

EAGLE RIVER/CHUGIAK PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Regular Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Eagle River/ Chugiak Parks & Recreation (ERCP&R) Board of Supervisors convened on March 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Teams. Chair Brian Fay called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Brian Fay, Mayor's appointee
Ms. Alexandra Hill, Birchwood Community Council
Mr. Josh Ream, South Fork Community Council
Mr. Will Taygan, Chugiak Community Council
Ms. Camilla Hussein, Eagle River Community Council
Mr. Pete Panarese, Eagle River Valley Community Council

Karen Richards, Manager
Tanya Iskra
Steve McSwain, McDonald Ctr Manager
Josh Durand, Parks and Recreation Director

III. MINUTES

The February minutes were approved.

IV. APPEARANCES

(Steve McSwain was here for the Mac center, reported under Old Business B;
Maeve Nevins Lavtar was here for to report on dog parks, reported under Old Business A)

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Dog Park development – Maeve Nevins Lavtar
Maeve starts her presentation by acknowledging our presence on traditional Dena'ina lands. She then continues with an introduction to the Dog Park Site Selection study. She reviewed the R&M report and comments; met with the Parks and Rec Maintenance folks; and produced this study. The study reviews existing dog parks; selection criteria; and the 5 proposed alternatives. 75% of residents surveyed supported a dog park. There are different types of dog parks: off leash areas, fenced parks, and off leash trails. 'Area' may or may not have full fencing, and amenities. Fenced parks usually have a 5-6' fence, although a lower fence is OK in urban areas; in the woods, with moose, 6' is needed. Fenced parks should be at least 5000 sq ft. A Trail-type park is less formal; one example is Beach Lake in the winter (which she notes is not currently designated as such). If Beach Lake were a designated off leash park, there would be some signs for rules.

The criteria for each site included: ownership, cultural resources, location, size (total park at least 1 acre, fenced portion may be smaller), and existing uses – both on site and adjacent. Also she reviewed to identify anything in relevant planning documents to consider. In Eagle River/Chugiak, we should pay attention to possible cultural resources, consult with Eklutna. We also need to consider utilities (lights, water); environmental constraints (contaminated soil; wildlife, moose and bear use patterns, etc.); neighborhood access, traffic, pedestrian access; accessibility; emergency response issues; topography and drainage; fences and natural barriers; costs; maintenance and management. She reviewed the 5 sites identified by R&M: Firehouse Lane, NW Quarter of Section 25; Beach Lake Park; Loretta French Park;

and Peters Creek Park. The report Summarizes each site's characteristics, opportunities and constraints. Maeve then shows her matrix with all the data entered into a spreadsheet and scored to rank the sites. With that, Beach Lake Park, NW Quarter, and Loretta French went to the back burner. Firehouse Lane is the lowest hanging fruit; Peters Creek Park has other advantages that make it a higher priority for this year.

B. Peters Creek Park: She summarized the concept plan for Peters Creek Park, and notes that on the S boundary, there is a utility corridor. She shows the maximum build-out fence as a dark line. On the S side, there would be vegetation buffer, hill, fence. The far SE corner is un-fenced but the topography and vegetation make a good buffer from the nearby house. On the NE side, she also suggests fence at the top of the hill to capitalize on the views. She discusses other interior features. Phase 1 would be S of Lace Rd.; Phase 2 would be the north side of Lace Rd., between there and the creek. Phase 3 conceivably could be the far NE corner of the property.

Firehouse Lane: A fenced area wraps around tennis courts, and there are trails winding through the wooded area. On the E side there could be a path through to the school. Costs: Firehouse lane: \$67,715; Peters Creek: \$318,995 (but this could be phased, and some cost savings are possible).

The next step is a community outreach meeting to present the site plan; solicit public feedback: do they approve of the report; do they support moving forward with Peters Creek Park? If we support this approach, she would move to design/development, go to Chugiak Community Council, and make more detailed drawings.

Josh R appreciates the excellent report. He also likes that her recommendations align with what the board thought was reasonable. He thinks her information will be valuable to the public and would love to move forward this summer. A couple of minor details concern him: drainage is important; we should be protecting wildlife from diseases that dogs might bring. He notes the potential for events (ice cream social), thanks her for the land acknowledgement and hopes some signage could include Dena'ina language, and possibly also identifying native vegetation. Brian says thank you as well and reiterates that she delivered exactly what we had hoped for.

Maeve would like to do a survey before the public meeting. Josh cautions against sample bias; that we should think about who would answer; and that many people would just oppose spending any tax dollars. Will notes that Chugiak Community Council is generally supportive of community amenities, if done smartly.

Karen notes that the \$318,000 is somewhat more than what we have set aside, but we have some potential for cost savings, as well as some other possible funds available. Camilla asks if we can put out a link for our community councils to be able to access the report. It is not up on a link yet but will be soon. We can share but should also note that we are not at the moment moving forward with Firehouse Lane. Maeve will create a short, shareable pdf for us to give to our councils. We'll have a public meeting for the study soon, and a more detailed meeting at Chugiak Community Council with Title 21-mandated public notice (21 days), in a month or so. Brian asks if the Animal Control Advisory Board has to approve. They do not. However, Maeve has worked with them to develop the criteria. They will want to know about it, but will not weigh in. She needs approvals from Chugiak Community Council and this board. Josh D may require the design go through the Urban Design Commission, which could slow things down, but right now it looks like we could go through an administrative site plan review.

C. Harry J McDonald Center – Steve McSwain

It is spring break right now and very busy. April High School hockey is a go, starting March 15th. Between that and a youth group (Alaska Blades) they will stay busy until the end of April and take ice out May 1. Talking with Pat McCormick, they are still holding strong financially and are not asking for money yet. Steve looks forward to talking to Karen on turf ideas, but not this week. There is a camp starting tomorrow. Brian asks about the phone system – one idea was mobile phones rather than land line – has Steve thought about that? He hasn't heard it discussed but thinks it's a potentially great idea. Brian also notes that we'd love to have Pat come to a board meeting and asks Steve to pass that along. Karen adds that she got 2020 balanced, with a 2020 year end of loss for \$94,166 before the \$84,700 PPP loan. Once that is accounted for, there was only a net loss of ~\$ 9400 for the year. \$6000 was Christmas bonuses. Netting that out, there was an operational loss of \$3,400 for the year. The December bank balance (cash in hand) was \$159,000. Based on all that, Karen and Josh determined that a subsidy was not needed. They will see how things go this year. Although the Mac had \$166,000 at end of January, they were still \$25,000 behind budget for January 2021 Budget that was submitted. The submitted budget for 2021 was the same as submitted for 2020 and anticipates a profit. They will work to have the turf side help with income. Once the next PPP loan comes in, their cash flow will be fine for the moment. She and Josh also decided to keep the 4% retainage unchanged to keep the books clean and clear heading into a new contract. She would like to change things in a way that split profits with FLAMI to provide them with some incentive. Josh asks about the PPP loan – doesn't it have to be paid back? Karen explains that the first one was 100% forgiven; the second one may be 100% forgivable, or less; she hasn't seen the terms.

D. Park/Trail Oversight – Update.

We have cancelled the 2021 summer camp and are trying to be a community support for other camps instead. Tanya was able to reach out to some of her contacts. Trailside Discovery Camp will rent out Beach Lake Chalet for their summer camp for several weeks in June and July. They will be out on the trails, using the chalet as their base. They will rent the pool twice a week, have a permit for use of the park, rent the kayaks and may also rent the lodge for staff training. They are getting some discounts, which we are asking them to pass on to local kids as lower prices. Other camps may show some interest as well, but we are off to a good start. Josh notes that his council is excited about public/private partnerships like this, and like the softball partnership. Camilla asks if we inquired about scholarships for our local kids. We have, as Karen noted. They have also agreed to hire her staff. Beach Lake Lodge is filling up for the summer. They have the TAPS group (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors -military families who have lost someone abroad) for two sessions, 1 week each. Some weddings; the softball group will have a coaches and scouting tournament in August. Schroeder Tennis courts – there is a task order and PO ready for TBC to assess what needs to be done there for the pickle ballers. The softball team will refurbish the remaining two fields at Loretta French. The American Legion field will be multi-use – American Legion or softball. We are buying materials, but softball folks are doing all the work. High School teams will have no-charge permits also, partly in return for this work, and partly because they won't get very many games, depending on weather in the spring. They will try snow blowing field 4 so that it will dry out sooner. If that approach works well, they will be able to do it again in future years. Softball has a jamboree in July, a High School coaches and scouting event with a tournament for underprivileged kids. The Chinooks are coming back, we have their schedule.

- E. Parks & Rec Maintenance Storage Yard Site (Old Glenn)
Bids were opened last week, and while the engineer's estimate was \$750,000 (high for a bare bones building), the low bid was even higher - \$854,900. In addition, the muni wants to add a fire hydrant (\$25,000) that was not required for previous buildings. Karen is questioning that requirement. We are over budget, and this takes us to the edge of our contingency fee. She will be looking for cost savings elsewhere.
- F. CARES Act funding – Mirror Lake Single Track
They are working on final design and budget aspects. Karen will be helping with the multi-use portion and contributing stored materials. Will notes that the new person they are using for design is very good. They have had to do a redesign because of a property line issue, but the quality is much higher. Costs are up, but Karen is helping with those stockpiled materials. Contracts are not signed yet, which is urgent because they need to order the features. Because there are jumps and other challenging features, it is being designed, built and installed by professionals. This reduces risk and keeps risk management happy. Once work starts much of the area near the parking lot will be cordoned off.
- G. FEMA / Quake Repair Project Status
Karen has just gotten the second project payment for roads and parking lots. She is expecting a third payment, for the dock. Funds for the Loretta French hillside crack have been obligated. Once the single track project is moving forward, they will work on getting crack repair project out to bid.

VI. ACTION ITEMS (none)

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. By-Laws
We will table action on this until next month. Josh R notes that in the 'election of board members' section we should be explicit about not needing assembly approval except for mayor's appointee. Brian has asked for clarification and legal is looking into it. Pete wants to bring to everyone's attention that important subjects come up at the last minutes of the meeting. Those important issues should be dealt with early. If we want to be more productive, we need to change our behavior. He's not sure how to handle it. Josh suggests that an extra meeting for important things could help.
- B. Elections:
Pete Panarese was nominated for Chair; Camilla Hussein for Vice Chair. Both were elected unanimously.
- C. Will brings up whether we can a) find a place for people to ski with their dogs; and b) get more skiers on Mirror Lake (Coyote) trails. No action at this time.

VIII. TABLED ITEMS

- A. MT. Baldy Parking
- B. Chugiak/Eagle River Cemetery
- C. AMATS Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Peter J. Panarese April 13, 2021
Peter Panarese, Chair Date

Karen Richards 4/12/21
Karen Richards, Manager Date