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**Minutes**

**Girdwood Trails Committee**

**Regular Monthly Meeting -- Tuesday, November 1, 2016**

**Girdwood Community Room, 7pm**

**Call to Order 7:00PM, Carolyn Brodin, Chair**

Agenda Approved

October 4, 2016 minutes approved with change

**Introduction of Guests/Presentations**Several people attending who are new to Girdwood Trails Committee, representing on behalf of Girdwood Nordic Ski Club and the Girdwood Mtn Bike Alliance.

**Old Business**

*Trails Agreements:*

* Interagency Land Management Agreements (Kyle Kelley)
	+ California Creek Trailhead & Beaver Pond/Abe’s Trailhead

These agreements, which currently give management authority of the Dept of Natural Resources land to AK State Parks, are expiring. When the current agreement expires, goal is to have management authority go to Girdwood Parks and Rec.

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

This agreement is expiring, and USFS and Girdwood parks and Rec are working on renewal.

*Trails Issues:*

**Girdwood Service Area boundary/Hand Tram**

As previously discussed, the Hand Tram is outside of the Girdwood Service Area (GSA) boundary, making it illegal to spend Municipal funds on tram work, including Parks and Rec staff time.

This has come up due to review of the GSA relating to policing services. In reviewing other trails outside of the boundary, Virgin Creek Trail and part of Abe’s/California Creek Trails are also outside of the GSA. It hasn’t been an issue as work on the hand tram has been done with funds from a RAC grant held by Girdwood Inc, not MOA funds. However, that grant has now been closed, and there is work to be done on the hand tram in the future, which will require Girdwood Parks and Rec staff time.

The solutions to this are:

1. Increase the GSA perimeter to include trail/trails

Girdwood Trails Committee can support change to make GSA boundary be made larger

This could be some parts, or all that are outside the current boundary

There are no homes in these lands; land will still be owned by HLB

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 6, 2016 in the Girdwood Community Room at 7:00 pm**

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



This would allow for law enforcement to assist in situations with illegal camping, etc.

To make this happen, GTC would need to move to support putting the item on the April ballot for GVSA voters only. GTC would need to help promote the proposition and educate public on the need for the extension of the service area.

1. Girdwood Trails Committee commit to handling work on these trails independently of Girdwood Parks and Rec

GTC can apply for and receive grants and/or other fundraising and use those funds to work on the trail without using Girdwood parks and rec staff support. Staff can volunteer their time toward these projects.

Group discusses the options. There is some concern of unintended consequences of extending the GSA in these other areas. Steve Halverson asks if there is a way to make this just a park service boundary instead of extending other services (police). Brian Burnett asks if this has any possibility that this will commit funds to road maintenance on Crow Creek Road, and if it obligates Girdwood Fire Dept to additional response.
Kyle says he’ll double check on making it only a park area boundary, instead of the full GSA. Overall, his understanding is that it does not change scope for road service or fire dept. Assistance of police in handling issues on the trails outside of the current boundary could be helpful, as there is no other enforcement mechanism to deal with camps and behavior that sometimes occur on those trails and at the trailheads.

Motion:

Girdwood Trails Committee moves to have Municipality of Anchorage legal department draft language for a ballot proposition for the April municipal election. Proposition is to extend the Girdwood Service Area boundary to include the Hand Tram, Virgin Creek Trail and Beaver Pond/Abe’s Trail alignments. GTC will have the opportunity to review language at the December GTC meeting.

Motion made by Dwaine Schuldt, 2nd by Lynne’ Doran

Motion passes 10-1

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

Brian Burnett presents proposed trails on behalf of the Girdwood Nordic Ski Club.

Plan is for approximately 4.1k of new trail, located in wooded area between meadows and Glacier Creek, looping design around perimeter of trees/meadows.

Construction of proposed trails would take place in two phases, the first being a figure 8 in the close set of trees, the 2nd being an extension from the top loop that connects with the existing winner creek/cat track area.

Trail would be multi-use, multi-species, year-round.

Alignment stays away from most other trails, although there is some impact to existing Stumpy Summer Trail and the winter-use meadow trails.

Construction access would be from the end of the Airport Road, along utility easement that connects to bridges behind hotel/Our Lady of the Snows Church. At Chugach transformer box, a new access route would be cut for trail building equipment access to the trail site in the woods. This would likely become trail access for users off the airport road (DOT land); winter access from parking lot at the end of the new Arlberg extension.

Trail will be narrower than Nordic 5K loop, which is 35’ clearing width.

Current plan is for 6-8’ trail tread; 12-15’ clearing width

Hardened trail surface

need to open canopy to allow snow to fall on trail tread.

Anticipated total cost is approximately $500,000.

Girdwood Nordic Ski Club is seeking support from Girdwood Trails Committee. They plan to present to HLB Advisory Commission in December, as well as LUC, GBOS and eventually the Anchorage Assembly.

Group discusses the desire to maintain the trail experience on the primitive Stumpy’s Summer Trail and the winter meadows trails. Concern that the trail will be visible and impactful to the users of these trails that have traditionally been quiet and rustic. Concern that the Nordic trail hasn’t been used at capacity due to lack of snow since its completion. Perhaps construction of a trail wide enough for skiing is premature. Concern about access from DOT Airport land and resort land (by Our Lady of the Snows).

Will Brennan, trail builder for USFS suggests that compromise could be in different trail profile. Wider clearing width, limbing trees for snowfall, but narrower single track trail tread with organic material on the sides of the trail. This would still be snowmachine groomable. This would provide better coordination with users of other trails. Paul Crews agrees that this would be better for multi-use. For walking/hiking a narrower trail is better. Brian Burnett agrees about narrower trail being better for the user group represented in the meeting, however there are other trail users, people with strollers, or those not comfortable with sightlines of narrower trail, who will use this trail if it is built to original design standard.

Deb Crogan recalls that at the last meeting Deb Essex mentioned a community survey to determine the desires of the community. Has that been sent out, or are there plans to do so. Brian remembers the discussion but says they haven’t worked on that yet.

Carolyn Brodin says that at the first meeting, this topic was at the end of the night, and all agreed it was a big concept to digest. She doesn’t feel informed enough to vote on this tonight, and wants to continue discussion to find alternatives, compromises.

Strong support for the trail is voiced by Nordic Ski Club members and Girdwood Mtn Bike Alliance members. These trails are needed for beginner mtn bike riders; Girdwood lacks mtn bike trails. Winner Creek is limited: easy part of trail is walk-only; harder part is too difficult for many riders. Also number of pedestrians on Winner Creek trail make biking difficult on that trail. Also Nordic Ski club has proven themselves to be great stewards of the skiing resources in the valley, grooming, trail building, removal of blowdown, etc. They’ve been good partners in trail work with Girdwood Trails Committee.

Will Brennan suggests that maybe the group should take a step back. First discussing that there may be a need for more trails, discussing what type and where, and then working toward a plan to create them. Possible that we end up looking at this type of trail in the proposed location, but through a process that considers needs and alternatives at the outset.

Group decides not to vote on this item at this time. Group is wary of the trail as proposed. A list of primary concerns is below. Girdwood Nordic Ski Club to address these concerns at the next GTC meeting. Jim Braham states that there is no rush to get to HLB Advisory Commission meeting for approval in December. This project is a long term one, several years in the making.

Primary concerns to be addressed:

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?

Trail construction type

Tread width
Clearing width

Too many trees to be cut
Over-building of trail

 Maintenance

Community outreach Need to collect community input Survey of trail users Determine type/location of additional trails desired by trail users & community
Access to trail DOT Access on Airport land Parking access Any concerns about access from new parking at end of Arlberg extension

Kyle requests profile of proposed trail with comparison to Nordic 5K trail along with consideration of above items.

**Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance (Nick Georgelos) - Progress report**

Group members have been out of town, no major progress to report.

They have met with Girdwood Nordic Ski Club and there is cooperative relationship between the two groups working on trail access for mtn biking inside the Nordic 5K, and also regarding future trail building previously discussed.

GMBA has met with Girdwood Inc and are able to hold funds through them.

Likely hold a GMBA meeting in December. Elect officers, etc; work on funding
Tentatively plan to hold a fundraiser in January.

Goal of the GMBA is to give a voice for bikers for all trails in Girdwood and create bike trails (single track, downhill and flow trails).

**DOT/Airport Upper Valley Trail Access**

No news on progress of hangar construction at airport.
Good to stay under the radar on public use of airport access. Keep dogs on leash on airport land, especially alongside of the runway; Educate others about not walking on taxiway/runway & loose dogs.

Pilots filed complaints a couple summers ago about issues with dogs on runway, and the result could be fencing of airport land to deter pedestrian access.

**Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Safety Corridor**

Project is about 95% complete, putting up road signs now. Once this task is complete, 35 MPH speed limit signs and double fine signs will be removed. Next summer there will be some work on embankments, landscaping.

**Iditarod Lower valley trail improvements (Kyle Kelley)**Discuss under grant info later in agenda.

**Girdwood Community Trails Plan**

Margaret and Kyle met with Nanette Stevenson, who is working on layout and design for Trails Plan under KMTA grant. Agreement with Nanette is that we’ll have a document to review December 6 at Trails Plan Working Group meeting.

**Prep for winter**

**Hand tram:** Closed for the season. Planning to fly the car out this week sometime and store it for the
winter inside; perform maintenance on it such as fixing welds, paint. Also need to tighten ropes before next summer.

**Grooming startup plan:** Cleared trees and created pad for Conex to be placed at start of Nordic 5K. This will be better for equipment, less hauling back and forth from Trails Conex by Moose Meadow.
Groomer Volunteer meeting to be held once it snows.

**Other Trails Issues**

Alyeska is closed for hiking as of November 1. Signs are up, getting ready for snowmaking and season start.

GTC needs to consider other formats and distribution for trail maps. Perhaps brochure style format, distributed throughout Girdwood and available at other locations. Also more prominent display on line. GTC members recommended Maprica, I Need a Map and other apps that would be good to pursue.

Thank you to Sophie Ostroski and Alyeska Ski Club, the Adopt-a-Trail sponsor for Beaver Pond Trail. ASC did work on the trail a few weeks ago, removing some metal bridge pieces and placing some of those pieces to cross mucky parts of trail. Also did some drainage and tread work.

*Budget and Grants*

* Financial Report (Diana Livingston)
No updated budget report, but it’s likely not changed since last month:

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| * Girdwood Trails Committee Financial Report
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| October 4, 2016 |  |  |
| Account with Girdwood Inc. |  | $11,689.12 |
|  Last Report 9/6/2016 |  |  |
| Reserve for Trail Signs |  |  (500.00) |
| Reserve for Forest Fair Fund |  |  (80.03) |
| Balance Unreserved Funds |  | $11,109.09 |
| Receivable for Hehnlin Work |  |  1,465.00  |
| RAC Grant for Hand Tram |  |  |
| Closed August 11, 2016 |  |  |

* Grants
* Anchorage Park Foundation Grant (lower Iditarod Trail work)

GTC filed an extension for this grant closing. Our total contribution is approx. $17,780 (including volunteer hours by Will’s crew and Alison Rein in planning the new trail alignment & Andy Hehnlin’s work on the access to the trailhead). Grant amount is $17,882.88. APF told Carolyn they want GTC to continue to keep track of volunteer time and expenses even after we have achieved the match, as it is good for them to see the continued effort. Reimbursement is expected just for the hard costs that have been paid by GTC (Andy’s work). We’ll get a check from APF for $1465 reimbursing us for that work.

Work on the access, brushing the new alignment and creation of the trail docs have been significant steps (see SOA Grant request below).

* KMTA Grant ($7,000 matching for Girdwood Trails Plan)

As reported earlier under the Trails Plan working group, we received grant for $7000 for layout work on the plan document. Contractor has been hired and we me with her to discuss the scope of work and overall goals. We’ll start calculating volunteer hours at the next Trails Plan Working Group meeting on December 6.

* SOA Recreational Trails Grant ($50,000 request for Lower Iditarod Trail Work)

Kyle and Margaret have spent much of the last 2 weeks working on this grant application, which was due today. As discussed at last GTC meeting, we applied for $50,000 grant (90/10 match) for work on the trail tread between the trailhead and the existing bridge at California Creek. With the planning documents we have already (mapping, profiles, etc) and the work by USFS on getting Army Corps of Engineers permitting underway, we are ahead of many groups that are working on projects for this grant funding. The eventual goal is to turn this trail over to USFS for maintenance. Alignment does not include access toward railroad or depot.

*Updates*

* Newspaper Article. No article from GTC. Waiting for winter season for article.
* November LUC/GBOS Meeting Representative: Brian and Carolyn plan to attend meetings this month.

**New Business**None

**Other Business**

None

**Meeting adjourned 9PM**