

Draft Notes from 5/28/19 Special Parks Commission Meeting

Written by Yvonne Byrd

Present were Commissioners Kassia, Fabienne, Dan, Carolyn, and Shelby. Staff present were Yvonne, Bill, and Alec, and Geoff joined for the final 45 mins.

Parks Commission in Charter

The Commission shall have charge of the construction, maintenance, and control of all public parks within the City.

WHAT the Park Commission does

Draft Mission -

As elected public guardians of public parks within the City, the Parks Commission sets policies and creates and promotes opportunities and a long-term vision that leverages public support and the cooperation, resources, and tools of critical partners to ensure that parks, gardens, greenways, and natural places are woven into Montpelier's planning and development and are forever available for all who live, work, play, and do business in Montpelier to enjoy a connection to nature.

WHY

Draft Vision

- From the Greenprint:
 - The Parks Commission envisions a Montpelier where no resident is more than a 10- minute walk from a neighborhood park or playground, and no more than a 15-minute walk from a large protected natural area. We envision a city interconnected by greenways that enhance opportunities for residents, especially children, to walk from their neighborhoods to parks, playgrounds, or downtown. We envision a Montpelier where residents retain their connection to the greater environment, including wild and working landscapes surrounding the urban core; a city where residents can step out of 2 their homes and walk, bike, or ski to working farms, windswept mountaintops, or a network of regional trails. Inherent in this vision is a goal to ensure that residents of Montpelier always have opportunities to encounter wildlife within the city limits; and therefore, maintaining a connection to wild lands outside of the city limits is imperative.
- Other aspects of vision talked about at meeting:
 - Montpelier is a recreation destination
 - Parks attract tourists, business, etc. and contribute to a thriving economy
 - People of all ages, abilities, and interests feel welcomed into and use the parks

HOW the work gets done

Parks Commission Responsibilities

- Conduct business in accordance with Vermont laws regarding meetings of public bodies with regards to scheduling, publicizing, agenda setting, providing minutes, etc.
- Define the mission and vision for the parks
- Develop a strategic plan for accomplishing its mission and the vision for the parks

- Identify a work plan with specific actions and a timeline
- Seek resources and opportunities for reaching the targeted outcomes
- Establish and maintain relationships with necessary partners
 - Council (clarity about leadership in establishing new parks, \$ in budget)
 - City Manager's Office
 - Community Services Department & Recreation
 - Police (feedback about dog complaints)
 - Public Works
 - Planning Office
 - Conservation Commission
 - Montpelier Alive
 - Montpelier Schools
 - Tree Board
 - Montpelier Development Association
- Advocate for \$\$ in budget, needed ordinances, adoption of Greenprint, etc.
- Engage with the public to generate understanding of park priorities and support
- Utilizing information and input from the Parks Director set and refine priorities, policies, and a long-term parks management plan
- Protect special natural places and corridors, using tools such as public ownership, conservation easements, trail easements, and zoning regulations

Noted activities excluded from Parks Commission responsibilities

- Micro-management of Director
- Favoring one group over another in policy
- Establishing or overseeing dog parks

Park Director Responsibilities

The Parks Commission cedes broad authority to the Park Director whose responsibility includes, but is not limited to:

- Operate and maintain the parks
- Make decisions about usage and resources
- Manage the budget
- Coordinate events
- Manage other staff and volunteers
- Respond to complaints
- Solve problems
- Seek guidance, when needed, from the Commission regarding a specific operational matter, though this is not a requirement.

- Draft the annual budget in accordance with City and other resources and the Parks Commission priorities and approval

Parks Commission / Parks Director Relationship

- Director makes decisions and performs all work in a manner that is consistent with the policies and vision adopted by the Parks Commission.
- Director ensures the Commission is updated in a timely manner about these and similar matters:
 - unexpected opportunities and challenges
 - progress on projects and goals
 - data and patterns regarding complaints or problems
- Commission utilize information and input provided by the Director in setting and refine policies and priorities and seeking opportunities to realize their vision.
- Commissioners participate in Director hiring and annual review
- Commissioners engage in periodic self-evaluation that includes an invitation to the Director for feedback on their performance

Next Steps

At regular June meeting – agree to mission and vision

At 5/25/19 facilitated meeting develop a strategic plan with short and long term goals, a calendar/planning cycle, and a detailed work plan for the Commission (who, what, when)