



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



February 12, 2015

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Carl Propes at 6:05 p.m. on Thursday, February 12, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Peter Murphy
Commissioner Richard Mystrom
Commissioner Carl Propes
Commissioner Levi Robinson
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Jim Balamaci
Commissioner Joey Caterinichio
Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Harlow Robinson

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

Holly Spoth-Torres
Josh Durand
Maeve Nevins
Diana Cramer

III. Consent Agenda

A. Agenda:

At the request of Josh Durand, Park Planner, Commissioners agreed to amend the Agenda to move Information Item PRC 15-07 (Proposed Renaming of Spenard Recreation Center) forward on the Agenda to be heard just prior to the first Action Item. Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Pete Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Rich Mystrom, Commissioners unanimously approved the amended Agenda for the February 12, 2015 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

B. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Pete Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Rich Mystrom, the Minutes of the January 8, 2015 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

IV. Director's Comments

Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent, provided an update on Parks and Recreation activities and concerns:

Progress is being made on replacement of the Westchester Lagoon bridge. Design specifications have been prepared and 2015 bond money for greenbelt trails and bridges should cover financing.

The Municipality of Anchorage does not support hunting in Kincaid Park or any other Anchorage park and will submit an official written opinion to the Board of Game, and Parks and Recreation staff will be present at the game board meeting in March to give testimony.

The curling facility on Government Hill is having significant problems with its refrigeration system. Parks and Recreation is assisting the curling club in securing a grant to finance repairs.

The Municipality of Anchorage received a state capital grant, the intent of which was for the Municipality to purchase the Waldron Lake property, where the Boys and Girls Club is located. The current Municipal administration is not interested in adding the property to its park inventory. Instead, it is working on a plan whereby the money from the grant will be transferred directly to the Boys and Girls Club so it can keep the land and maintain it. The land will be put in a conservation easement so that the public will have access to it in perpetuity.

The Municipality of Anchorage continues to work with the Hilltop organization on an agreement.

As part of the Centennial celebration, the Last Frontier Pond Hockey tournament will take place at Goose Lake March 6-8. The tournament is being organized by the Scotty Gomez Foundation, and hundreds of participants and spectators are expected.

Parks and Recreation continues to address conflicts between dog owners and the sports user group at Chuck Albrecht fields. The dog owners like to use the fenced fields to run their dogs, but the user group that maintains the ball fields does not think it is an appropriate use. Parks and Recreation is working with both groups to reach an amicable resolution.

The refrigeration project at McDonald Center in Eagle River is done, and was completed within budget. The next project will be Sullivan Arena.

Ms. Spoth-Torres announced that she will be leaving her position as Park Superintendent in mid-May. Josh Durand has been hired to fill her position. The Operations Section of Parks and Recreation will be undergoing reorganization in order to facilitate efficiency.

Ms. Spoth-Torres also reported on the progress of park dedications that were the subject of resolution by the Commission at its meeting in June 2014. The Municipal Attorney found that there is an unclear title record on nine of the parcels and also questions the Snowshoe Park easement. Parks and Recreation proposed to move forward with dedication of the 22 parcels that did not have legal questions; however, the Municipal Manager has directed that all these parcels be reviewed by the Planning Department to determine what non-park uses they might have. Assemblyperson Jennifer Johnston is advocating that the Municipality move forward with dedications on the 22 parcels that did not have legal questions and is aggressively pursuing that. The will be updated as things progress and, depending on actions taken, will be advised if further involvement of the Commission is appropriate.

V. Appearance Requests: Non-Agenda Items

There was one appearance request on a non-agenda item.

Lester Shepherd, who spoke to the Commission in January 2015 regarding his interest in building an indoor tennis facility on a parcel of land located on the north side Northern Lights Boulevard, provided a progress report on his plans. Mr. Shepherd will continue to work with Parks and Recreation staff to further this project, providing updates to the Commission as he progresses.

VI. Information Item

PRC 15-07: Proposed Renaming of Spenard Recreation Center

Presented by the Mayor's Citizens Naming Committee:
Nancy Beardsley, Arthur Geuss and Jack Mosby

Members of the Committee spoke to the Commission regarding the desire to rename Spenard Recreation Center to honor Robert O. Robertson, former long-time director of Anchorage Parks and Recreation. Mr. Robertson was the driving force behind the development of many of Anchorage's parks, trails, sports fields, and recreation facilities, particularly Spenard Recreation Center. The committee feels that it is appropriate to name the center "The Robert O. Robertson Spenard Recreation Center" because of the significant contribution Mr. Robertson made in developing, building and turning the Center into the valuable asset it has become for the Anchorage community. The Committee will next hold a public meeting regarding this matter to obtain public opinion, after which Parks and Recreation staff will bring its staff report and recommendation on this matter to the Commission for resolution. This will likely occur in March 2015.

VII. Action Items

A. PRC 15-04: APF Neighborhood Park Fix-Its

Presented by Josh Durand and Maeve Nevins, Park Planners

Working with the Anchorage Park Foundation, Parks and Recreation will have four Neighborhood Park Fix-It Projects in 2015. Parks and Recreation staff and the Anchorage Park Foundation worked with neighbors and park users to identify and prioritize park improvement projects. The projects focus on improvements to existing facilities. Staff then worked with Very Important Park committees to identify and prioritize projects for each park. Input from neighbors and park users ensures that upgrades align with community desires.

1. Suzan Nightingale McKay Park is a small park located on Government Hill and has spectacular views of Denali. The park has an open space, a small playground, picnic tables, benches and a Sydney Laurence monument. The playground will be upgraded. Contractors will purchase and install new play equipment, swings, and a new woolly mammoth themed climber, build a small picnic plaza, install bear-proof trash cans, and improve ADA accessibility. Volunteers will add new engineered wood fiber surfacing to the play area, do landscaping, sand and paint bollards, and install a flower bed at the park sign. The volunteer fix-it day will be held on Saturday, June 27, 2015. Funds for this project were obtained from a state grant and "Clean and Green" funding from the Rasmuson Foundation.

2. Pop Carr Park is located near the intersection of Arctic Boulevard and Tudor Road. The park has 4 tennis courts, a picnic shelter, play equipment, picnic tables, benches, lighted trails, forest, and an open space. Contractors will replace play equipment for 5-12 year olds, add a new play area for 2-5 year olds, build a concrete picnic plaza, resurface and stripe four tennis courts, build a sledding hill and add LED lighting, and upgrade trail lighting. Volunteers will thin brush and trees to improve safety and add engineered wood fiber surfacing to the play areas. The volunteer fix-it day will be held on Saturday, July 15, 2015. Funds for this project were obtained from a state legislative re-appropriation, Rasmuson Foundation "Clean and Green" funds, a private donation, and the municipal bond fund.

3. Moen Park is located on Goldenvue Drive in South Anchorage and encompasses 10 acres of forested hillside. It includes a small parking lot, play equipment for 2-5 year olds and a new soft-surface trail. Last summer Youth Employment in Parks built a soft-surface trail in the park, and a volunteer day was held to clear brush and open up sight lines to improve safety. This year contractors will purchase and install new play equipment for 5-12 year olds, add a new sand play area, develop the open space area with turf, provide landscaping, and install new park amenities (picnic tables, benches, and bear-proof trash cans). Volunteers will add engineered wood fiber to the play areas and do landscaping and brush clearing. The volunteer fix-it day is scheduled for Saturday, July 29, 2015. Funds for this project came from a state grant and Rasmuson Foundation "Clean and Green" funding.

4. David Green Park, located at 36th Avenue and MacInnes Street, features a picnic shelter, play equipment for both 2-5 and 5-12 year olds, open space, a multi-use trail, and a small parking lot. Contractors will purchase and install new play equipment, add ADA accessible surfacing to the play area, provide a central plaza to connect the shelter and play areas, install a BBQ and hot coal bin, provide landscaping, and install new signs, bike racks, benches and trash cans. Volunteers will do landscaping. The volunteer fix-it day is scheduled for Saturday, July 22, 2014. Funds for this project come from a state legislative re-appropriation and Rasmuson Foundation "Clean and Green" funding.

The four proposed projects are supported by their local community councils. Parks and Recreation recommends that the Commission approved the proposed resolution in support of the Neighborhood Park Fix-It projects as presented.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Peter Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Levi Robinson, Resolution 2015-02 APF Neighborhood Park Fix-It Projects was unanimously approved as follows:

PRC Resolution No. 2015-02
2015 Neighborhood Park Fix-it Projects

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, Parks and Recreation partnered with local Community Councils to establish Very Important Park (VIP) Committees that convened during the fall 2014 to assist the Department with developing a prioritized list of improvements at each selected neighborhood park; and

WHEREAS, the VIP Committees and Parks and Recreation staff reviewed park improvements identified by the community in the 2008 and 2011 Anchorage Parks Report Cards to scope applicable projects; and

WHEREAS, all proposed improvements have received local neighborhood support through the VIP process and Community Council review and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the improvement plans, priorities, and schedules submitted by the Department and VIP Committees for the 2015 Neighborhood Park Fix-it projects: David Green Park, Moen Park, Pop Carr Park, and Suzan Nightingale McKay Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 12th day of February, 2015.

B. PRC 15-05: Other APF 2015 Projects

Presented by Josh Durand and Maeve Nevins, Park Planners

The details of two other Anchorage Park Foundation projects for 2015 were presented.

1. Wonder Park Corridor is a natural use park located between East 4th and East 6th avenues that connects residential areas to both Wonder Park Elementary and Russian Jack Springs Park. The community council requested the following improvements: new asphalt and vegetation management for improved visibility. In 2014 the Anchorage Park Foundation received a state grant to improve visibility along

the trail and to repair paved pathways. In 2015 the existing paved trail will be improved and selective pruning will be accomplished. The proposed renovations are supported by the Russian Jack Community Council and will improve pedestrian safety. Parks and Recreation recommends that the Commission pass the proposed resolution to support the improvements as presented.

2. Jewel Lake Park is located in the Sand Lake community. The park received an upgraded ADA compliant dock in 2014. This year the community council has approved the following improvements: new asphalt drive to the portable toilet, vegetation management around lights and the dumpster, improved drainage around the picnic shelter and playground, repair of the rain garden, 2 new BBQ grills, stabilization of the concrete picnic areas located adjacent to the beach, and installation of a ping pong table similar to the one that was installed at Minnesota Park. A neighborhood fix-it day is scheduled for Saturday, July 25, 2015. Parks and Recreation recommends that the Commission pass the proposed resolution to support the improvements as presented.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Peter Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Jim Winchester, Resolution 2015-03 Other APF 2015 Projects was unanimously approved as follows:

**PRC Resolution No. 2015-03
Other APF 2015 Projects**

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, Parks and Recreation partnered with local Community Councils that convened during the fall 2014 and early winter of 2015 to assist the Department with developing a prioritized list of improvements at each selected neighborhood park; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation staff reviewed park improvements identified by the community in the 2008 and 2011 Anchorage Parks Report Cards to scope applicable projects; and

WHEREAS, all proposed improvements have received local neighborhood support through the Community Council review and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the improvement plans, priorities, and schedules submitted by the Department and Community Councils for the Other APF 2015 projects: Wonder Corridor Park and Jewel Lake Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 12th day of February, 2015.

C. PRC 15-06: Lyn Ary Park – Interpretive Panels and Gateway

Presented by Josh Durand, Park Planner

Lyn Ary Park, a community use park located in Turnagain, features play equipment for 2-12 year olds, ball fields, tennis courts, active turf areas, and paved access to the Coastal Trail. A master planning process for the park was undertaken in 2009. The master plan proposed future conditions that included interpretive panels that speak to the history of the park and improved gateways into the park. In the fall and winter of 2014-2015, Parks and Recreation staff worked with the Turnagain Community Council and the Marston Foundation to develop interpretive panels. Community members requested benches with backs and low maintenance landscaping as part of the improvements. Funds have been procured, pavers and benches from Parks and Recreation's inventory will be used, and installation will be performed by Community Work Service. The gateway improvements will include: a relocated trash can, three benches with backs, low maintenance landscaping, pavers for circulation, and three 22" x 34" interpretive panels. The proposed renovations are supported by the Turnagain Community Council, will provide an informative and defined entrance into Lyn Ary Park from the Coastal Trail, and are consistent with the Master Plan. Parks and Recreation staff recommends that the Commission pass the proposed resolution to support the project as presented.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Jim Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Peter Murphy, Resolution No. 2015-04 Lyn Ary Park Gateway and Interpretive Panels was unanimously passed as follows:

PRC Resolution No. 2015-04 Lyn Ary Park Gateway and Interpretive Panels

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 proposed improvements are consistent with the 2009 Lyn Ary Park Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, all proposed improvements have received local neighborhood support through the Turnagain Community Council review and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the presented improvements to Lyn Ary Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 12th day of February, 2015.

VII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Rich Mystrom discussed his concerns regarding the hazard presented to skaters by unleashed dogs on the ice at Westchester Lagoon and other lake ice skating areas. He inquired whether Parks and Recreation might be able to do to alleviate the problem. Discussion ensued regarding the vagueness of Anchorage leash law ordinance and how it needs to be amended.

Commissioner Carl Propes inquired as to Anchorage Centennial activities planned by Parks and Recreation. Ms. Spoth-Torres mentioned the Goose Lake Pond Hockey tournament but stated that activities are planned to take place throughout the year. No specific information was provided.

IX. Upcoming Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 12, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

X. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Pete Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Jim Winchester, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2015.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

Director
Parks and Recreation