



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



September 10, 2015

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Jon Dyson at 6:05 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Richard Mystrom
Commissioner Carl Propes
Commissioner Peter Murphy
Commissioner Harlow Robinson
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Jim Balamaci
Commissioner Joey Caterinichio
Commissioner Levi Robinson

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

Josh Durand
Tom Korosei
Diana Cramer

III. Consent Agenda

A. Agenda

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Peter Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Jim Winchester, the Agenda for the September 10, 2015 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

B. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Upon motion duly by Commissioner Rich Mystrom and seconded by Commissioner Harlow Robinson, the Minutes of the August 13, 2015 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

IV. Director's Comments

In Director Rodda's absence, Park Superintendent Josh Durand reported on Parks and Recreation projects.

The new Coastal Trail bridge at Westchester Lagoon is supposed to arrive on October 4 and the contractor has until October 18 to install it.

Two weeks ago, due to high tides and high winds, portions of the Coastal Trail experienced significant erosion and there were areas near Fish Creek where waves were lapping up over the trail. Parks and Recreation is working with other municipal departments to find a way to protect this valuable asset.

The Chester Creek Trail rehabilitation project is on schedule and soon to be completed for this year.

All but one playground project has been completed, and that one will be completed this month.

Planning and design development has begun for next year's projects.

V. Appearance Requests

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

Les Shepherd provided an update on his plans to build an indoor tennis facility at Tikishla Park. He admits that he has not received public support for a facility at that location, but has been unable to find another suitable location.

Mr. Durand stated that because the local community councils rejected the proposal for a tennis facility at that location, it is not supported by Parks and Recreation.

It is Mr. Shepherd's stated intent that he will to continue to work toward building a facility at that location, unless another viable location is found.

VI. Action Items

A. PRC 15-16: Request by ENSTAR Natural Gas Co. for an Easement in a Portion of Emerald Hills Park (Campbell Creek Greenbelt) to Facilitate Replacement of a Section of a Natural Gas Distribution Pipeline

PRC Resolution 2015-09

Presented by: Tom Korosei, Park Planner
Vin Robinson, Enstar Engineer

Enstar Natural Gas Co. (Enstar) has requested a 15-foot wide easement, approximately 630 feet long, in park parcels of the Campbell Creek Greenbelt in Emerald Hills Park, adjacent to Dimond Boulevard. The easement would allow a new segment of Enstar's distribution pipeline to be installed which is needed to replace an existing section that does not meet current safety standards. Project details were provided and questions answered by Vin Robinson.

Emerald Hills is formally dedicated park land. Therefore, the easement may be authorized by the Assembly pursuant to AMC 25.30.020. The affected parcels were acquired with a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LCWF). LCWF regulations generally allow underground utilities if they do not impair recreation use of the land.

Parks and Recreation recommended that the Commission adopt a resolution to support the proposal subject to the following conditions:

1. ENSTAR shall pay to the Municipality applicable fees and administrative costs in addition to fair market value for the easement.
2. ENSTAR shall obtain all other required permits and approvals for the proposed project.
3. ENSTAR shall restore disturbed park areas using appropriate materials, in accordance with MOA standards and in accordance with plans that may be required by the Parks and Recreation Department.

4. ENSTAR shall coordinate construction and related site work with Parks and Recreation for permitted park activities.

Commissioner Harlow Robinson informed the Commission that Vin Robinson is his brother, but stated he not feel a conflict of interest existed that would require him to recuse himself from participating in the discussion and voting on this matter. Commissioners unanimously agreed that Mr. Robinson did not need to recuse himself.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Peter Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Mystrom, Resolution No. 2015-09 *Request for Utility Easement at Emerald Hills Park within Campbell Creek Greenbelt for an Underground Natural Gas Pipeline* was unanimously approved as follows:

Resolution No. 2015-09
Request for Utility Easement at Emerald Hills Park within
Campbell Creek Greenbelt for an Underground Natural Gas Pipeline

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, ENSTAR Natural Gas Company maintains a distribution pipeline at the southerly boundary of Emerald Hills Park, specifically on or adjacent to the East 1/2 and West 1/2 of Lot 2, and East 1/2 and West 1/2 of Lot 3, Chester H. Lloyd Subdivision, and Lot 110 Campbell Creek Greenbelt Subd. Addn. 14, part of the Campbell Creek Greenbelt, to serve surrounding properties; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the subject section of pipeline is to be replaced to meet current safety standards for this type of facility, and replacement of the pipeline in proximity to the existing line is the most feasible alternative to address the problem; and

WHEREAS, the requested easement adjacent to the existing line and the right-of-way boundary would facilitate the project while resulting in limited impact on the park area potentially affected by the project; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that a 15-foot-wide easement along portions of the boundary of Emerald Hills Park/Campbell Creek Greenbelt be granted to ENSTAR Natural Gas Co., generally as shown on the attached diagrams, for the purpose of replacement of an underground natural gas distribution pipeline.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 10th day of September 2015.

The "attached diagrams" referenced in the "BE IT RESOLVED" paragraph of the resolution are attached to these Minutes.

B. PRC 15-17: Proposed amendment of Anchorage Municipal Code to prohibit smoking and “vaping” in Town Square Park and adjoining areas

PRC Resolution 2015-10

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner

The Parks and Recreation Commission was asked to consider and make a recommendation on a proposed ordinance to prohibit smoking and vaping (the use of an electronic smoking device) in Town Square Park and adjoining areas. It is understood that the intent of this ordinance is to promote health by reducing exposure to second-hand smoke in areas where people are likely to be in close proximity to one another. The vapors from electronic smoking devices are also likely to have similar second-hand exposure impacts. The adverse health effects from smoking are in contrast with Parks and Recreation's mission to promote "healthy parks, healthy people." The Commission was provided with a copy of the draft ordinance to amended AMC 16.65 to prohibit smoking and vaping in Town Square Park.

Parks and Recreation staff recommended that the Commission issue a resolution in support of adoption of an ordinance to prohibit smoking and vaping in Town Square Park.

Commissioners expressed concerns about the intent of the ordinance, whether or not it would be effective in helping to clean up Town Square Park, whether a smoking ban meant to protect the public's health from the effects of second-hand smoke is necessary in an outdoor park environment, and whether imposing a ban on smoking and vaping in Town Square Park sets an unintended precedent for banning smoking in all parks and trails.

A motion to table Resolution 2015-10 was duly made by Commissioner Rich Mystrom, seconded by Commissioner Harlow Robinson, and unanimously approved by the Commission. Instead, Commissioners submitted the following Memorandum to the Anchorage Assembly expressing its position with regard to said Ordinance:

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 11, 2015
To: Anchorage Assembly
From: Jon Dyson, Acting Chairman
Subject: Ordinance Amending AMC 16.65 to Prohibit Smoking and “Vaping” in Town Square Park, Including Adjacent ACPA Property, Right-of-Ways and Walkways

The Parks and Recreation Commission is aware of problems of negative activity in Town Square Park and supports a comprehensive effort to address these problems.

It is not clear that extending the smoking ban would help to maintain order in Town Square Park, or improve the use of the park and the safety and conduct of park users. The Commission would endorse a ban on smoking and vaping in the park if supported by information to demonstrate that such an ordinance would be an effective part of an overall plan to improve safety of park visitors, and facilitate maintenance and programming of the park. A statement from the Public Safety Advisory Commission on the matter may be helpful.

The Commission has specific questions about the ordinance, such as who would enforce the law, and whether imposing fines would be fair and effective.

The Commission is unsure that a smoking ban, meant to protect the public’s health from the effects of second-hand smoke, is necessary in an outdoor park environment, and whether imposing a ban on smoking and vaping in Town Square Park sets an unintended precedent for banning smoking in all parks and trails.

The Commission noted that the design of Town Square Park may in some respects be similar to other amphitheaters in which smoking is banned under current municipal code.

In sum, the Commission supports efforts to improve safety for park visitors but is not convinced that potential benefits of the proposed ordinance to ban smoking and vaping in Town Square Park would outweigh an infringement on rights of citizens.

VII. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

VIII. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2015:

Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Director
Parks & Recreation