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**Minutes**

**Girdwood Trails Committee**

**Regular Monthly Meeting -- Tuesday, December 6, 2016**

**Girdwood Community Room, 7pm**

**Call to Order** 7:05PM Carolyn Brodin, Chair

Agenda Approved
November 1, 2016 minutes Approved

**Announcements:**

Girdwood Trails Committee will vote to seat the GTC officers at their regular meeting on TUE January 3, 2017.

Girdwood Land Use Committee will vote to seat the LUC officers their regular meeting on MON January 9, 2017.

GBOS seats D and E are up for election and will be on the April 4, 2017 Anchorage Municipal Election ballot.

**Introduction of Guests/Presentations
Old Business**

Interagency Land Management Agreements (Kyle Kelley)

* + California Creek Trailhead & Beaver Pond/Abe’s Trailhead

Kyle Kelley continuing to work with Kyle Kidder on this IMLA which would allow Trails Committee to take over maintenance of Trailhead land for California Creek and Abe’s Trails when current agreement between State of AK and Dept of Natural Resources expires.

* + USFS/MOA/GTC Memorandum of Understanding, exp 2017 Update (Kyle Kelley)

USFS just completed draft document, which will now go out for MOA signatures and then be countersigned by USFS.

*Trails Issues:*

* Girdwood Service Area boundary/language for ballot proposition

As previously discussed, the Girdwood Service Area boundary does not include the Girdwood Hand Tram area, Beaver Pond, California Creek/Abe’s Trail, and Virgin Creek Trailhead. In order to spend municipal funds and staff time on projects in these areas, either the Girdwood Service Area boundary must be expanded or Trails will need to work on them without MOA funds or paid staff. In addition, police are not able to respond to those areas because they are outside of the boundary.

At the last meeting of GTC, there was a motion passed which requested that the MOA attorneys begin to draft language for a ballot measure within the GVSA to annex these lands. The MOA is looking for strong show of support for the ballot measure from GTC as well as Land Use and Girdwood Board of Supervisors.

Group reviewed language proposed for a GBOS Resolution of Support for annexation of the land. This resolution will be further reviewed and edited by the Land Use Committee and GBOS Land Supervisor before consideration at the GBOS meeting on December 19.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 3, 2017 in the Girdwood Community Room at 7:00 pm**

Girdwood Trails Committee Agendas and minutes are available on line: <http://www.muni.org/gbos>



Motion:

The Girdwood Trails Committee moves to recommend the language presented for Resolution 2016-15 in Support of the Girdwood Valley Service Area Annexation of HLB property on which trails and trailheads exist.

Motion by Brian Burnett; 2nd by Dwaine Schuldt

17 in favor; 1 opposed

Motion passes

**Trail Issues:**

* **Conceptual proposed multi-use year round trails by Girdwood Nordic Ski Club (GNSC)**

GNSC announces Winter Solstice Community ski event will be held on December 22. More info to come.

At the last meeting of the GTC, GNSC was asked to provide answers to the following questions and concerns, to clarify the conceptual plan for the multi-use, year-round trail proposal.

**Area to be used for trail (Impact to trail users on the Meadows Trail and Stumpy’s Summer Trail/Pristine wilderness setting that others enjoy without trail). Are there other trail location options to consider?**

Brian presented that the location was selected because of its high and dry location. Snow falls and stays better

in locations with good ground. Locations on the other side of Glacier Creek are not desirable because of the lack of interconnectivity for grooming equipment. GNSC believes that the trail can be built with as little tree cutting as possible and will not be negatively impactful to the existing trails in the meadows and Stumpy’s Summer Trail. He states that the GNSC is willing to discuss alternatives to the trail route to lessen the impact – move it away from Stumpy’s trail where it is too close. The trail is flagged, and people are encouraged to go and check it out.

Concern expressed that the trail being placed in the forest in that location will negatively impact the Trail User Experience on the other nearby trails. The new trails will be visible from the existing trail, and the experience of hiking or skiing on these existing trails will be altered by the presence of the new trail alignment.

**Trail construction type (Tread width, Clearing width, too many trees to be cut, Over-building of trail)**

Conceptual plan for trail is for 3.5m width, hardpack ground. GNSC is open to consider limbing some trees instead of cutting them in order to achieve snow coverage on the trail. Width at 3.5m is adequate for 2 skiers, bikers, hikers to pass, for groomer to drive through. This is similar to width of trail through Enchanted Forest.

Concerns expressed are that this width is greater than is needed if skiers coordinate when passing each other, and that banking of corners or other features may create wider trail than is being presented. In addition, in summer, this trail will be better as a singletrack bike/hike trail than as a wider open stretch, matching a desire for bike trail experience not really available in Girdwood. People express that although they use the Nordic 5k in summer for hiking and biking, it is not their preferred experience, and want to avoid creating more trails similar to the wide open hardpack of that trail.

Diana Livingston asked if the trail will be used for competitions. Brian says probably not, but perhaps for classic ski race.

**Trail Maintenance**

GNSC has a proven track record for building and maintaining trails, including substantial trail maintenance during the summer months and in response to weather/wind events.

**Community outreach (Need to collect community input, survey of trail users, Determine type/location of additional trails desired by trail users & community)**GNSC created and distributed a survey via facebook and email to gather community input after the meeting last month. Brian presented the results of that survey, which shows strong support for trails.

Comments are that it is difficult to interpret the data collected from this survey as people may or may not know specific information about the trail GNSC is proposing. Overall, everyone in the room is supportive of trails, the issue is where and what type. Distribution so far may not have covered the need to reach out to the community, recommend specific meetings to discuss in detail the proposed area and style of trail in order to get informed opinions of the trail concept.

Carolyn Brodin commented that she is concerned that people state their support for a trail and then may find that it is larger and more impactful than they realized. She wants to avoid repeating situation that occurred with 5k.

**Access to trail (DOT Access on Airport land/Parking access/Any concerns about access from new parking at end of Arlberg extension)**

Brian states that it is too early to have this information. GNSC plans to meet with DOT regarding airport access in the future, and this information will be part of future discussions.

**Profile of proposed trail with comparison to Nordic 5K trail along with consideration of above items.**

Brian states that it is too soon for this to be created as well. GNSC is still in the conceptual planning phase, and is considering trail style, profile, etc with community input.

Kyle states that these are plans that usually come in many phases, 10%, 50%, 80% and final design stages, all able to be adjusted during the process.

**Take step back and give project time to mature and for public to consider.**

Brian states that this is exactly where GNSC is in the process. They have a concept that they like, and are bringing it to the public to consider and comment on. Project will not proceed without GTC support. However, the goal of the GNSC is to build ski trails, so Ski Trail designed use is the objective of their group.

**Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission (HLBAC)**Brian Burnett is scheduled to present the conceptual plan and map that has been presented at GTC to the Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission on THU December 8. Comments from the GTC are that this presentation may be premature, and that since there is not voiced support for the trail concept, perhaps he should postpone his presentation until the community, GTC and GNSC have come closer to agreement on the trail proposal. Brian states that meeting with HLBAC is a preliminary step, to see if the land owner is interested in a trail easement through this land. This is a critical step that should be taken before further consideration of possible trails on that parcel occurs, and possibly should have occurred prior to coming to GTC. Brian states that the trail will not be constructed if it doesn’t have support from GTC.

Several attending the meeting express that they believe the process here is somewhat off-kilter. They recommend that GNSC could come to GTC with the concept, gain support at GTC and have GTC pursue the land with HLBAC. As with USFS trails, most are built by others and then turned over to the public land entity to manage later on. Following this concept, the GNSC and GTC would work together. Brian states that GTC has not built new trails in years. GNSC has been recently successful in building and fundraising for new trails.

In conclusion, Brian states that new trails are in the community’s best interest. They are an asset to the community, promoting healthy lifestyles, industry and commerce for all businesses in Girdwood.

Kyle comments that Parks and Rec staff and GTC cannot do all that needs to happen in trails in Girdwood. Volunteer groups such as the Nordic Club and Mtn Bike Alliance are key in making trails, trail improvements and maintenance throughout the GVSA. HLB doesn’t want to promote something that is not what the community wants, and this presentation is just the first step in the process.

Moving forward, Carolyn Brodin says she wants to see a dual effort with GTC and the GNSC to reach out to the community as a whole and have dialog about what type of trail, where, and to what design standard.

* **Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance (Dan Starr) - Progress report**

Dan Starr presents on behalf of GMBA. Recent meetings have created the raw organization of the GMBA. Board has been seated, and bylaws written. Next is creation of a membership plan, similar to that of the GNSC with a paid membership base (non-voting) and a decision-making board.

Working on launching a website, and planning a fundraiser for January.

Likely to have article in Glacier City Gazette timed to help promote the fundraiser.

Subject project would be mtn bike flow trails built within the 5k loop. Plan is for singe track, clearing width unknown. GMBA is working on a conceptual plan to bring forward to GTC. Dan states concern that he’s following direction from GTC on how to go about building trails, but this structure seems the same as what GNSC is doing and the result is friction between the two groups.

Kyle states that the land under consideration this project would require HLB permitting as well. There are no established trails within the area, so the project is significantly different in that respect.

* DOT/Airport Upper Valley Trail Access

No new information to report.

* Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Safety Corridor

A few areas of overflow on to the bike path have appeared with the colder weather. Working with DOT to fix this.

Comment: At Glacier View, make sure that the plowing goes tight around the road/bike path. Kyle says he’ll talk to road crews about that item.

* Girdwood Community Trails Plan

95 page document has been received from the layout/design contractor that we hired. Kate Sandberg painstakingly edited the document, and now the sub-committee is meeting to review the draft. Items still to be added are maps, photos, executive summary. It’s a big project for a small group of volunteers. Trail plan document should clarify the process for determining what new trails to build and where, and should be a great asset to the groups that are currently meeting about ski and mtn bike trails.

* Hand tram work (welds, paint, lock)

Cold Temperatures delayed flying out the hand tram for service. Still plan on doing this, but waiting for better weather window.

* Trail maps

As requested at GTC, Margaret researched some on-line options for Girdwood trail maps. Some of them may require volunteers to load maps on to the sites.

Brian Burnett mentioned creating a Girdwood Trails map app for mobile devices.

* Prep for winter

Grooming started on the 5k last week, thanks Jim Braham.

No plowing or sand on the bike path along the Arlberg extension, so it makes a nice ski in as well.

Derek Ruckel volunteered time and equipment to get Moose Meadow trail packed. No grooming or dragging until 18” of snow is on the meadow. Current snow depth is about 10” of light cold snow.

* + grooming startup plan

Groomer training on SAT 12/10 at 10AM. Volunteers must complete waiver and training before they can groom.

* Other Trails Issues

Discussion of facebook post about snare/trap on Lower Iditarod Trail. Is this legal?

Kyle says land is HLB and no trapping/snares are allowed on HLB property.

Group discusses that there used to be trap release demonstrations in the late fall/early winter conducted by USFS. There are also videos on the AK dept of Fish and Game website:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=trapping.sharing>

* Financial Report (Diana Livingston)

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| Girdwood Trails Committee Financial Report |
| December 6, 2016 |  |  |
| Account with Girdwood Inc. |  | $14,936.72 |
| Reserve for Trail Signs |  |  (500.00) |
| Reserve for Forest Fair Fund |  |  (80.03) |
| Balance Unreserved Funds |  | $14,356.69 |

* Grants:
* Anchorage Park Foundation Grant (lower Iditarod Trail work). Received reimbursement for Andy Hehnlin’s bill $1465 from APF. GTC has about $1000 left to match, and then we can file for full reimbursement.
* KMTA Grant ($7,000 matching for Girdwood Trails Plan). Received bill for $3500 for work on the layout and design. Turned bill over to Diana to pay with Girdwood Inc GTC funds and will submit disbursement request tomorrow. GTC is keeping track of volunteer hours on Trail Plan document for matching requirement.
* SOA Recreational Trails Grant ($50,000 request for Lower Iditarod Trail Work). Submitted grant application and received positive feedback from State of AK staff who reviewed it. Provided additional information as requested, and now we wait for State Agency Review period (Feb-Mar), when ORTAB will review requests and make recommendations.

*Updates*

* Newspaper Article

Discussed joint article regarding ski trails in the future.

For now, Winter trail etiquette and/or winter grooming.

* December LUC/GBOS Meeting Representative

Brian Burnett will attend both

**New Business**GTC Elections in January

Fungus Fair 2017

Discussed requirements to be beneficiary of Fungus Fair evening event, including signing of contracts with Alyeska Resort, booking band, and securing auction items. Kyle lets group know that this would need to be strongly supported within GTC, as staff time is limited. GTC decides to decline opportunity this year, request to be considered again in the future.

**Other Business**

Question about inviting skijoring group to come and hold races in Moose Meadow again. Kyle states that the group hasn’t inquired for permits for the last couple years based on snow conditions. They were a great group and we’d love to have them again. They just need to request a permit.

Meeting adjourned 9:06PM