



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



February 9, 2017

I. Call to Order

The February 9, 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 John Rodda, Director of Parks and Recreation.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Shannon Kuhn
Commissioner Michael McCambridge
Commissioner Eric Milliken
Commissioner Peter Murphy
Commissioner Richard T. Mystrom
Commissioner Alison Smith
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Levi Robinson

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

John Rodda
Josh Durand
Tom Korosei
Maeve Nevins
Diana Cramer

III. Approval of Agenda

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner McCambridge, the Agenda for the February 9, 2017 meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Upon motion made by Commissioner Mystrom and seconded by Commissioner Murphy, the Minutes of the January 12, 2017 meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

V. Director's Comments

John Rodda, Director, Parks and Recreation

A handout was provided to the Commissioners that contained an overview of bond items that will be on the ballot for the April 2017 Municipal Election. More information on the bond packet as it pertains to Parks and Recreation will be provided to the Commission at upcoming meetings between now and April.

Mr. Rodda provided the Commission with an update on the homeless camp cleanup campaign. A map, prepared using the results of the recent homeless census, showed the location of camps throughout the Anchorage area. Mr. Rodda specifically pointed out the areas in which the camps are concentrated. Efforts to address the problem by the Administration, Anchorage Police Department, Anchorage Parks and Recreation and other municipal entities and social services organizations are ongoing.

Mr. Rodda requested that Commissioners give staff an idea when they might be unable to attend meetings this year. Knowing in advance that there will be absences is helpful to staff in planning action items for the agenda.

VI. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Commission was held.

Jon Dyson was unanimously elected as Chair.

Alison Smith was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

VII. Appearance Requests, Non-Agenda Items

Al Milspaugh, University Lake Area Community Council: Mr. Milspaugh spoke to the Commission about the need for park rangers or a similar program in our parks and to

make funding available to support the program. Director Rodda responded to Mr. Milspaugh by explaining some of the issues involved in implementing a ranger program, not only funding, but enforcement, and recruitment and training of qualified officers. Ideally, Director Rodda believes the program should be a sub-unit of the Anchorage Police Department.

VIII. Anchorage Park Foundation Report

There was no Anchorage Park Foundation report.

IX. Action Items

A. PRC 17-07: 2040 Land Use Plan Map

(Resolution No. 2017-01)

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner
and Tom Davis, Municipal Planner

Presentation

This item was introduced as an information item at the January 2017 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission. At that time, copies of the draft of the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan (Public Hearing Draft)* were provided to Commissioners for review, as well as an overview of the Plan and items of particular relevance to parks and recreation issues.

The current draft, as presented at this meeting, incorporates comments made by Parks and Recreation staff and Commissioners on the previous draft including recommended expansion of the service area boundary.

The Department requests that the Commission adopt a resolution in support of the Plan. A draft resolution was provided to Commissioners.

Public Appearance Requests

(1) Cathy Gleason, Turnagain Community Council President. The Council provided a written handout with its comments on the Plan. The Council recommends adding an amendment stressing that Pt. Woronzof Park should be retained as a natural park open space and not included in land exchanges for possible airport expansion.

(2) Gloria Manni, West Anchorage Resident. Ms. Manni expressed the need for a connector trail between Fish Creek Trail and the Coastal Trail, and the need to

keep open spaces and green areas free from development. Mr. Durand explained the appropriateness of including this greenway on the overlay. A study is underway to determine the feasibility of obtaining rights-of-way from the Railroad and other stakeholders, and initial discussions have been favorable.

Discussion and Resolution

Commissioners, staff and Mr. Davis discussed the Plan at length, particularly the "overlay" depicting potential open space alternatives and potential airport growth alternatives. Mr. Davis explained that the meaning of the various designations on the overlay and how they relate to parks.

Several commissioners expressed concern about the inclusion of Pt. Woronzof Park as a "potential airport growth alternative" in the Plan and discussed inclusion of an amendment stressing the Commission's position that Pt. Woronzof Park is dedicated and as such should be retained as natural, open space and not included in any land exchange for potential airport expansion. A motion to amend was made by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner McCambridge, and approved by Commissioner on a vote of 7 to 1, with Commissioner Winchester opposing (see voting record after Resolution text).

Upon motion made by Commissioner McCambridge and seconded by Commissioner Smith, Resolution No. 2017-01 A Resolution Recommending Approval of the Public Hearing Draft, *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan*, as amended, was approved on a vote of 7 to 1, with Commissioner Winchester opposing (see voting record after Resolution text). The amendment is contained in Paragraph B of the Resolution. The text of the Resolution follows.

Commissioner Winchester stated his reasons for opposing the amendment to the Resolution, and the Resolution itself, are that this appears to be a Draft of the Plan, that it is important to keep the Planning and Zoning Commission schedule, and that opportunities for Commissioners to comment and/or revisit the Plan will present themselves in the future.

Resolution No. 2017-01
A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT
Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly, having the responsibility to advise the Mayor, Anchorage Assembly, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other municipal entities on matters of park, recreation facilities, and open space management and administration; 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, a typical city comprehensive plan incorporates a land use plan map; and

WHEREAS, the land use plan map for the Anchorage Bowl is more than 34 years old and it has become necessary for the Municipality to produce an updated, comprehensive Land Use Plan Map that integrates neighborhood plans and functional plans, including the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreational Facility Plan*, on a Bowl-wide basis; and,

WHEREAS, that updated, comprehensive Land Use Plan Map would incorporate and reflect current development trends, updated projections, and future public lands and facility needs; and

WHEREAS, adequate public infrastructure, parks, open space, and compatible development are integral to land use planning and together help determine Anchorage's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the municipal Planning Department produced a Community Discussion Draft Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map for public comment in February 2016, which included several elements of interest to and relevant for the Parks and Recreation Commission, including recommendations for design and compatibility standards that address urban design features; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department staff and Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the Community Discussion Draft, and provided comments to the Planning Department; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Department then produced a Public Hearing Draft Anchorage 2040 Land Use Map for public comment in September 2016, which included modifications and incorporated additional text based on comments from the earlier Community Discussion Draft, including those from the Parks and Recreation Department; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Commission has reviewed the September 2016 Public Hearing Draft Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission:

A. The Commission makes the following findings of fact:

1. The Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan is an essential element of the Comprehensive Plan and is intended to guide land use and development standards for the next 25 years.

2. The Plan includes consideration of park features and incorporates implementation action items intended to ensure that these are factored into future infrastructure needs.

B. The Commission recommends that the September 2016 Public Hearing Draft Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and adopted by the Anchorage Assembly as an element to the Comprehensive Plan, with the following:

1. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends removal of the designated potential future airport growth alternative and continues to support Point Woronzof Park as dedicated park land.

2. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that the Real Estate Department review the land acquisition and preparation language on page 52 of the Public Hearing Draft, for accuracy, clarity, and consistency with the Municipality's real estate programs and capabilities.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of February 2017.

Voting record, Resolution 17-01

Amendment to Resolution 17-01, passed 7-1

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, McCambridge, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom and Smith

Nay: Commissioner Winchester

Abstained: None

Resolution 17-01, as amended, passed 7-1

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, McCambridge, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom and Smith

Nay: Commissioner Winchester

B. PRC 17-08: AWWU Reservoir 6 Drainage Improvements-Hillside/Far North Bicentennial Park

(Resolution No. 2017-02)

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner,

Mark Queen, AWWU and Dan Kirsch, PTS Engineering

Presentation

Details of Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility's (AWWU) Reservoir 6 Drainage Improvements project was presented to the Commission as an information item at the January 2017 meeting. A resolution supporting the project is now requested.

AWWU is preparing to construct a berm along the westerly boundary of Hillside Park, and extending into Far North Bicentennial Park, just north of Trailside Elementary School. The proposed berm will upgrade an existing trail along the top. The purpose of the project is to prevent potential flooding of adjoining property. The project has been planned so as to minimize disturbance of vegetation and impacts to the area, and restoration and revegetation of areas that are disturbed. AWWU has obtained public support from local residents and from Abbott Loop Community Council and Far North Bicentennial Park Users Group. As proposed, the trail would be gravel and approximately 5 feet wide – similar to a Class 3 or Class 4 trail described in the *Trail Improvements Plan*. Only the section of the trail that is part of AWWU's improvement project would be improved at this time. The Department currently has no plans or funds to full upgrade the trail.

The Department requests that the Commission approve a resolution in support of the project proposed by AWWU as part of its Reservoir 6 Drainage Improvements Project.

Public Appearance Requests

Marilyn Houser, Anchorage resident, expressed her concerns about the impact of this project on park land and the importance minimizing those impacts, and revegetating and restoring land that is disturbed by the project.

Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, and upon motion duly made by Commissioner Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Mystrom, Resolution No. 2017-02 Request for Approval of Proposed Trail Improvements as Part of Proposed Reservoir 6 Drainage Improvements, Hillside Park/Far North Bicentennial Park, was unanimously approved as follows:

**Resolution No. 2017-02
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AS PART OF
PROPOSED RESERVOIR 6 DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS, HILLSIDE PARK/FAR
NORTH BICENTENNIAL PARK**

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 Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility is proposing improvements to the drainage system for municipal Reservoir 6 (Service High), which system is also used by Trailside Elementary School and discharges water into Hillside Park; and

WHEREAS, proposed drainage improvements include construction of an earthen berm to control potential surface water flooding in the event of emergency draining of Reservoir 6; and

WHEREAS, the berm as proposed would coincide with a portion of an existing, informal, neighborhood trail that is not managed by the Municipality and is not identified for improvement as part of the *Far North Bicentennial Park Trails Improvement Plan* (2011); and

WHEREAS, the design and construction of the berm may include reconstruction of the informal trail using standards similar to Class 3 or 4 as described in the *Trails Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the Far North Bicentennial Park Users Group and Abbott Loop Community Council at their respective meetings in January 2017, as well as park area residents previously, have considered the AWWU drainage improvement plans including proposed trail improvements; and

WHEREAS, the above mentioned groups generally support the plans and in particular support proposed trail improvements; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission supports in principle the improvement and maintenance of the subject informal “non-managed” trail within Hillside Park and Far North Bicentennial Park, and supports construction of a portion of the trail as part of AWWU drainage improvements, to connect the Sahalee Subdivision and Trailside Elementary School area to the Homestead Trail.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of February 2017.

Voting record, Resolution 17-02

Resolution 17-02, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, McCambridge, Milliken, Murphy,
Mystrom, Smith and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

C. PRC 17-09: Benches at Mile 2.2 Coastal Trail

(Resolution No. 17-03)

Presented by Maeve Nevins, Park Planner and
Chad Taylor, Intrinsic Designs

Presentation

This project was presented last month to the Commission as "Benches for All" and is an Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant. Since last month's presentation, the project has changed in that instead of including three sites for benches, the focus will be on one location – Mile 2.2 Coastal Trail. Mr. Taylor provided details about the planning

and design of the benches. The Coastal Trail is one of Anchorage's favorite public assets. This site along the trail has beautiful views of the Coastline. The project will transform this small and often over-looked spot on the trail into an attractive gathering and resting site. The project has the support of the Turnagain Community Council.

The Department recommends that the Commission pass a resolution supporting this project.

Public Appearance Requests

Cathy Gleason, Turnagain Community Council President. Turnagain Community Council fully supports this project and requests that the Commission pass a resolution supporting the project.

Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, and upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Smith, Resolution No. 2017-03 Benches at Mile 2.2 Coastal Trail was unanimously approved as follows:

**Resolution No. 2017-03
BENCHES AT MILE 2.2 COASTAL TRAIL**

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 Tony Knowles Coastal Trail Bench project rehabilitates and updates an existing park asset to meet current codes and standards for accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department partnered with local Project Champions, Turnagain Community Council, and the Anchorage Park Foundation, to identify and prioritize desired design and preferred location for the *Benches for All* Challenge Grant Project; and

WHEREAS, the accessible bench and bike rack system would be a valuable asset to the community and enhance the Coastal Trail for place-making and increase appreciation for natural resource values of the trail, in particular the flora, fauna, streams, wildlife and ecosystems by providing an improved observation area; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves in the proposed plan for the Coastal Trail Benches at mile 2.2 project generally as proposed.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of February 9, 2017.

Voting record, Resolution 17-03

Resolution 17-03, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, McCambridge, Milliken, Murphy, Mystrom, Smith and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

D. PRC 17-10 Coastal Trail – Audubon Wayside Improvements

(Resolution No. 2017-04)

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner

Presentation

The Great Land Trust, with the support of the Anchorage Audubon Society, proposes to upgrade a portion of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. Specifically, a turnout/viewpoint located at approximately Mile 0.4, just west of the Alaska Railroad on Railroad property. There is now a park bench at the turnout. The upgrades would enlarge the turnout to create more space for trail users and include an additional bench. Turnagain Community Council reviewed the project and recommended inclusion of a bike rack and

trash receptacle. Background information, project plans and designs were provided to Commissioners. The project requires approval from the Alaska Railroad.

The Department believes the improvements would improve safety and enhance the quality of this section of the trail, and recommends the Commission pass a resolution in favor of this project.

Public Appearance Requests

Cathy Gleason, Turnagain Community Council President. Turnagain Community Council supports this project and has passed a resolution to be approved at the February 2017 special meeting.

Pat Pourchot, Great Land Trust. Mr. Pourchot stated that tentative approval from the Alaska Railroad has been received, but there is still a complete process to go through. Project design has been completed by Dwayne Adams, and construction planning is underway. From a safety perspective, because the current wayside is so small people taking photographs or just stopping to enjoy the view often block the trail. Enlarging and improving the wayside will move those people off the trail and out of the way of bicycle and other trail traffic. He personally believes this is a very good project for the community.

Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, and upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commission Smith, Resolution No. 2017-04 Approval of Proposed Improvements to Tony Knowles Coastal Trail Turnout/Viewpoint at Milepost 0.4 was unanimously approved as follows:

Resolution No. 2017-04
Approval of Proposed Improvements to Tony Knowles Coastal Trail
Turnout/Viewpoint at Milepost 0.4

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 Great Land Trust with support of the Audubon Society proposes improvements to a feature of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail; and

WHEREAS, the affected portion of the Coastal Trail is located on Alaska Railroad (ARRC) property and the project is subject to ARRC approval; and

WHEREAS, the proposed improvements would enhance a well-used scenic overlook, originally built about 1986, by providing an expanded area with a suitable platform for sightseeing and birdwatching by visitors and residents and would enhance views to the shoreline and its biological resources currently obscured by vegetation; and

WHEREAS, the project would help address current safety issues between Tony Knowles Coastal Trail through-traffic and wayside users and would allow expansion of the width of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail in the future; and

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2017, the Turnagain Community Council considered the project and with recommendations gave its unanimous support; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED: The Parks and Recreation Commission approves the improvements, generally as proposed, to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail turnout/viewpoint at Milepost 0.4, with recommendations of the Turnagain Community Council, subject to obtaining required permits.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of February 2017.

Voting record, Resolution 17-04

Resolution 17-04, unanimously approved

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Kuhn, McCambridge, Milliken, Murphy,
Mystrom, Smith and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

X. Information Items

A. PRC 17-11 Chester Creek Single Track Trails

Presented by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent,
Zack Fields and Christina Grande

Residents from the South Addition and Fairview communities, along with the Single Track Advocates, have approached Parks and Recreation with the idea of creating single track trails that flank the Chester Creek Trail. Single tracks have become very popular in Anchorage. The idea is to provide single track trails in areas that are more centrally located than those at Kincaid and Far North Bicentennial Park. Also, the single track trails would bring more positive activity into the area and hopefully discourage negative activities and make the area less welcoming for illegal camping --- a "take back our park" idea. By having single track trails for bikers and dog walkers to use, congestion on the main trail should be reduced. It is anticipated the project will be done in phases.

The Department has concerns about safety. Essentially these trails will be built in areas of high density, unsavory activity and illegal camping. Inviting people out into these areas is not a responsible thing to do until such time as the illegal camping problem is resolved. The Department would also like to see the two-way single track trails, wider than the one-way trails that were built at Kincaid. The Department has requested a comprehensive plan from the proponents and when that is in place, the plan will be brought back to the Commission for updates and final review before construction begins.

B. PRC 17-12 Hostetler Park Memorial Beautification

Presented by: Paula Bradison, Victims for Justice
Peter Briggs, Landscape Architect

Victims for Justice is a local nonprofit organization that provides assistance for victims of violent crimes. This organization proposes to improve and upgrade Hostetler Park, where the Victims for Justice Memorial is located, by improving accessibility, parking, landscaping, and lighting, and to make the park a safe and peaceful place for people to visit the memorial year round. Support from Anchorage Downtown Rotary and Anchorage Park Foundation, as well as private sector supporters, should ensure that the project is sufficiently funded. As the plan develops, it will be brought back to the Commission for updates and final review before construction begins.

XI. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Murphy inquired whether it would be beneficial for the Commission to address the park ranger issue directly with the Assembly. Mr. Durand responded that the Department has already had a great deal of discussion with the Assembly and the Administration about the best way to implement a ranger program. There is one idea of starting a "Park Ambassador" program, which ambassadors would educate park users and contact police if needed. It is felt that the ranger program would need to be part of the Anchorage Police Department.

XII. Upcoming Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., March 9, 2017, at Spenard Recreation Center.

XIII. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Winchester, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2017:

Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Director
Parks & Recreation