

**EAGLE RIVER/CHUGIAK PARKS AND RECREATION
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Regular Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Recreation (ERCP&R) Board of Supervisors convened on December 13, 2021, at 7:00 pm via Microsoft Teams. Chair Pete Panarese called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

Alexandra Hill, Birchwood Community Council
Barbara Trost, Alternate for Birchwood Community Council
Will Taygan, Chugiak Community Council
Jackie Welge, Alternate for Chugiak Community Council
Camilla Hussein-Scott, Eagle River Community Council
Pete Panarese, Eagle River Valley Community Council
Ruth Armstrong, Eagle River Valley Community Council

Josh Durand – Parks and Recreation Director
Karen Richards – Parks and Recreation, Principal Administrative Officer
John Rodda - The Boutet Company, Project Consultant

III. MINUTES

Approval of November 8, 2021, meeting minutes was postponed for Board Member Review and Comment.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Budget Review of 2022 Operations, CIP and Fund Balance Dollars
Parks & Recreation provided a report prepared by Karen and John identifying the current CIP funded projects, status, remaining balances, future project funding needs anticipated for 2022 and the department's recommended planned use of Fund Balance dollars and anticipated project timelines.

Josh asked if board members all had time to review the information provided. Will likes the format but needs help interpreting. Peter had a question regarding project header identifications. On the Operation budget side, he would like to see an organizational chart for Eagle River/Chugiak Parks & Recreation division to expand his knowledge of the Operating budget, staff positions and what they do. Karen will provide that information prior to the next meeting.

Karen presented the report information and explained the different sections of the report and item detail associated. The first report section (**Project Overview**) identifies the

project listing re-cap of original project detail and balances matching the SAP Project report balances that were supplied over the summer by Josh and Tanya. This report contains project detail notes of status and intent for the existing project balances and shows total CIP project funds in the amount of \$5,636,290.85. Some project balance savings from completed projects will be moved to alternate existing projects, undesignated project funds, and with some balances being retained for future maintenance needs. Barbara asked about two projects with noted FEMA cost saving balances and if there are any government restrictions or reporting requirements associated with using those project balances elsewhere? Karen clarified that the two projects referenced by Barbara's question are CIP funds that were already on hand before the earthquake and balances remaining after FEMA funding paid for these projects to be completed, therefore leaving the original project funds from CIP still available and able to be used elsewhere. The second section of the report (**Current & Proposed Projects**) has all zero balance projects from the first report removed so only projects with remaining funds are seen. This report identifies project balances after the "completed" project saving balance transfers (as noted on first report) have been made and reallocated as noted. The second report also identifies Parks & Recreation's 2022 proposed CIP projects and anticipated funds of \$1,690,000 needed for those projects. With the project cost savings already identified as well as the movement of some CIP funds back to undesignated from Park Maintenance Facility Phase 1 and CHS Pool in the total amount of \$1,493,967 and combined with undesignated project balance funds of \$608,320.40, the Department has the funds to cover the 2022 CIP projects proposed. This report also provides narrative identifying proposed use of Fund Balance dollars for two major projects needed. Chugiak Highschool Pool needs major repairs estimated at \$1 Million Dollars (this estimate may increase after condition assessment has been performed) and Phase 2 of the Park Maintenance Storage Facility estimated at \$1.5 Million Dollars. Additional fund balance proposed uses were \$793,967 of CIP funds used for Park Maintenance Facility Phase I build costs overages to be returned to CIP funds and fund balance funding used to replace it as this project was originally intended to be funded by fund balance funds so this will reapply those costs where they belong. One additional idea presented for use of fund balance dollars was to pay off the current Bond indebtedness balance of \$602,062 for Eagle River/Chugiak taxpayers several years early (payoff scheduled in 2027) and provide the local community cost savings of \$726,104 in interest as well as the cancellation of the .06 yearly mill rate tax calculation charged annually for this bond payoff and provide taxpayer relief of that tax collection from 2022 forward. Use of the Fund Balance for such major projects as identified will allow for CIP designated funding dollars to be effectively utilized and retained for smaller project funding needs. The third section of report (Project Timelines) provides an estimated five-year project completion timeline for existing and new projects. Board members asked various questions in relation to the reports with clarifications and answers provided by John, Josh, and Karen. The reports provide both the board and the community a clear picture of where the department is at and where we are going. Board members will digest this information further and take their understanding back to their CCs for

engaging discussion and possible additional questions next meeting if needed. The department will be looking for possible board approval of the 2022 proposed projects sometime in the next few months.

Rich Anderson is an Engineer in Eagle River and shared his comments with the board. He references the estimated CIP yearly mill rate allocation of approximately \$400,000 and feels that Parks & Recreation saving this money for the last 20 years to create a savings is overtaxing the citizens and not actually creating a savings because we are not properly budgeting the funding we receive. He uses the Dog Park as a reference and feels that Parks & Rec and the Municipality in general does not perform proper project management because we don't know time frames, things are done on a whim, and we are not accurate when we say we will have Geotech and Construction set in three months, as it takes that long just to get drilling done. He feels what needs to be done is for Parks & Rec to come up with a project manager, realistic budgets, and project timeframes for all the projects because we will never meet any of our deadlines the way we are running our Parks & Rec operation in Eagle River/Chugach.

B. Update on Board Appointments and Members

Josh has no update on any new member notifications currently. We do have two new appointed contacts in the mayor's office for handling board appointments. Sammy Graham (Chief of Staff) and Brice Willbanks (Administrative Specialist) are those two individuals. Josh has an upcoming meeting with the Municipal Manager and does have this topic on his agenda. He is hopeful that they will assign a dedicated person for this need. Josh asked Pete and members to notify him if there is an immediate concern or need associated with any current or recent expirations needing renewal etc. Karen will also provide him the last department record of board expiration dates as well.

C. Peters Creek Dog Park Status

Karen and Josh met with consulting team last Friday and they are currently working on putting the package together. They have their survey done but do not have the Geotech complete, which is influential in determining subgrade improvements needed for the parking lot specific. The consultant will have the completed concept with cost estimates ready by January 10, 2022. From this package, Josh and Karen will take in the information and create a menu that delivers the concept to the community and the board with budgetary options identified, such as fencing, how high, how much and trails etc. We know we are going to deliver a dog park and these menu options will allow us to define and identify what is included and for how much. The design they are working with does mitigate the safety concerns that were heard through the public process before the board earlier. The department's goal is to have a finished product with complete documents ready for project bidding by February or March 2022, and with construction intended for summer of 2022.

D. Status of Edmonds Lake/Eklutna access road proposal

Josh is still waiting for a formal list of the board's questions and will carry those forward. He did pose the board's general question of why they are choosing the route that they are and not utilizing the utility easement that exists. No clear answer received yet, but Josh assumes that this route relates to their desired destination and where they are wanting to land within the park. Eklutna project team has indicated that they would like to seek board approval of this project by January 2023, so any questions should come forward now to the project team so they can be addressed soon. Brian asks about the expected use of funding identified for this project within the presented 2022 project list, and whether it is intended to create the access road which he understood to be Eklutna's financial responsibility, or are these funds intended for something else? Josh, John, and Karen anticipate that this access road will create community recognition and need for development of a Master Plan and identify opportunities associated with the new park access point, as well as access mitigation measures to protect existing trail and park assets. Park Master Plans typically take a year or more to develop and can cost more than \$100,000 so having these funds established and available will position the department to move and plan in tandem with the Eklutna access. Will has a question he would like presented before the Eklutna project planners and that is "How does this road tie into the area wide trails plan" and "is this the time to ask"? Josh does see this access road being influential in future trail development and does see a constraint associated but thinks it could also provide some opportunities as well. John points out that we stand to gain a lot in association with this access road for additional trail access or parking areas etc. The goal is always to create something that benefits the community and John is willing to participate as he forty years ago in trying to solve these issues.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Birchwood-Chugiak Trail Plan Support and request for SCORP Projects Funding
This topic ties in with the resolution presented below. Will feels that the old area wide trails plan governing documents (1985 appears to be the last one) could use some resurrecting, possible updates and to continue with these greenbelt and trail access plans. He feels these area wide plans have been dropped or forgotten somewhat over time and there seems to be no point person to take this topic on as a priority and would like to request that the board advise Parks & Rec to assume this responsibility as the lead and help foster some of the development plans for greenbelts and trail connections referenced in the area wide trail plan documents. He also would like to see emphasis and priority on community connections to Chugach State Park. He feels we have missed some opportunities this year where we have lost some important parcels because we felt that it was the responsibility of state parks and not suitable for a park. The only value seen in the parcels was only as it related to direct connectivity to the community. Will thinks it is in the best interest of the community to preserve those parcels and connections and that it may take an action of the board to recommend support for the use of taxpayer dollars to make those connections within the community.

Peter reviews the resolution language to the board members and then asked for Josh's input on whether this document is necessary. Josh does not feel the need for a resolution from the board as Parks & Rec has already been recognized as the lead on this through the planning department and they have \$250,000 available with plans for Parks & Rec to administer the funds. Josh anticipates this to be implemented in the fall with Parks & Rec assigning a planner from the Anchorage service area, the Eagle River/Chugiak Parks & Rec service area (currently open for hire), as well as a planner that resides within the Municipality AMATS program to lead this. He emphasizes that this is only a plan, and it is then up to us as a department as well as the board to allocate funds to realize the plan. We can do that now if we have a project that is attainable. Josh reminds board members if there are opportunities that they are aware of in this regard, please bring them forward through board meetings and e-mail for consideration. Current available GIS data and information will be helpful in updating these old plans and create a new living document. Peter and Will discuss that some parcels offering connection to trails and Chugach State Park are worth investing in and would like to see this idea within the Parks & Rec scope of services and consideration. John likes Will's comments and identifies the challenge of who could undertake this and who would fund it. He had many years of dealing with these issues and while we may want it, how would we get there and who is responsible for funding. Josh recognizes that there is a challenge in creating synergy between multiple land managers and notes that when the department considers land parcels, the parcel must meet several criteria challenges. It must be justifiable to the taxpayers within the service area to be developed as a park with identified parking, as well as provide connectivity for access to State Parks, but if we are looking to retain or develop property only for access as it relates to Chugach State Park, then that is really the responsibility of Chugach State Parks and not the Municipality. There is also the concern with just creating an attractive nuisance in some areas. Karen pointed out that much of the land parcels being discussed are not owned by Parks & Rec but instead are owned by Real Estate Services and Parks & Rec would have to purchase the properties from Real Estate Services at Fair Market Value first and before any planning or development could be realized. Brian Fay likes the resolution and does not see it as a commitment of funds but merely shows the board is interested.

VII. ACTION ITEM

- A. Board Resolution 2021-3 – Support for AMATS request that Parks & Rec (contingent on funding) update of the Municipal Recreation Trails Plan
Pete asked members for resolution support and did not receive it at this time. Will proposes to table this resolution topic for further discussion and consideration next month or after.

VIII. INFORMATION

Staffing of Beach Lake Chalet has proved to be challenging again this year and Chalet opening and operation is postponed at this time.

IX. DISCUSSION

Camilla suggests that the board members tour our parks and facilities and meet the staff that operate them to further see and recognize what we have and maintain.
John Rodda thanked everyone for their participation and discussion of the night's agenda topics and encourages the members to send forward any further questions they may have regarding the budget reports presented to Pete and Josh.

X. TABLED ITEMS

- A. MT. Baldy Parking
- B. Chugiak/Eagle River Cemetery

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm


Pete Panarese, Chair

2-24-2022
Date


Josh Durand, Director

3/29/2022
Date