



JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 4:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Brandon Sundeen
Councilor Gundersen

Chair Dana Lathrope
Vice Chair Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Lucas Green
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Lynne Pettit
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Dawn Richardson, Admin Billing Specialist
Jamie Ford, Admin Billing Specialist

CALL TO ORDER: 4:07 PM

Mayor Massey called the Joint City Council and Parks & Trails Commission meeting to order at 4:07 PM on Wednesday, October 22, 2025. Attendees introduced themselves, including Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen and Councilor Sundeen, and Parks & Trails Commission Members including Chair Lathrope, Vice Chair Blumenthal, and Commissioners Green, Woodruff, Belcher, Jacobson, and Pettit (via Zoom).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. "Friends-of" Groups

Chair Lathrope reported that the City currently has two official "Friends of" groups for Dalton Lake and Nob Hill, with interest from individuals wanting to establish new groups for McCormick Park and the Botanical Gardens. The Commission expressed a need to clarify and streamline the process for creating these groups as the current website information contained outdated contact information and unclear guidelines.

The Council discussed updating the website, which currently lists the Parks Field Supervisor as the contact point, and refining the documented processes. City Administrator Walsh acknowledged the need to review and update the information.

It was noted that Dalton Lake's group is uniquely structured as an "advisory committee" due to the park being owned by ODOT rather than the City, which requires different coordination with multiple entities including the State.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Chair Lathrope presented concerns about the Municipal Code sections related to the Parks & Trails Commission, highlighting two specific issues:

1. The current code-language referring to "publicly accessible buildings and associated grounds" is overly broad and could potentially include facilities like the Police Station or City Hall, which are outside the Commission's intended scope.
2. A requirement for site visits to be approved by the City Engineering Director is impractical and not currently followed.

The Commission also expressed frustration about their limited involvement in recent park projects like the waterfront park development and stage design. They emphasized their desire to be more integrated into the decision-making process and to fulfill their advisory role as stated in the Municipal Code.

Mayor Massey and Council members affirmed their support for better including the Commission in planning processes, particularly at early stages of projects. They discussed possible solutions, including improved staff reporting on parks projects and better communication channels.

3. Parks Assessments

Chair Lathrope introduced a new assessment tool she developed to systematically evaluate City parks. The digital tool allows Commissioners to document observations during park visits, record public feedback, and track maintenance needs. The data is compiled into reports that can be used to inform future planning and maintenance priorities.

The assessment process involves Commissioners being assigned different parks on a rotating basis every three months, ensuring all parks receive attention and that Commissioners become familiar with all City parks, not just those they would normally visit.

Mayor Massey expressed interest in the Council receiving access to the assessment tool and reports, noting that the data collection could also help inform future parks planning and budgeting.

4. Master Plan

Chair Lathrope noted that the Parks & Trails Master Plan is significantly outdated, having been created in 2015. The Commission discussed the need to either amend the existing plan or create an entirely new one.

City Administrator Walsh explained that while updating the plan is a priority, it requires time and resources from the Planning Department, which is currently understaffed. He suggested the Commission compile a list of desired additions or changes to the Master Plan.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Parks & Trails Commission would compile a list of recommended updates at their next meeting, which Chair Lathrope would then present to the City Council at an upcoming meeting rather than waiting until the next joint meeting in April.

5. Milton Creek

Chair Lathrope provided an update on the Milton Creek project, noting that Commissioner Green had prepared a detailed presentation addressing Council's previous questions about the proposed land protection area. Commissioner Green's research demonstrated that the area in question contains valuable natural features including vernal pools and rare camas fields.

Commissioner Jacobson emphasized the ecological significance of the camas fields, noting that of the original 400,000 acres of camas in Nevada, only 1,000 remain, with this site representing five acres (0.5%) of the remaining total.

Mayor Massey requested that Commissioner Green's presentation be shared with the full Council and suggested scheduling this item for a Council meeting in November for possible action.

6. Urban Trail

Commissioner Belcher provided a status update on the Urban Trail project that has been in development for approximately five years. The project includes:

- A constructed kiosk ready to be installed
- Trail templates created by Chair Lathrope and tested by the Parks Division
- A proposed trail route

The originally planned route through Columbia View Park has been delayed due to ongoing construction. The Commission is now seeking:

1. Permission from the County to place the kiosk in the Rose Garden (or an alternative location)
2. Council authorization to implement the Urban Trail project

After discussion about potential kiosk locations, it was determined that the Commission would evaluate placement options in the completed sections of Columbia View Park. Mayor Massey directed City Administrator Walsh to place the Urban Trail implementation on a City Council agenda in November for action.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Massey adjourned the meeting at 5:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Jamie Ford, Administrative Billing Specialist