMBA and MAMBA are assessing Montpelier's trails. Could be more accessible if bridges were wider. MAMBA has a goal of making Montpelier's trail system adaptive by the end of next year – widening bridges, fixing turn ratios.
- What about pedestrian trails? Accessibility is not running the same assessment for pedestrian trails.
- 10/31 deadline to complete FEMA projects
- Enchanted Forest happened last weekend
- Incident Report: Child making noise while walking new trail. → Alec will follow-up with signage timeline

6:22 Abenaki Land Use Agreement Discussion (Emily)

- Last meeting, discussion about 5 days notice; Approval by Chief: Challenge of thousands of citizens and needing to approve access every time someone wants to access. Instead suggest creating a mechanism for someone to report what they've done or verify person is Abenaki Citizen. Tribe does this for VT hunting and fishing licenses. If it's too complicated people won't use it. Once final, would be posted on Vermont Abenaki website to make tribal members aware.
- Would like to see administrative paperwork limited.
- Exception for live trees: Retain this language for individual harvesting, but allow for opportunities for harvest in close coordination and collaboration with Abenaki. Chief Don gave examples of times when land managers have cut the trees, but then tribal members have collected the bark or trees for baskets, etc. Only need for live trees would be a birchbark canoe. Could be opportunity to contact tribe in advance and see if they're interested in what they're cutting.
- In the permit – live trees not allowed to be harvested. Further collaboration could happen in coordination with the Parks Commission.
- Jessa: Resolution should state intent, not process. Policy can stand while process changes.
- Emily: Could resolve "via annual permit"
- Chief Don: Would like to see a system for anything that would need special approval. Eg. camping or fires. How would Parks want to vet those special activities to approve or not?
- Kassia: Difference between individuals vs. events. Would like to see following typical event processes for larger events to provide more collaboration and coordination with Parks Commission for larger events.
- → Emily will incorporate feedback and bring a new version to Parks Commission for November meeting
- Keir: If a person is coming out of the park with a basket of mushrooms, how would we know how to approach that conversation?

6:51 Stonewall Meadows Management Plan Update and Eagle Scout Proposal (Lincoln)

- Izik Currier:
 - Scout Troop 709 troop leader. Stonewall Meadows Park is close to his house, heard that Parks Commission was working to get it more established. Propose building four benches and a kiosk. Two benches towards the entrance, two others farther into the park. Kiosk, sign, and map at the entrance on Hebert Drive.
 - Bench: Opportunity to add arm rests to increase accessibility, ensure that seat height meets accessibility standards
 - Isaac will fundraise for supplies, so won't cost Parks anything
 - Timeline: will fundraise and build over the winter, and then install in the spring
 - Kiosk: Opportunity to make kiosk design similar to other signs used in North Branch or Hubbard? Park name would go below the roof. Main portion of the sign would have a map. Keir recommends locust for the footings.
 - Izik needs a letter of support by December.
 - Lincoln motions for Chair of Parks Commission to sign a letter of support and/or project approval to indicate support for the project with the understanding that Parks Staff will approve final design of all benches and kiosk(s). Andrew seconds. Passes unanimously.
 - Alec: Question of whether it'd be possible to *not* build a kiosk, and instead build a couple more benches, which could be used in other parks as well.

- Jim, Carol, and Heather collaborated on history
- Need to combine multiple .pdfs into a single document, then can release at November meeting for public comment → Emily will combine files
- Carol concerned about parking. Andrew: Don't see a flood of people going to the park, view it as a neighborhood park.
- Need to coordinate with city re: plowing on Hebert Road so that the snow piles don't block the trail area
- Will share for public comment via:
 - Neighborhood listserv
 - Link on city website
 - Front Porch Forum
 - Social media
 - Flyers near the park and also Hubbard, Blanchard, and North Branch kiosks → Alec will make this
- → Parks staff will double-check timeline and provide any final feedback on the draft plan

7:33 Hubbard Park Dog Rules —planning for 1-year check-in, as established by Hubbard Park Dog Policy Assessment Plan Adopted by the Parks Commission February 25, 2025

- *Analyzing trail counter data* - Trackers are currently non-functional. Hope to get counters installed before winter, though it may be spring. Will help inform how many people are using the trails and which areas.
- *Call for feedback on social media and local forums* - Need a simple form collection tool to collect feedback.
 - Long form answers are challenging to analyze
 - Options can also be challenging
 - Much of the assessment is based on location. Are there 1-2 location questions from the "Dog Committee Survey" that could be repurposed
 - Actually need to know what the impact is on different parts of the park...which may not be achieved via a survey.
 - Challenge of compliance. Most people are in compliance, also people who are regularly not complying.
 - Activity question to sort respondents
 - Do people feel like the rules are clear?
 - Do you go to the park more or less often?
 - Do you feel like the park is available and welcoming to you? more/less/same
 - Open ended question: Are there observations you'd like to share about how the park is being used or impacts to the park?
- *Host walks to receive feedback* - Challenging season for this. Instead, set aside 30 mins of a Zoom meeting to listen to public comment. November listening session.
- Linda: Lots of positive feedback for the new trail. Also some concern about how off leash dog walkers will be impacted when bikes are added.
- → Alec will draft the survey and flyer

8:05 Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Biocontrol Discussion

- Parasites have already been released in Plainfield

- These wasps only eat EAB, they don't eat anything else.
- Mattison – They are not bioengineered, but are brought in from Asia where there are also ash trees. Chloe Sardonis with FPR could be a good contact to share more.
- → Kassia to follow-up with Joanne Garten to learn more
- Suspect that City Council would also like to be involved

8:18 Agenda items, date, and location for next month's meeting: November 18, 6:00pm

- Dog policy listening session
- Release Stonewall
- Abenaki land use final version

8:23 Adjourned by unanimous consent