



Kassia Randzio, Chair
Carolyn Grodinsky
Fabienne Pattison
Dan Dickerson
Shelby Perry

Geoff Beyer, Parks Director
Alec Ellsworth, Parks Caretaker

Parks Commission
Tuesday September 17, 2019 / 6PM
Meeting Location: Montpelier Police Station Conference Room

Commissioners: Fabienne, Kassia
Staff: Geoff, Alec
Public: Richarda, Danis, Chris Hammer

Note: Commissioners did not have a quorum (3 or more), so nothing was voted on.

Meeting Minutes

6:05 July and August minutes
September agenda

Could not approve minutes and agenda due to lack of quorum.

6:10 Comments from the public:

Danis - It's been challenging to find minutes and agendas. What's going on? Kassia - City updated its website this summer, and we've heard from several people that it's been hard to find minutes and agendas.

Danis will reach out to Jamie in the City Manager's office. Kassia will email Danis recent minutes and agendas.

Chris - Does Parks get involved with rain gardens? Conservation Commission did the one by the Credit Union, and he'd like to do one at the back lot by the Unitarian Church. It drains directly to the river.

Richarda - Great reminder of connectivity between commissions and groups in town. For example, the children's playground was recently redone, and now there are a lot of stormwater runoff techniques, etc. VRC is working on a signage project to educate kids about stormwater runoff and how it's connected to our rivers.

6:15 Confluence Park (Richarda, VRC)

- Update: City Council declared this a city park about a year ago, it's at the confluence of N. Branch and the Winooski. With no action, it would be a minimal feature green space. VRC has been working with multiple partners to assess features and amenities the community is interested in and has been leading extensive public outreach. Based on public input, VRC with Malone and MacBroome worked on conceptual designs over the past year. VRC presented three designs to the City Council in January, and the City Council asked VRC to continue the process to narrow down to one design. More public outreach (meetings, survey) this summer. From that feedback VRC created "Concept D," which is what VRC

will be presenting to City Council next Tuesday, September 24, then City Council will make a decision at their usual meeting on Wednesday, September 25.

- Danis - What would they do to move forward? Richarda - Proposing continued work as VRC and working with the city to find funding to continue. VRC will present a budget with the final conceptual design (could be altered), and will propose working with the city to keep moving ahead with a timeline, fundraising, etc. It will be a multi-year project. It's on a brownfield site and would require redoing the corrective action plan that has already been signed.
- This City Council has selected "Face the River" as one of the city priorities. VRC is also working with Friends of the Winooski on a city plan for plans to link river access throughout the city, which they will share with City Council at a later date (6-12 months).
- Chris - What about the east side of the North Branch? Richarda - VRC's role is exploratory right now. They have some ideas for a "Confluence Park East," and would love for that to be part of consideration in the future as part of the River Plan. It would be a great "Gateway Park." Confluence Park now is fairly visible from the road, and having that east side would also be a draw.
- Highlights of Concept D:
 - A, B, and C - the key focus areas are away from the river. We want to "Face the River." D flips that with added space along the shore of the river, which could be performance space, seating space, etc. If someone is sitting above on benches, they'd be facing the river.
 - More comprehensive flood mitigation techniques addressing that the lower bank will be underwater at times. How to utilize that space when it's not underwater. It's a compact park, and tries to maximize the park by having seasonal spaces that can be used when it's not flooding.
 - ADA accessible (the only other one that *wasn't* was A). Wheelchair accessible ramp. Also incorporates features that make it easier to bring a boat down to the river.
 - It incorporates parking that was given to the park from the transit center. Whether those spots are available may be in flux. If Confluence park does have those six spaces, half of those would be greenspace and the other half would be loading/unloading (ex. unload boat and then park) and handicap spaces.
- Richarda - It could be helpful to have a letter of support from the Parks Commission prior to next week's meeting.
- The Commissioners present support the idea of a Confluence Park and like the direction it's going, but don't have a quorum to state that publicly at this time.
- Copies of designs are on VRC's website - VermontRiverConservancy.org / news / confluence park designs. It includes the four designs, survey, etc.
- Public meeting to brief City Council - September 24, 7:30pm, City Hall

6:45 Spring Hollow Lane (Alec) -

- Opportunity to purchase easement for access to (future) Sabin's Pasture
- Chris - Former Parks Commissioner, not a developer. Bought a property on Spring Hollow Lane. It's one of the larger lots in the area and it abuts Sabin's Pasture. It's been

vacant for three years. While it was vacant, many of the neighbors started walking through this lot to access Sabin's. Spring Hollow Lane is a dead end street, and there's no public access currently. Plan to sell the property next spring. Full survey might be \$1,500. The lot is surveyed with pins. Could probably hire a surveyor at a reduced rate (maybe \$300?) to note the two new pins. Would not want motorized vehicles or a road, and would convey that in the easement. The potential trail location is very dry.

- Alec - Had thought it might cost \$2,000-5,000, but it may be considerably less expensive. Dan had expressed prior to the meeting that he was concerned about the amount to an area that's not yet a park.
- Chris wants to make sure it's surveyed and monumented well, but doesn't want compensation for the land.
- Possibilities to hold an easement could be Vermont Land Trust or The Cross Vermont Trail Association (they envision a trail from College Street, U-32, and bike around the river.)
- Funding possibilities - Park Impact Fees or Conservation Fund (which would require Conservation Commission to sign off on it). Parks Commission should identify a representative to attend Conservation Commission meetings and be a representative to the Conservation Fund.
- It would be nice to have similar easement access from the College property. Chris to talk with the College. Alec to talk to the people who just bought the lower portion of the College property. Chris would like to present an example for other landowners to take similar conservation action.
- Geoff and Alec to find out a more exact surveying cost.

7:10 Park Staff Update (Alec and Geoff)

- North Branch Park trail construction update -
 - MAMBA started work September 1st, Alec hasn't been up there yet to see it. Alec had three walks ahead of time, including one with the trail designer. In general, the new construction is less advanced.
 - Geoff was surprised that they're not doing maintenance on the long loop.
 - Alec reported that MAMBA says the machine built berms will make the trail more sustainable. When people brake, it causes erosion. When people can lean into the turn, it makes the trail more sustainable.
 - Alec reported that MAMBA says the trail they constructed last year is lower level intermediate.
 - Commission concerns expressed during August walking tour:
 - Tables, rollers. Instead, use features that are already on the land.
 - Multi-use
 - MOU
 - This spring had asked for location of berms/tables/etc., but haven't seen it.
- Parkapalooza - Last one Saturday, need a few volunteers (especially for ticket people). Improved attendance from last year. Learned: Almost no campers all summer, so may consider getting rid of that portion. Good publicity/marketing this year.

- Enchanted Forest - Will be October 12. Event usually sells out in advance. Need volunteers.
- Budget FY21 -
 - Increase in salary for FY21 for new position that will be added January 2020
 - Planning funds for river park along country club road
 - \$21,000 for tractor
 - Focus will be on Hubbard Park (which is the focus every other year)
 - Budget to be a primary agenda item for October Parks meeting
 - City Council discusses budgets beginning in December, when department heads present a plan.
- Fall staff priorities
 - Cleaning-up homebase - insulating shop, burying electrical lines, improving drainage, etc.
 - Prepping trails for winter use - improve connection between Hubbard and North Branch (assessing groomer distribution)

7:10 Planning (Kassia)

- Map out top agenda meetings
 - October - MAMBA update, budget, planning
 - November - Budget, state forester plan
 - December - Green Print

8:05 Adjourn

Unfinished Business

- Hubbard Park vegetation management
- Hubbard road mitigation
- North Branch pump track
- ADA improvements to Hubbard Park
- Budget
- Spring Hollow easement opportunity

Policies in Progress

- Finalize memorial policy
- MOU for groups doing work in city parks (standards/policies)