



**MINE FALLS PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
Monday May 5, 2025**

Attendees: Paul Lochhead, Bryan Conant, Dave Silva, Dick Gillespie, Steve Kenney, Lon Hohberger

Guest observers: Ben Davis

Call to Order – 7:00 PM

Approval of March Meeting Minutes:

Paula motioned to approve the March Meeting Minutes. Lon seconded this motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Parks Dept Report, Bryan Conant:

1. Bryan discussed the 1953 culvert into the canal at 7th Street. Silt has built up in the canal over the decades and has created an island near the 7th Street canal bridge. City engineers have looked at the issue and determined it's okay for now and any work can be deferred. Dick suggested we have Normandeau & Associates look at it and see what can be done and if dredging is an option. The committee agreed that we should look at dredging the area to improve water depth. At the request of the committee, Bryan will reach out to Normandeau to get their input and to see about getting a quote. Steve and Brian will visit the site as well.
2. Bryan started the discussion on the unsheltered problem in the park since it is a common topic at all our meetings. The committee agreed it is the most significant matter currently facing the park. Dave provided photos he had recently taken of encampments currently in the park and at the Gate City Fence entrance. This is a hot topic. Feedback from volunteers and committee members has been very critical of these encampments and the negative impact they have on visiting the park, creating an environment that is not welcoming nor considered safe. Though the city has addressed the committee with what steps it is taking, it has proven to not be reducing the number of encampments within and adjacent to the park. Paula commented that the lack of affordable housing could also be contributing to the issue. Dave commented that the city should have a rapid response team or hazmat team that can clean up the sites. Paula commented that these encampments are destroying the park. Steve commented

Submitted May 8, 2025
Steve Kenney



that the city has a policy in place regarding the overnight presence of people in the park but that it doesn't seem to be a deterrent. Dave and Paul both commented that this is a city problem and not a park problem and the city must do something. Steve suggested drafting a letter to the Board of Alderman and presenting it at the next BOA. Dave said he would draft up the letter and allow the board to review it before submitting it. Lon commented that Forest Park in St. Louis, a park he recently biked didn't have any encampments and it was large. We asked him to reach out to them to see if they could provide suggestions. It was also decided that the committee will no longer be cleaning up abandoned encampments. Collecting the waste from these sites, some of which includes human waste and medical supplies (needles) should not be performed by volunteers. Some committee members who have recently departed the committee had commented that they felt like free labor and the city was not doing enough to eradicate the encampments in the park.

3. We transitioned to other successes in the park. Bryan brought up the pond leveler at Oxbow Lake and showed in a video on his phone how it was working. The device should help keep Spline Road from flooding.

Committee Report:

1. Steve discussed the upcoming Trail Day. He will be away and Dave will handle it. We have a folks from the Academy of Science and Design joining for the field day. They had reached out to the Parks Department and Bryan passed the contact information on to Steve. They may have a large group. For projects we have bark mulch and gravel spreading near the flagpole at the soccer fields. We also have painting of the pump and electrical sheds near the flagpole as well as painting of a wall of the electrical shed near the south high school entrance. Paula mentioned the painting of some tagged rocks along Spine Road that should be covered. Brian will ensure mulch and gravel is delivered. Scott Painter may have paint from the last trail day. Steve and Bryan will visit the shed prior to the trail day to ensure all the materials, and water, are in the shed.
2. Paula continued her quest for funds for the necessary Gate House repairs. She hopes to have a proposal for the repairs by June 18 and hopes to secure some funding for those repairs. She should have a plan by November.



At approximately 8:15pm, Dick motioned to conclude the meeting. Paula seconded the motion and the meeting was closed.

2025 Meeting Dates

- February 3, 2025
- March 3, 2025
- April 7, 2025
- May 5, 2025
- June 2, 2025
- August 4, 2025
- September 8, 2025
- October 6, 2025
- November 3, 2025
- December 1, 2025

2025 Trail Days

- April 19, 2025
- May 17, 2025
- June 21, 2025
- August 16, 2025
- September 27, 2025 (should plan for reduced DPW labor)
- October 25, 2025