

Montpelier Parks Commission, DRAFT meeting minutes

January 15, 2019 6:00pm, Montpelier Senior Center

Parks Commission: Carolyn Grodinsky, Daniel Dickerson, Fabienne Pattison, Bill Johnson, Kassia Randzio

Parks staff: Geoff Beyer, Alec Ellsworth

Public present: Mariah Lane and Colleen Kearnon

Meeting Minutes

6:10 pm Meeting moved to order

Kassia motioned to approve agenda, Fab seconded, approved

Fab voted to approve Dec minutes, Carolyn seconded, approved

Public Comment

Mariah and Colleen voiced their concerns re dogs and bikes and that there are lots of areas for bikes to be, not for dogs off leash. Mariah expressed safety concerns due to bike speed, and emphasized her enjoyment of the quiet of the park. Commissioners recommended Mariah, Colleen, and others visit North Branch to familiarize themselves with winter bikes, where winter fat tire bikes are now allowed on a trial basis, and to share feedback of winter bikes' effect on visitors.

6:10 Hubbard Park Sledding Hill - Parks staff and Commissioners reaffirmed their support of Park's Rule requiring dogs on leash by the sledding hill. Kassia suggested to add a sign at the top of the hill for dog walkers.

FY20 Parks Budget and Priorities

- Budget in great shape but Council voted out the FT person, didn't want to exceed the 3.5% increase in the budget. Should Parks Commission continue to push for the position or shoot for an alternative at this point?
- Suggestion to create nonprofit, *Friends of the Trails and/or Friends of the Parks*, to raise money and support for Parks' priorities
- Parks needs to fine tune its goals in summer so we can get them to the Council in time for their budget review
- Geoff recommended the need for Park's staff time to implement the Greenprint.
- Major priority is the need to start advertising a new staff position by early March, with selection in April, and with goal of starting position in May. Need an overlap with new position and Geoff. Geoff retires on June 30.

- a. Bill suggested meeting or communicating with Bill Fraser and Sue Allen to make sure we are all on the same page with the hiring process (who is the decision team) - need to do soon!
- b. and that we need funds allocated for an overlap with Geoff and the new hire
- c. Geoff to share Parks Director position description with Commission members
- d. Need a subcommittee to decide who will work on this process. Probably will be Bill and Dan for the time being.
- Need to ask Council to budget money for an overlap
- Dan mentioned idea of having Tree Position extracted from Parks Budget so that the Parks staff can focus solely on Parks work. Parks assistance would still be needed with trees though.
- Can we split Tree Position to be half time trees, half time Parks?
 - a. going forward, suggest Tree Position go to another City Department. It isn't safe for tree person to be working on trees solo. In another Department there would be more staff to make tree work safe.
- Geoff suggested that Commission go into Executive Session to talk about the Parks Director position at the end of the meeting
- Park Priorities to advocate to Council:
 1. third FT staff person cost of \$55,000
 2. funding for overlap for Geoff training new position
 3. if priority 1 falls through, want a share of new Tree Position for one year and \$10,000 for a summer position (for 1 year)
- Bill Johnson will draft a letter to City Council and Bill/Dan will schedule a meeting with Bill Fraser to talk about hiring process.
- Commissioners will reach out to liaisons from other groups to come to the final City Council budget meeting (MAMBA, Tree Council, dog people, Division of Labor) on January 24th

Staff Updates

- **East Montpelier Trail:** Potential opportunity to extend North Branch trail systems deeper into East Montpelier
- Onion River Outdoors holding 1) I Heart winter Festival January 20th and 2) outdoor snowshoe on February 1st

Commission went into Executive Session at 8:05

Commission exited Executive Session at 8:25

8:30 Carolyn moved to adjourn, Dan seconded