

PRNR Commission Meeting

Nov 8, 2021

Agenda

6:00 PM – Call to order

Chair, Monika Roth

6:05 PM – Additions/Changes to the Agenda

6:10 PM – Privilege of the Floor (3 min per person) – sign up on line in advance

[Meeting time to be adjusted depending on whether or not there are comments]

6:20 PM – Commission member and advisor announcements if any

6:30 PM - Staff updates (Jeanne and Jim)

6:45 PM – Minutes of Oct. 18 meeting – review/approve

7:00 PM Old Business –

- 1- Art in Park Policy: criteria for evaluation – member review and input (see attached document)
- 2- Green New Deal follow-up – Stephanie
- 3- Terms ending and vacancies – suggestions for candidates (see attached document)

7:30 PM – New Business

- 1- Story Walk proposal for Conley Park – response/recommendation needed
- 2- Lights for Ithaca Falls – Tom Knipe
- 3- Working groups and projects for 2022 –discussion (see attached document)
- 4- Other?

Unfinished Business – to be addressed at future meetings:

-SEQR process input

-Private Tree Ordinance

-Park Signage

-Bolton Point update

-Homeless update

-Cemetery Arboretum Status

-Other?

7:55 PM – Next meeting – Dec. 13, 2021

PRNR Commission Meeting

October 18, 2021

Present: Monika Roth, Dan Hoffman, Stephanie Figary, Ty Moeller

Excused: Scott Freyburger

Absent: Ellen Leventry

Staff: Jim Dalterio, Jeanne Grace

Council liaisons: Graham Kerslick, Cynthia Brock

Guest: Yuki Wu – Cornell student observing meeting

6:05PM – Meeting Called to order by chair Monika Roth.

No Additions or Changes to the Agenda

No one present for Privilege of the Floor

Commission member announcements – Congrats to Ty who passed his dissertation exam

Staff updates

Jim – submitted capital projects funding for rink enclosure and pool upgrades, Rink enclosure is in the Mayor's budget, and about half of the funding was included for the pool upgrades. He is submitting a request above Mayors Budgets (RAMB) proposal for the balance of funds. It is a costly project but after consulting with pool contractors, he submitted the larger request so the job is done properly and completely. Graham asked about timing on the request? Was it submitted prior to the budget decisions being made, Jim said it was. Graham mentioned there are many requests for additional funds which will need to be prioritized. Monika shared a draft letter from PRNR supporting the request for additional funds. Members present at the meeting unanimously endorsed the letter to be send to council and the Mayor.

Jeanne – lots of upcoming activities: Tomorrow 10 AM, bulb planting at Cass Park along Waterfront trail. November – crew will be grinding tree stumps and then planning new trees.

Citizen Pruner volunteers are winding up their season. The new volunteer group of EcoStewards will continue to work on some projects depending on weather. This season there have been several staff vacancies which has made it a bit challenging to keep up with work.

Minutes of Sept 13 meeting -motion to approve by Hoffman, second by Figary, all present in favor.

Old Business –

Draft Art in Park Policy – Monika has been researching as to whether there is city-wide public art policy in place in the city. It seems there was a plan in 2003, and the Public Arts Commission was originally in charge of this, but now Community Life is not meeting and recent projects have fallen to Planning Dept staff. Cynthia mentioned that in 2014 there was a plan for where to locate murals and is wondering where she might find this (Caleb Thomas perhaps might have this). Input from several of the individuals contacted indicated that they feel it is time to update the city art policy. Monika may encourage folks to convene at year end or early in 2022.

The question raised is: should the Art in Parks policy move forward in the absence of an overarching public art policy? Everyone felt that it would be good to start raising awareness about the proposed policy sooner rather than later since it takes a long time for proposals like this to be acted upon. It was agreed that Monika will try to get on the PEDC and BPW agendas before year end to introduce the work being done to draft an art in parks policy. Tyler agreed to help with this outreach. Cynthia mentioned that elections are coming up for half of the Council members so we may want to wait till winter. The idea of raising awareness and getting feedback sooner rather than later was important to PRNR members so we will look into which upcoming meetings to attend.

Private Street Tree Ordinance update – Jeanne has information from Nikki Cerra in Planning. Will share at the November or December meeting.

Bolton Point project in Six Mile Creek - restoration plan update – Jeanne has been monitoring the situation. There are some valve leakage problems so the project is not yet completed. Jeanne worked with Bolton Point to order a native wildflower meadow mix and annual ryegrass for seeding this fall. She has developed a list of small trees and shrubs for spring planting. Beaver concerns in the area means plants will need protection. The trail entrance path will also be re-established.

Discussed Natural areas ecologically informed guidelines – for work in Natural areas. Dan indicated that guidelines were developed (around 2014) but the question is where they can be found. Monika will ask Julie Holcomb. Dan - ask past Natural Areas Commission members. There is a permit application for work in natural areas.

It is important for this Commission to know what policies are in place related to parks and natural areas and gather these in one place...drop box or google folder.

[Tyler volunteered to create a shared google folder for documents, unless someone has already done this].

Park Signage – Jeanne indicated she met with Ellen and that most of the park sign text has been created. The plan will be to finalize and order signs and posts before the year's end.

Homeless update – there is an ongoing problem that no one entity seems to be addressing. Many business owners and residents are complaining about the activity, theft missing shopping carts, noise, environmental concerns, etc. No one seems to have the ultimate authority to do something.

Terms ending and vacancies – suggestions for candidates

7:40 PM – New Business

SEQR process – how we can plug in better -waiting to hear from Lisa Nicholas; part of our charge as a commission but it is hard to know exactly when to plug into the process to comment.

Ideas on how vegetated green spaces could be enhanced to capture more carbon –follow up discussion related to GND – consider at a future meeting

Working groups and projects for 2022 – Monika suggested 3 groups:

Natural areas – working towards a natural areas plan and staff; Cemetery might be include here as well, it now has arboretum designation.

Parks (and Recreation) – Cynthia mentioned that Recreation needs and facilities are also part of our charge; Perhaps combine with Parks? Since many of the parks have recreational facilities.

Green Space – funding for parks, rec, natural areas including grants, fees, etc. plus SEQR, GND, etc.

Each working group will need a charge. Have at least 2-3 commission members per group, and then each group can recruit other members to help. At next meeting discuss more what groups make sense and how to move forward with initiatives to improve parks, recreation and natural resources. Monika shared some website resources at the end of the agenda that could be reviewed by all for ideas.

Committee Vacancies: at year end there are 3 people whose terms are ending – Monika, Scott and Ellen. Monika and Scott are willing to continue another term. Need to check with Ellen.

Tyler will be leaving the area so his seat is open, plus one additional seat.

People are encouraged to suggest names. Monika will send a press release.

One person has applied however, she is not a city resident and we already have 2 non-city residents.

She may be a good working group candidate – for natural areas.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM

Next meeting – Nov. 8, 2021

2022 PRNR Commission Members

Continuing members:

Dan Hoffman Term ends at end of 2022

Stephanie Figary Term ends at end of 2022 (not city resident)

Paul Paradine Term ends at end of 2022 (not city resident)

Resigning

Ty Moeller Term ends at end of 2022 – so this leaves a 1 year term open

Eligible to serve another 2 year term – reappointments

Monika Roth Term would end at end of 2023 – willing to serve

Scott Freyburger Term would end at end of 2023 – willing to serve

Ellen Leventry Term would end at end of 2023

Vacancies to Fill

One year term – Term ends at end of 2022

Two – 2 year terms Terms end at end of 2023

Criteria for Evaluating proposed Art projects for City Parks (based on policy)

Pre-Application Inquiries

- Nature of Art – Description - is it appropriate for the park location – message, function, scale, etc.
- What does the art intend to convey (message)? Is it respectful of culture, history, neighborhood character?
- Who is the intended audience?
- How do people interact with the art?
- What are the materials?
- Is there be any impact on plant or wildlife habitat?
- How is safety being addressed?
- How long does the applicant envision the piece to be in place? Likely durability of the piece?
- Who is responsible for installing, maintaining, and removing the art?
- Does the applicant have insurance?
- Has it been reviewed by City Life Commission?
- Is community/neighborhood input needed?

Full Review – of submitted application

- Full description – questions?
- How does the art complement or enhance the park experience?
- Has safety been addressed?
- Artist qualifications? (Community Life role)
- Sponsoring organization – capacity to follow thru with installation, maintenance and removal
- Duration of exhibit?
- Input from Community Life Commission?
- Input from Community/neighborhood?
- Presentation to PRNR Commission

Summary of findings/recommendations/next steps

Upon review of the full application, PRNR will prepare a report with recommendations that will be shared with the City Life Commission, appropriate Planning staff, Planning and Economic Development Committee, and the Board of Public Works, before submitting it to Common Council for final approval.

Proposed PRNR Work Plan for 2022

General:

- Survey of residents regarding neighborhood parks
- Review overall parks and recreation plan and set priorities based on recommendations
 - Grants for improvements
 - Separate Parks & Rec Department
 - Regional Parks Commission for Stewart and Cass Park?
- Website information – location of city green spaces, connector maps/trails or routes from one location to next...
- Development/Development implications for green space and use of parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities (SEQR Role, implications for GND)
- Raising money for Green spaces: public spaces, recreation, parks, natural areas – strategies
- Commission document records

Follow-up details on work already done:

- Memorial policy – get this on the website (meet with City web staff and Jeanne)
- Art in Parks – continue to clarify as needed and move towards adoption (by Spring 2022)
 - identify art location ideas for parks
 - post policy on website
 - encourage the furtherance of an art in public places policy (City Life)
- Park Signage installation (by Spring 2022)
- Park info on City Website (status?)
- Private property tree removal ordinance (by Spring 2022)
- SEQR review – how to make this PRNR role more workable

Specific Topics:

NATURAL AREAS

- natural areas review/plan
- need for protection/education
- deer and invasives management
- Natural areas manager position
- Grants
- Volunteers - Ecostewards

Specific issues/opportunities:

- Ithaca Falls as a major tourism destination – overall plan for improvements (tourism grant)
 - Ezra's tunnel
- Negundo Woods/Southwest Park – Homeless impact
- Stewart Park – Fuertes Bird Sanctuary – improvements?

PUBLIC SPACES

- Golf Course (geese)
- Cemetery – Arboretum
- Waterfront/waterways

RECREATION FACILITIES

- Cass Park: Pool, Rink, Athletic Fields
- Stewart Park – tennis courts
- Play structures in Neighborhood Parks – safety, upgrades needed, additional facilities?

PARKS

- Memorials (Promote donations? Locations for memorials, etc)
- Art in Parks
- Needs assessment/neighborhood input
 - Infrastructure: benches, picnic tables, etc.
 - Plantings
- Adopt-a-Park

TREES & other public plantings

- Street trees - City Forestry Dept.
- Private Property Tree ordinance
- Volunteers – Citizen Pruners
- Beautification – CCE connection

PROPOSED WORKING GROUPS:

- A. Parks & Recreation
- B. Natural Areas
- C. General Topics/direction