

I am deeply saddened by the tragic death of Billy Moore, and committed to taking prompt and tough measures to prevent future acts of senseless violence in the community.

While the Mayor, as Police Commissioner, and the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) are taking the lead in strengthening public safety and management approaches, my office and Portland Parks and Recreation (Parks Bureau) have been working closely with them over the past several weeks.

Following the community meeting on June 24, we joined with the Mayor's office, the Police Bureau, Guardian Management, the HAP, Parks Bureau, the New Columbia Owners' Association, Tri-Met and the Boys and Girls Club to outline a number of short and long-term strategies to address the well being of New Columbia and the surrounding areas.

Mayor Adams will convene a second community meeting at New Columbia on July 22 to discuss these plans with the community. Representatives from my office and the Parks bureau will attend as well.

In the meantime, I wanted to provide you an update on the ongoing and renewed efforts related to McCoy Park.

On June 28, we launched the fourth year of summer programming in the park. This year, the Summer Playground program provides positive supervised activities for children ages 4 and up from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. Nutritious lunches are provided through the federal free lunch program at noon. Please come by, introduce yourself to the staff, and see what's happening. If you or your friends and neighbors would like to volunteer with the program, please contact Karen Birt, Supervisor at the University Park Community Center (503.823.0203).

The Parks Bureau, Boys & Girls Club, and HAP staff are developing additional programs and activities in their recreation facilities and at McCoy Park to engage youth and connect with families. Look for Parent/Mentor nights at the park. These community evenings will revolve around activities for children to participate WITH an adult /older teen, mentor or parent.

We all recognize the value of employment opportunities for young people this summer. The Mayor's office of Youth Violence Prevention has identified some funding that can be used to employ youth, and we'll be working with them and the Boys and Girls Club to create those opportunities - in McCoy Park, at recreation facilities and elsewhere in our park system. .

Many have asked for McCoy Park to be closed earlier, believing that the park closes at midnight. The park actually closes at 10pm - and reopens at 5am. We are working with HAP, Guardian and the police to increase enforcement of the closure hours. You can help by reporting to the police when you see activity in the park after hours.

The Parks Bureau has drafted a new park rule to provide that an exclusion from New Columbia properties also serves as an exclusion from McCoy Park. This will give the police and private security another enforcement tool, and will prevent trouble-makers from trying to use McCoy Park as a safe refuge.

The Parks Bureau is also going to evaluate whether there are areas in the park that could be modified to allow more visibility into and through the park. This could involve trimming or removal of some vegetation and/or trees.

McCoy Park will once again be hosting family-friendly free concerts this summer. New Columbia and other private and public partners have worked with the Parks Bureau to bring these concerts to your neighborhood, as part of the “Summer Free for All” in Portland Parks. This is another opportunity for you and your friends and neighbors to come together for a positive, fun activity in the center of the community. The concerts start at 6 p.m. on the following days:

Sunday, July 11: Norman Sylvester Band (original R&B);

Sunday, July 18: Gretchen Mitchell Band (jazzy blues);

Sunday, July 25: Portland International Raceway presents Jujuba (Afro beat & juju);

Tuesday, Aug 3: Reggie Houston's Box of Chocolates (N'Awlins jazz)

I plan to attend the concert this Sunday, July 11, and hope to see you there.

My commitment to New Columbia transcends my role as Commissioner-in-Charge of Parks. I have a personal stake in the vision that created this new community. I am deeply committed to maintaining McCoy Park as a safe and welcoming asset to the neighborhood, and working with the Mayor, HAP and others to enhance the safety and well-being of the entire community.

Please feel free to forward this message on to your friends and neighbors in New Columbia and the Portsmouth neighborhood. Thank you for your commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

Nick Fish
Commissioner