



PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION

Monday, August 11, 2025 at 4:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Dana Lathrope
Vice Chair Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Paul Barlow
Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Lucas Green
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff

STAFF PRESENT

Brandon Sundeen, City Councilor
Buck Tupper, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor
Dawn Richardson, Admin Billing Specialist
Jamie Ford, Admin Billing Specialist

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Nick Flory
Commissioner Lynne Pettit

OTHERS

Gilli Williford
Ashley Stanley
Sean Williams

CALL TO ORDER – 4:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the Minutes of July 14, 2025

Motion made by Commissioner Woodruff, Seconded by Commissioner Jacobson to approve the minutes of July 14, 2025.

Voting Yea: Chair Lathrope, Vice Chair Blumenthal, Commissioner Barlow, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Green, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Woodruff

TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR: From attendees not otherwise on the agenda

No topics were brought forward from the floor

NEW BUSINESS

2. Round Table Topic: Parks-Related Questions (Lathrope)

Chair Lathrope introduced a discussion topic, asking: "When visiting a park, what activity do you prefer and why does it bring you joy?"

- Chair Lathrope described her enjoyment of observing the natural environment, appreciating the park's water, plants, and attending individuals.
- Commissioner Belcher shared his routine of walking his dog near the botanical gardens, finding peace in the tranquil surroundings. Scott Jacobson mentioned a current focus on completing park assessments, relishing the sense of accomplishment.
- Commissioner Green enjoys searching for unseen plant species in different areas.
- Commissioner Woodruff finds joy in both participating in and observing sports.
- Vice Chair Blumenthal appreciates seasonal changes in the parks and regularly collects cigarette butts to maintain park cleanliness.
- Commissioner Barlow highlighted park events like concerts and family activities with grandchildren as significant experiences.
- Councilor Sundeen typically seeks relaxation away from crowded playgrounds.
- Tupper mentioned infrequent personal park visits due to professional duties, though he appreciates outdoor areas.

Chair Lathrope acknowledged and celebrated the diverse experiences and gratitude expressed by members for their personal park engagements.

3. Scappoose Bay Watershed - Nob Hill Proposed Treatment Plan

Gilli Williford, Vegetation Manager for the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council, presented concerning invasive plant species in Nob Hill, including American pokeweed and common mullein. Though not legally deemed noxious in Oregon, these invasive plants require attention as pokeweed reproduces rapidly through bird-dispersed seeds. It presents a toxic risk to both animals and humans. Mullein, less widespread than pokeweed, thrives in disturbed areas but can be controlled by shading. Williford noted the impact of such plants on biodiversity, habitat quality, and increasing risks of erosion and fire.

Treatment recommendations included:

- Larger plants: Cutting the plant to the stump, with root removal or targeted herbicide application if necessary.
- Rosettes: Hand-pulling with protective gloves for toxic pokeweed.
- Mullein: Effective management involves cutting below the crown.
- High infestation levels: Herbicide sprays are effective.

Gilli shared that there is an increased risk with this was the site's incline, advocating for hand tools instead of power equipment on the slope.

Vice Chair Blumenthal underscored the urgency, noting increased unmanaged growth following recent disturbances from underground installations. The possibility of contracting removal work was considered, though Tupper suggested possibly using community service workers available on specific weekdays.

The discussion considered managing available resources to replace invasive species with native alternatives. Commissioner Belcher suggested opting for feasible seeding costs from Williford, and Tupper assured that fund allocation was manageable for such concerns.

4. Parks Assessment (Lathrope)

Chair Lathrope expressed excitement for the advance of the park assessment initiative, noting approval for an online assessment form. She collaborated with Tupper to gather and finalize required information, with plans to provide the designated City staff, Kathy, with the form shortly.

Relevant for City-planned maintenance and development, form data will be securely managed under the City's account to ensure accessibility for planning and official requests. The user-friendly form aims to effectively collect relevant data pertinent to park management.

5. Parks Assignments (Lathrope)

Chair Lathrope delineated a structured plan for commissioners to oversee specific park areas using a randomized method to ensure fair distribution. Assigned parks are as follows:

- Chair Lathrope: McCormick Park disc golf course, Dalton Lake and McCormick Park walking trails
- Commissioner Belcher: Campbell Park, McCormick Park playground and Columbia View Park
- Commissioner Jacobson: McCormick Park Veterans Memorial area, Walnut Tree and Grey Cliffs
- Commissioner Green: McCormick Park ball fields, McCormick Park creek and picnic area and McCormick Park skate park
- Commissioner Woodruff: Botanical Gardens, 6th Street and Knob Hill
- Vice Chari Blumenthal: Japanese Gardens and Godfrey
- Commissioner Barlow: Civic Pride and Caster Road Softball Field
- Commissioner Pettit (absent): McCormick Park dog park and Heinie Heumann

The Commission analyzed logistical aspects, including an accessible link for completing online assessments. Essential for data integrity, the form records assessor identification, visitation specifics, park demographic details, facilities, and safety concerns. If Commission members engage the public, an optional feature allows broader data collection. Assignments maintain a three-month span, ensuring their facilitation once City setup is finished.

6. Nick Flory Resignation (Nick Flory)

Jamie Ford, the Administrative Billing Specialist, announced Nick Flory's resignation due to job relocation. The Commission intends to begin the process of finding a qualified replacement.

OLD BUSINESS

7. Bylaws (Jacobson)

Commissioner Jacobson voiced concerns over the bylaws' comprehensiveness regarding operations, planning, and park development responsibilities, exploring adequacy fulfillment.

Clarification subjects included:

- Ambiguity around "publicly accessible buildings," with Tupper suggesting focus on park-specific structures.
- Exploring advisory capacity over budgetary and development aspects.
- Commission's obligations concerning bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

Commissioner Belcher expressed discontent over changes pursued by the City without prior Commission notice (e.g., Sand Island, Riverfront Park). Chair Lathrope emphasized distinguishing advisory capacities over decision-making entitlements, with noted Commission input capacity under City governance but lacking determinative authority.

Tupper encouraged a broad, independent review of both the Municipal Code and Bylaws for potential document revisions to be proposed formally for City Council consideration in future meetings.

8. Milton Creek Reserve - Standing Item

Chair Lathrope summarized a recent commissioner visit to Milton Creek amid City Council development concerns. Recognizing the prevalence of quarries and wetlands, she valued discussions with Commissioner Green over essential local vegetation.

Establishing photographic trails of key locations for comprehensive presentation aims at substantiating boundary preservation recommendations to City Council.

Commissioner Woodruff and Commissioner Jacobson expressed substantive doubts over development viability on the rough terrain. Additionally, Commissioner Jacobson recommended garnering Native American tribal input for the considerations ahead. The Commission empowered Commissioner Jacobson to open dialogue with the tribes historically associated with the land, like the Klatskania and Ne-Pe-Chuck.

Chair Lathrope and Commissioner Green aim to jointly prepare a presentation utilizing compiled resources to buttress future boundary propositions.

STAFF REPORT

Tupper presented several updates:

- Discussions with Bailey Feakin expressed enthusiasm for situating the wind phone near McCormick Park's Japanese Garden.
- Post tree-fall analysis at Sixth Street Park revealed manageable risks beyond typical root concerns for pin oaks.
- Staffing transitional adjustments are in progress, intently anticipating Roger's retirement.

A review of radio-controlled car usage reported no explicit prohibitions, noting various models' nuances promptly. An epoch review of the City's website is underway to ensure accuracy and update recreational information.

Chair Lathrope highlighted potential partnership processing with Crystal for clear, public guidance on "Friends of" group establishment.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Councilor Sundeen, enthused for impending joint sessions, articulated the importance of coordinated discussions, the next scheduled with the Parks and Trails Commission on October 22, 2025, at 4:00 PM.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Vice Chair Blumenthal mentioned various observations:

- Unauthorized usage of electric trucks raised safety concerns, prompting regulation ideas for motorized vehicles in parks.
- Collaborating with Tupper on information placement and blackberry control initiatives.
- Communicated difficulties Code Enforcement faced with leash rule compliance.

The Commission acknowledged leash rule angling seen as persistently weakly supported, suggesting feedback channels might better reinforce authority. Chair Lathrope advocated potential benefit through public awareness measures.

Commissioner Belcher highlighted outset-of-meeting urban trail coordination discussions, coordinated alongside Tupper, eyeing forward-moving actions.

Closing the session without additional discussion points, the meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT - 5:43 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jamie Ford, Administrative Billing Specialist