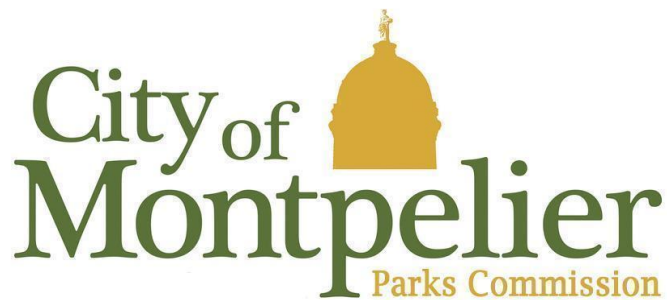




Parks Commissioners:
Emily Donaldson (2027)
Andrew Brewer (2028)
Kassia Randzio, Chair (2029)
Jessa Barnard (2030)
Rebecca Copans (2031)

Alec Ellsworth (Parks Director)

Parks Commission
Monday, June 15th, 2026 / 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: Becca, Jessa, Kassia, Andrew

Staff: Alec, Keir

Public: Steve Whitaker, Linda Young, Katie Swick, Annie Limoge, Celeste Randzio Porter

Meeting Minutes

6:05 Commissioner Introductions

6:03 June 15th Agenda, May 12th Minutes. Becca moves, Jessa seconds. Passes unanimously.

6:07 Public Comment for items not on the agenda

- Steve Whitaker: Country Club Road is owned by the City of Montpelier. Concerned about Parks Department digging for trails, nursery, etc. and other ground disturbances. Clarification via discussion: Much of what was shared is outside the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission. The Parks Commission sets policy, but doesn't manage Parks staff. City Council provided formal authorization for the disc golf course. City staff have completed extensive soil testing for the nursery and the farm with outside consultants.
- Linda: Request to move Summer Street park earlier on the agenda.

6:17 Staff update, Review of Incident Reports (Alec)

- MYCC program starts in two weeks
- Lots of mowing
- Trail counters have been installed. Posts could double as sign posts.
- New VISTA member started today.
- Boardwalk on Windham Dr. has been started
- Kassia mentioned fire risk, people starting fires with lack of water to put them out. Alec: Requires policy update. Relic of existing structures. People put picnic tables into the Seven Fireplaces area. Helpful to hear from someone who addresses fire. Keir: Opportunity to post best practices poster at fire areas. If/when fire danger is high, would post signs at the entrance. Becca: Could install a covered bucket full of water near fire stations. Alec will look into getting large fire danger signs for roads, and add to a future Parks agenda.
- Incident Report: tree down on the new Sparrow Farm Trail bridge. Alec to add Becca to the incident report forms.

6:29 Plant Patrol (Kassia)

- Are there specific section to focus on? Keir and Alec can make a list
- Keir: Language of “invasives” vs. “introduced species”. Eg. “Slow the spread VT.” Name “Plant Patrol” to focus on positives.
- Are there naturalists we should reach out to? Becca suggests Sarah Hoffmeier
- Jessa: Is there any risk to spreading invasives? Or setting precedent of digging plants up? Alec: Not worried about that. Staff could run the training. What if everyone on the Parks Commission, Conservation Commission, or Tree Board is part of this and adopts a trail section?
- Sign-ups: Could add a column to share what species people are focused on
- Could also engage the Middle School sustainability school, and also Union Elementary School Student Advisory Council.

6:45 Summer Street Park Management Plan Update

- Linda is continuing coordination with Emily on this, will revisit in August.
- Some discussion of ball playing pros and cons, and the history of this ordinance.
- Challenge of older teens gathering in Summer Street Park.

6:51 Ongoing Projects Quick Updates

- Pump Track – Alec has been working with MAMBA and the Planning Department to work through permitting
- Hubbard Park Multi-Use Trail –
 - Doubtful that we’ll find a contractor to finish the North Park Dr. section by the end of this season.
 - Alec suggests adding a “turnstile” at the North End of Seven Fireplaces, then open bike use Windham Dr. to Seven Fireplaces, but clearly closed from Seven Fireplaces to North Park Dr.
 - Andrew: Move that when the 50 foot boardwalk on the southern half of the Windham-Seven Fireplaces Trail is complete, that the trail be open for bikes from Seven Fireplaces south to Windham Dr. Becca seconds. Passes unanimously.
 - Becca suggests sharing this on Front Porch Forum.
- 127 Elm –
 - Contractor returned to seed and mulch. Hostas are coming up.
 - The Parks Commission approved “Phase I” of minimal reseeding and similar on site.
 - Katie: Interested in helping out to convene neighbors to develop more plans, fundraising, etc. to help advance the planning.
 - Becca and Katie: Would like to see an educational installation about water and how the river moves through.
 - Alec share conceptual designs provided by National Park Service landscape architects. Some structures may not be allowed. Need to determine what’s possible.
 - Access to river would be challenging due to the retaining wall’s connections to adjacent architecture.

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- Katie: Offered to help lead some neighborhood community engagement.
- Becca: Could do canvassing to flyer neighborhood. Suggests feedback on vague uses rather than specific drawings.
- Katie will connect with neighbors over the course of the summer to collect neighborhood feedback, with the caveat that raised features (eg. raised garden beds) likely wouldn't be allowed. Then NPS can refine drawings. Then VEM can review drawings.
- 5 Home Farm Way
 - Building has been removed.
 - Had a meeting to discuss floodplain restoration project, which may be slower than anticipated, but still planned for summer 2027.

7:21 Dog Rules Assessment — discussion of what metrics to gather

- Alec shared 2021 survey data, Hubbard and North Branch Park Management Plan Survey, and fall “temperature check” survey from fall 2025. Also have some trail counter data.
- Becca: We’ve already done a lot of surveys. Challenge is that we don’t have a baseline.
- Jessa: Most valuable to digest what we already have. First as a Commission propose changes and get feedback on the specific proposed changes, rather than asking survey questions again.
- Timeline:
 - September: Parks Commissioners surface any potential proposals to tweak existing policies. Seek feedback.
 - October: Further discuss the proposals, make any decision if necessary.
- Retain focus on Hubbard Park

7:35 Agenda items, date, and location for next month’s meeting.

- No July meeting
- Wednesday, August 5, 6:00-7:30pm: Mill Pond, Summer Street, 127 Elm Street Ramble. Meeting at Summer Street Park.

7:44 Adjourned by unanimous consent