



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING**



April 13, 2017

**I. Call to Order**

The April 13, 2017 meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission, held at Spenard Recreation Center, was called to order by Chair Jon Dyson at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Jon Dyson  
Commissioner Shannon Kuhn  
Commissioner Eric Milliken  
Commissioner Peter Murphy  
Commissioner Richard T. Mystrom  
Commissioner Levi Robinson  
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Michael McCambridge  
Commissioner Alison Smith

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

Josh Durand  
Maeve Nevins-Lavtar  
Taylor Keegan  
Diana Cramer

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Mystrom, the Agenda for the April 13, 2017 meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

### **IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Upon motion made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Winchester, the Minutes of the March 9, 2017 meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

### **V. Director's Comments**

Josh Durand, Park Superintendent

Trails are currently being cleared of snow and debris, and readied for summer use.

The Assembly is considering the possibility of hiring park ambassadors, as part of the Parks & Recreation staff, who would be out in the parks and on the trails to assist park users and direct feedback to Park Maintenance and Operations.

The park bond on the 2017 Municipal ballot passed. Four projects will receive support from the bond: Campbell Creek trail project, Valley of the Moon improvement project, South Anchorage Sports Park improvements, and Muldoon Town Square park development.

The Town Square master planning processing is proceeding but it will not be a simple process. This summer Town Square will be filled with food and other vendors to help create a positive influence in the park.

### **VI. Appearance Requests**

There were no appearance requests for non-agenda items.

### **VII. Anchorage Park Foundation Report**

There was no report from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

## **VIII. Action Items**

### **A. PRC 17-15 Valley of the Moon Park Improvements**

Resolution No. 2017-07

Presented by Taylor Keegan, Park Planner

#### Presentation

In 2014 a Master Plan for Valley of the Moon was finalized, in which the community requested additional amenities for the park including a dog park, lighting improvements, and expanded parking. Funding was approved by voters as part of the park bond packages and are estimated at around \$350,000. Twenty-seven additional parking spaces, an ADA accessible entrance to the dog park, and landscaping are included in the project. The project has been approved by the South Addition Community Council which provided a resolution in support. Lighting will improve safety in the park, parking will provide safer access to the park, and the ADA entrance will enable improve accessibility for users of the dog park.

#### Department Recommendation

Parks and Recreation staff recommends that the Commission pass a resolution supporting these improvements.

#### Public Appearance Requests

There were no public appearance requests for this item.

#### Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, upon motion duly made by Commissioner Milliken and seconded by Commissioner Robinson, Resolution No. 2017-07, Valley of the Moon Park Improvements, was unanimously approved as follows:

**PRC Resolution No. 2017-07  
Valley of the Moon Park Improvements**

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, Valley of the Moon is a community use park located along the Chester Creek Trail and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The Municipality Parks and Recreation Department collaborated with an advisory group of South Addition and North Star CC residents on a Master Plan for Valley of the Moon Park in 2015; and

WHEREAS, this plan identified the community's request for better amenities for dog walkers, increased lighting in the park, and because of the popularity of the park and playground have created additional traffic and parking on local neighborhood streets, causing congestion; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality Parks and Recreation Department will be improving circulation to the dog park, increasing and upgrading the lighting in Valley of the Moon Park and constructing an additional 27 spaces which will be sufficient to meet parking demand and would help address the negative impacts of park users parking on local neighborhood streets;

WHEREAS, the project is supported by the South Addition Community Council and was included in the 2014, 2016, and 2017 Parks Bond package which was approved by voters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposal for improvements at Valley of the Moon Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13th day of April, 2017.

Voting record, PRC Resolution No. 2017-07:

Resolution 17-07, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom,  
Robinson and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners McCambridge, Smith

**B. PRC 17-16 STA Hillside Trails and Improvements Proposal**

Resolution No. 2017-08

Presented by Maeve Nevins-Lavtar, Park Planner

Lee Bolling and Cody Gauer, Singletrack Advocates

Presentation

Singletrack Advocates (STA) proposes to plan, design and construct a 6-8 mile extension of the existing singletrack trails in Far North Bicentennial Park. Single track trails are soft-surface, narrow multi-use trails built for mountain biking, running, walking,

hiking, snow shoeing, wildlife viewing, and skiing. STA will fund the project and maintain the trails after construction. Construction is anticipated to being as early as July 2017 and completed by the fall of 2018. STA has constructed and maintains 9 single track trails in the Hillside area and 16 miles in Kincaid Park. STA raised funding by private contributions, grants and volunteer time for those trails. The trails are a valuable community resource, with many organizations and events utilizing the trails. The narrow, year round trails are an alternative to the wide cross-country ski trails. Mountain and fat biking have increased dramatically in this community and the need for more single track trails exists. STA desires to reduce congestion on the existing trails and improve both user safety and wildlife safety.

Commissioners were provided with written materials on the project in their meeting packets and Lee Bolling and Cody Gauer of Singletrack Advocates presented details of their proposal to Commissioners and answered questions.

STA has shared its proposal with the Hillside Community Council, Hillside Ski Area, Nordic Ski Club, and the Far North Bicentennial Park Users Group, all of which support this project. The project will be a benefit to all Anchorage residents, but primarily mountain and fat bikers, hikers, runners, dog walkers, bird and wildlife viewers, classic skiers, and snowshoers.

STA will secure all funding for the project, administer all grants, and provide grant reporting.

#### Department Recommendation

Parks and Recreation staff believes the plan proposed by STA is consistent with the objectives identified in the Park Plan and the Far North Bicentennial Trail Improvement Plan and supports the public process that has been undertaken to develop this proposal. The Department recommends the Commission approve a resolution supporting the STA Hillside Expansion and Improvement Proposal.

#### Public Appearance Requests

Nineteen people spoke to the Commission regarding the STA Hillside Trails and Improvements project, 18 in support and 1 against.

Speaking strongly and enthusiastically in support of the project and Singletrack Advocates were: Brian Swartzentruber, James Howery, Andrew Culp, Chris Palmer, Ryan Thrasher, Jake Maxwell, Ira Edwards, Tim Woody, Paulo Sierra, Jared Hansen,

Petra Davis, Leeann Brewster, Stacy Nieder, Sharon Smith, Uriah Rolando, Jason Summons, Joe Engle and Tom Schmidt.

Speaking in opposition of the project was Marilyn Houser.

1. Ms. Houser believe there are enough trails in Far North Bicentennial Park.
2. She is concerned that the trails being improved are "illegal" or social trails and that this encourages people who want more trails to build illegal trails, if all they have to do is build one and then STA takes it over, improves and maintains it.
3. She does not believe the construction of the trails complies with the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvement Plan.
4. She does not believe the trails are truly multi-use trails for all users because the bikes dominate the trails forcing others to move out of the way or be run over.
5. She stated there could have been more outreach to the community councils in the area, stating that a presentation was made to only one council, the Mid-Hillside Community Council when outreach should have been to all adjoining community councils.
6. Concern was also expressed concern about the effect on wildlife of building more trails in wildlife corridors.
7. Ms. Houser believes building trails for advanced riders is not safe and cites an accident that occurred on an advanced trail at Kincaid wherein the rider was seriously injured and died from his injuries.

#### Discussion and Resolution

Commissioner Winchester brought to the Commission's attention that he is a member of the Singletrack Advocates organization but that he did not believe that would prevent him from being objective in this matter. No objections to his participation was heard.

Josh Durand, Park Superintendent, addressed Marilyn Houser's concerns.

1. The illegal trail building is a problem, but Parks and Recreation has no enforcement capability and must rely on the Anchorage Police Department for enforcement, and on the public to report suspicious activity.
2. Mr. Durand said is not fair to compare the Singletrack Advocates trail building to illegal trail building as they are building trails in complete compliance with Parks and Recreation authority. The illegal trail building does demonstrate the public's desire for more mountain bike trails.
3. Mr. Durand believes these single track trails do comply with the Trail Improvement Plan for Far North Bicentennial Park, falling within the high density network identified in the Plan.

4. The trails are designated multi-use trails, the problems Ms. Houser brought up regarding being forced off the trail by bikers is a matter of trail etiquette. Educating trail users in matters of trail etiquette is the solution.
5. Parks and Recreation is satisfied with the level of public outreach conducted by the Singletrack Advocates in promoting this project.
6. Mr. Durand states that all of Anchorage is actually a wildlife corridor. The concern at Far North Bicentennial Park, and other areas, is public safety. The way this is handled is through public education, signage, trail closures during sensitive times (such as when moose are calving).
7. As to the safety of advanced level trails, it is up to the individual to make choices regarding personal safety and how they handle themselves on the trails.

After hearing the presentation by Parks and Recreation staff and the representatives from Singletrack Advocates, discussion amongst commissioners ensued, with questions being answered by staff and the STA representatives.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Mystrom and seconded by Commissioner Murphy, PRC Resolution No. 2017-08 Singletrack Advocates (STA) Hillside Trails and Improvements was unanimously approved as follows:

PRC Resolution No. 2017-08  
Singletrack Advocates (STA) Hillside Trails and Improvements

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* recommends maintenance of existing facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department received a proposal from the Singletrack Advocates (STA) to expand the singletrack trails by approximately 6- 8 miles in Far North Bicentennial Park. The proposed trails would be part of the trail infrastructure covered under the Maintenance Agreement between STA and the Department; and



WHEREAS, the Singletrack Advocates have seen rapid growth in the mountain and fat bike communities since the first STA trail project nearly a decade ago; the increased popularity has resulted in heavy trail congestion and safety concerns with user conflicts on existing trails; and

WHEREAS, STA proposes to elevate user conflicts with the addition of new uphill and downhill trail options and by converting the existing trail network to recommended directional flow to improve safety of various multiuse groups; and

WHEREAS, the proposed plan includes the design and construction of missing links in the network of singletrack: soft surface, narrow trails sustainably built for mountain bikes and foot traffic in Far North Bicentennial Park; and

WHEREAS, STA has funded, planned, constructed and maintained over 9 miles of singletrack trails in Far North Bicentennial Park and 15 miles of singletrack in Kincaid Park; and

WHEREAS, a singletrack network in Far North Bicentennial Park is consistent with the Far North Bicentennial Park Trails Master Plan provided that the project continues to coordinate with the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA). Singletrack trails must be developed secondary to cross-country ski trails and not compromise the ability for the cross-country ski trail network to meet international standards; and

WHEREAS, NSAA, along with the Hillside Community Council, the Hilltop Ski Area, and other park and trail user groups, have provided written letters of support for this project;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Commission supports the Singletrack Advocate's plan to design, construct and maintain the Hillside Trails and Improvements project that includes 6-8 new miles of singletrack and trail improvements in Far North Bicentennial Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13th day of April 2017.

Voting record, PRC Resolution No. 2017-08:

Resolution 17-08, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom,  
Robinson and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners McCambridge, Smith

### **C. PRC 17-17 Campbell Creek Trail Improvements**

Resolution No. 2017-09

Presented by Maeve Nevins-Lavtar

#### Presentation

The Campbell Creek Trail Improvement Project is a multi-year program aimed at addressing safety and improving the experience for users of the trail. Funding has been provided through municipal bonds and state legislative grants. Included in the project are rehabilitation/replacement of asphalt, bridge transitions, amenity upgrades, and improved signage and wayfinding.

The public process began years ago through previous greenbelt system improvement projects. Public comment has been collected and many site visits conducted to identify the highest priorities for repairs. This project was presented to the Taku/Campbell Community Council which supports the project.

There are two phases to the project:

Phase 1 – Spring 2017 Campbell Creek Trail from West Dimond Blvd. to Minnesota Dr. This area has been identified as the highest priority. Improvements will include rehabilitation or replacement of cracked and heaving asphalt, streambank erosion, bridges, underpasses, amenity upgrades, and improved signage.

Phase 2 – 2017-17 Campbell Creek Trail between Minnesota Dr. and Arctic Blvd. This phase will likely begin in mid-July to early August 2017 and improvements will include the rehabilitation or replacement of cracked and heaving asphalt, streambank erosion, bridges, underpasses, amenity upgrades, and improved signage.

It is hoped the entire project can be completed by October 2017.

#### Department Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends that the Commission pass a resolution supporting this trail improvement project.

## Public Appearance Requests

Ira Edwards spoke to the Commission expressing his support for the Campbell Creek Trail improvement project.

## Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Robinson, PRC Resolution No. 2017-09, Campbell Creek Trail Improvements was unanimously approved as follows:

### PRC Resolution No. 2017-09 Campbell Creek Trail Improvements

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the Campbell Creek Trail is major multi-use trail corridor that connects areas within our community and provides valuable recreational benefits in a protected greenbelt; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department has worked with professionals and community members to identify priorities for trail rehabilitation and upgrades; and

WHEREAS, Phase 1 will focus on the area of trail between West Dimond Blvd. and Minnesota Drive and Phase 2 will focus on the area of trail between Minnesota Drive and Arctic Blvd.; and

WHEREAS, the proposed improvements include rehabilitation/replacement of cracked and heaving asphalt, streambank restoration, bridges, underpasses, amenity upgrades and improved signage and wayfinding, as well as the addition of two (2) feet of soft-surface shoulders on each side of the asphalt, and

WHEREAS, this project is supported by the Taku-Campbell Community Council;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposed rehabilitation of the Campbell Creek Trail as presented.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017.

Voting record, PRC Resolution No. 2017-09:

Resolution 17-09, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom,  
Robinson and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners McCambridge, Smith

## **IX. Information Items**

### **PRC 17-18 Government Hill Commons Master Plan**

Presented by Steve Gerlek, Government Hill Commons, Inc.

Government Hill Commons, Inc. (GHC) proposes to convert a two-acre property owned by the State of Alaska that was once cleared for the proposed Knik Arm crossing bridge project into a neighborhood park with an orchard and garden. The space is intended to be a community focal point and gateway to the neighborhood. GHC and the Municipality of Anchorage are working with the State on a long-term lease for the land and two structures on the property. The objectives are to provide education opportunities, infuse art into the community, provide the community with urban agricultural space, enhance recreation, and serve as a community center. The project has a high level of community support and many government and private entities have provided support to the effort. It is anticipated that once the land has been leased to the Municipality that GHC and Parks and Recreation will enter into a cooperative use agreement for management of the property. Detailed information about the plan was provided to Commissioners in their meeting materials. This item is presented as an information item only and will be brought back to Commissioners as development progresses.

## **X. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Murphy stated he may not be attending many meetings between now and October due to his travel plans. He will provide the Commission with his schedule.

Commissioner Kuhn reports that she has been participating in the Town Square Park master planning process and community outreach being undertaken by Parks and Recreation.

## **XI. Upcoming Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, May 11, 2017, at Spenard Recreation Center.

## **X. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Mystrom, seconded by Commissioner Murphy, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair  
Parks & Recreation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Parks & Recreation