



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

Geoff Beyer, Parks Director  
Alec Ellsworth, Parks Caretaker

**Parks Commission**  
**Tuesday October 15, 2019 / 6PM**  
**Meeting Location: Montpelier Police Station Conference Room**

Commissioners: Carolyn, Kassia, Dan, Shelby

Staff: Geoff, Alec

Public: Cameron Nidermeyer, Dona Bate, Nolan Langwell, Kip Roberts, Judy Stanger, Jill Olsen

**Meeting Minutes**

6:05 Call to order. Cameron Nidermeyer, new assistant city manager, introduced herself.

6:06 October agenda - Motion to adjust the agenda for staff update at beginning (Dan). Carolyn second. Passed unanimously.

July, August, and September minutes - Dan motioned to accept minutes. Shelby seconded. Passed unanimously.

6:09 Comments from the public. None.

6:10 Staff Update

- Written update provided ahead of time.
- North Branch multiuse trail
  - Geoff walked the trail and expressed some concerns that it is not as multiuse as it could be, but it is a beautiful mountain bike trail.
  - Nolan volunteered to work with volunteers to build some features that make the trail more multi-use friendly next year, but it is too late to change the work for this year. Geoff will come as a volunteer.
  - Phase II construction is ongoing, they are close to the Gould Hill connector trail, starting from the top of Role Call Climb. This is the easier down for mountain bikers, and might make a good uphill route for hikers.
    - Before November meeting staff will work with MAMBA to identify areas that require additional work from the first phases of the construction (go rounds for hikers, making sure that the groomer can navigate the trail, etc) and present a plan at the November meeting. If these could be identified in advance and the work that requires equipment could be done this fall.
    - Some of these trails may not need to be groomed in the winter, but that grooming would improve the skiing.
    - Some sections won't get completed this year, MAMBA will look into when they need to spend their funding by, and if they can push that work past

the spring so that they will not be working in the wet areas during the wettest time of the year.

- Staff should update the map on the website to reflect the current trail plan and work.
- Pump track and winter biking in Hubbard are on the agenda for November
  - Staff should amend the MOU for working with outside groups to require input from the staff before permitting/construction before the November meeting. This should be a standard template for working with all groups, with editable sections for specifics to each request. Needs to be complete a week before the meeting so that it can be posted with the agenda for next month's meeting.
  - MAMBA will bring a proposal for the pump track to the November meeting and will be prepared to answer questions. Parks commission has requested at least two meetings to consider the project. Geoff suggests that a December vote should leave a reasonable amount of time for permitting.
- Staff update reported 3395 volunteer hours, which at \$20/hour comes out to \$67,900
  - This does not include DOL trainees, some other volunteers
  - Staff will include these numbers in the annual report
- Conditions at Enchanted Forest were perfect and the event sold out, and we still did not make the budgeted \$3000 in profits, so staff would like to reduce or remove the budgeted amount that the event is intended to raise.
  - Allocating revenue towards a specific expense may make it easier to recruit volunteers or gain more donations.
  - Incentive for people wearing costumes.
  - Need discussion/plan to increase revenue - business sponsors, tickets, etc.
  - Look into Kohls and big box volunteer incentive programs
- Geoff received the Theresa Brungardt award for lifetime achievement in the field at the VRPA conference. A hearty congratulations to Geoff from the commission!

#### 6:40 September Follow-up

- Confluence Park update
  - City council approved the plan to move forward with confluence park
  - Vermont River Conservancy has committed to providing joint leadership and fundraising in partnership with the city
  - There is no timeline, but the project continues to move forward
  - They have not gotten to cost, are still in early planning phases
- Spring Hollow Lane
  - Survey cost?
    - Estimated at \$3-5k
  - Conversations with Vermont College of Fine Arts?
    - The parcel behind the college is under contract (or maybe closed?) and Alec is in the process of trying to connect with the purchaser
  - Funding possibilities?

- Find some money in the park budget
- Easement holder progress?
- Staff will work with Chris to answer these questions and come back with a presentation next month
- Is it worth putting money towards this project that would essentially be a bridge to nowhere at this point? Commission really needs to think about this carefully.
  - Easement would be 10-20' wide, and go for ~200'
  - This opportunity has the potential to be an important connection for the green print and the donation is an opportunity that will not be replicated.
- Staff will work on getting a price for a survey, finding an easement holder, and will come back with a more complete proposal for the commission to consider.

#### 7:00 Review Draft Budget Needs

- Increase in health insurance costs is impacting the budget - represents a 5.4% increase in city budget
  - Parks may lose the new full time position that was supposed to start in January (which would have represented a \$30k increase in the parks budget)
  - Position should be included in the initial City budget, but is likely to get cut in the resulting negotiations, Parks should be prepared to advocate for keeping the position with the City
    - Staff will look at the parks budget and look for savings in other places to offset the increased costs, and provide a one page list of their prioritized expenditures that the commission can review and discuss at the next meeting
    - Geoff will come with a proposal for clearing the tower view to the December meeting
    - Staff and Commission should bring the vision for all they want to the commission, so that the Council knows the vision and priorities and knows that the parks department has already made cuts to their vision to meet budget needs

#### 7:20 Planning (Kassia)

- Agenda item template - *See attached template*
  - Staff could make recommendations/comments on the agenda request.
  - Should include submitter's name and contact information - we just need to make sure this is not included in the public documents
  - Include how does this relate to our mission and vision
- Draft work plan review - *See attached draft*
  - Tonight: make sure the list is comprehensive, and assign some names to the tasks
  - See updated draft workplan for details
- Prioritize projects and action items
  - Dan: Could we have special meetings each quarter and have a special topic?
- Map out top agenda items for future meetings
  - Grooming ski trails beyond city boundaries.

- Geoff is in conversation with Morse Farm and others about extending the XC ski trail network for winter 2019-2020.
- Dan offered to draft a letter to alert City Council that we will continue to try out grooming XC ski trails outside city limits in order to promote recreation and support economic benefits of outdoor recreation.
- Need to evaluate the amount of staff time grooming would take, assess the value of that investment.
- What are other partners or individuals who could take on grooming so that there are groomed trails, but not necessarily a Parks investment?
- Could explore alternative ways to generate grooming revenue via donations, etc.
- Kassia motioned that Dan and Geoff update the City Council about grooming intent for the coming year (include map, cost in staff time, equipment, etc.). Carolyn second.
- November:
  - November 12, 6-8pm - Special meeting: Greenprint
  - November 19 - MAMBA, Budget priorities
- December: Spring Hollow Lane, Sabin's Pasture

8:17 Adjourned by unanimous consent

*Unfinished Business*

- Hubbard Park vegetation management (to be discussed December 2019)
- 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)