



In Attendance: Commission Members: Chair Dory Waxman, V. Chair Nathan Robbins, Craig Lapine, Cynthia Loebenstein, Michael Mertaugh, Colette Bouchard, Zack Anchors, Amy Segal, Ana Lagunez, Marie Gray and Caitie Whelan. City Staff: Michael Goldman, Ethan Hipple, Sally DeLuca, Alli Carroll. Members of the public: Michelle Lesprence, Mary Sherpus, Norm of Clinton Street, Marc Lesprence, Barbara from North Deering, Joan Gildart, David Turitz, Jess Anthony, Anne Callender, Megan Goodwan, Logan Puck, Shawn Demas, Nancy Simpson, Chris Noyse, Bobbie Cope, Kristen Smith, Andy Bean, Jessica Lobits, Charles Melcher, Leza Grough, Ellen Rathfor, Marie Shurkus, and Sean Kirsy.

City of Portland Parks Commission Minutes

July 18, 2019, 5:00 PM

Portland City Hall

389 Congress Street, Council Chambers

Dory called the meeting to begin at 5:02 PM.

I. General Citizen Comment Period

There are no comments at this time.

II. Agenda Items

a. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: April 4, 2019

Cynthia moved to accept the meeting minutes of April 4, 2019. Michael seconded. Motion passed with 9 in favor. Caitie abstained.

b. New Business

i. Welcome New Commission Member, Caitie Whelan

Caitie and Commissioners introduced themselves. Dory and Commissioners welcomed Caitie to the Commission.

ii. Proposal for Baxter Woods Leash Change in City Ordinance Chapter 5 - *vote to recommend to bring proposal for Baxter Woods Leash Change in City Ordinance Chapter 5 to City Council*

Dory introduced Ethan Hipple who presented. He shared that Sally and he met with the representatives of the Facebook Group, "Responsible Dog Owners of Baxter Woods" and Maine Audubon and staff's goal is to find a compromise for all parties involved. Ethan reiterated that they are proposing the change due to Baxter's Deed restrictions, safety, and to benefit the habitat. He briefly discussed the park history and the previous proposal. He then shared the new proposal:

From April 1st through July 31st dogs would be on an 8-foot leash at all times. Throughout the other 8 months, dogs would be allowed off leash from 5:00am to 9:00am and 5:00pm to 10:00pm. Dogs would be restricted to an 8-foot leash from 9:00am through 5:00pm each day. There will also be a restoration area of 5 ½ acres that has been identified as the area to benefit and help increase ground nesting due to a meadow that resides within it, vernal pools and amount of undergrowth.

The Biodiversity Research Institute is in progress to do a baseline study of what birds are there now before the policy change occurs, then after the policy changes they will do it again so that they can see progress and if anymore change needs to occur.

Dory opened public comment.

The majority of the public who shared comments were not in favor of any change to the ordinance and would prefer it to stay a voice-controlled park.

Dory closed public comment.

Craig moved to recommend to bring proposal for Baxter Woods Leash Change in City Ordinance Chapter 5 to City Council. Marie seconded.

A discussion began between Commissioners regarding their concerns and questions. A question of signs and fencing arose. Ethan explained that there will be signage and the fencing around the 5 ½ acres will be rustic fencing. Marie asked about enforcement. Ethan said that if this proposal were to pass, the 1 full-time ranger and 4 seasonals would spend a lot of time educating public on the changes to the ordinance. Once some time doing that has passed, ticketing would increase. Commissioners appreciate the idea that studies will happen before and over time if this change is passed so that they can keep track of whether or not it is working. The goal is to have up to a dozen ground nesting species in Baxter Woods. Commissioners asked if there was a consideration of different hours. Due to the lack of rangers, keeping hours consistent with other parks, such as East End Beach, would be most efficient. The Commissioners had a lot of interest in wanting more park rangers in the parks. Commissioners asked if staff had looked into Boulder, Colorado's fee tags and education program. Unfortunately, it is a budget issue at this time. Eric Topper, Director of Education at Maine Audubon, explained that this 5 ½ acres is the most diverse in the most concentrated area of Baxter Woods and will accommodate all of the needs of the ground nesting birds. After this baseline study and the policy is in place if passed, the support in ground nesting bird's breeding behavior may allow measurable changes in a breeding period or two.

Commissioners made sure that the public knew that the powerpoint presentation created by the public who opposed this change was received by the Commission and taken into consideration. They would also like to follow up on the Forest and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan every year when they review the bird count to see what the impact of the construction abutting 5 ½ acres of restoration area.

Michael would like to amend to change the hours of daily 8-foot leash to 9:00AM through 3:00PM. Amy seconded. Sally shared that this would be difficult for staff but they will try to make it work. All in favor. Motion passed.

Dory moved to recommend to bring proposal for Baxter Woods Leash Change in City Ordinance Chapter 5 as amended to City Council. 10 in favor. Amy opposed. Motion passed.

iii. Nominate new Chair - *vote to appoint new Chair person*

Dory moved to nominate Cynthia as new chair. Nathan seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

iv. Nominate new Vice Chair - *vote to appoint new Vice Chair person*

Nathan moved to nominate Michael as new V. Chair. Craig seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

c. Communications/Updates

i. Subcommittee Updates - *Finance Subcommittee launches Love Portland Gift Catalog*

Finance Subcommittee: Michael pressed the "go live" button for the Love Portland Gift Catalog.

Parks Initiative: Baxter Trail should be opening in September or October.

Annual Report: Nathan is hoping to have a draft ready for the next meeting.

ii. Summer Calendar and Tour Discussion

Cynthia proposed the August meeting to be a trip to Fort Gorges on August 15th from 5:00-7:00PM. No meeting on the August 1st, 2019.

Strategic Planning discussion will be at the Parks, Recreation & Facilities office at 212 Canco Rd September 14th, 2019 from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

Parks Commission is putting on a forum with the Portland Parks Conservancy regarding Fort Gorges on September 4th at 5:30PM at East End Community Center.

iii. Parks Division Report

There is a Parks Director opening in the Department and the job posting will be open until August 9th.

Cynthia moved to close the meeting. Nathan seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:38PM.