

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

Regular Meeting Minutes – August 8, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Recreation (ERCP&R) Board of Supervisors convened on August 8, 2022, at 7:05 pm via Microsoft Teams. Chair Pete Panarese called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

Barbara Trost, Birchwood Community Council

~~Alexandra Hill, Alternate 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, Alternate for Eagle River Valley Community Council

Jasmine Carter, Mayor's Appointee

Mike Braniff – Parks and Recreation Director

Karen Richards – Parks and Recreation, Principal Administrative Officer

John Rodda - The Boutet Company, Project Consultant

III. MINUTES

May 9th and June 13th 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

IV. APPEARANCES

Jenna and Taylor Sjostrand – Local Baseball & Softball Facility

Jenna and Taylor have been residents of Eagle River for 30 years and have recently invested in a franchise known throughout the country as D-Bat. D-Bat specializes in year- round baseball and softball training facilities that promote the sport for both youth and adults as well as, baseball and softball programs. The business would be membership based, and would provide lessons, batting cages, pro shop, camps, clinics, party rentals, vending and sports performance training opportunities. They would need approximately 15,0000 square feet in which to operate from and are looking for a possible existing facility large enough to accommodate their operation or some land large enough to build a facility and operate from in the Eagle River/Chugiak area if possible. They do not have the necessary funds to purchase a property and build their own facility and are interested in renting an existing one or working with an organization such as Parks & Recreation to possibly provide the land and facility build in which to rent from and operate this business. John Rodda suggested that they contact the Lions Club for a possible solution as they do have the space currently for a build option and they may

want to touch base with Kelly Merrick or Lora Reinbold to discuss the particulars and conditions of the recent land trade agreement between the Lions Club and DNR. Ruth Armstrong suggests that they contact Jason Woodward who was recently looking to develop an “open air” facility where the Eagle River Cinemas used to be located. John also recommends that they contact the McDonald Center to see if something might work for them on the turf side of the facility as well. Jenna and Taylor will reach out to the suggested contacts for any possible solutions. The board as well as Parks & Recreation will continue to be on the look out for any possibilities that might be a good match for them.

Mike Braniff – Parks & Recreation Director

Mike is the new Parks & Recreation Director replacing Josh Durand. He grew up in Fairbanks and was a X-Country Skier in High School. Mike has been with the Parks & Recreation Department for the past four years with concentration on beetle kill removal and prior to that he worked for a local tree service in the role of arborist. His most recent work has been concentrated around the homeless community issues and clean up as well as the recent Highland Road avalanche response. He is looking forward to becoming more familiar with the board and the Eagle River/Chugiak area parks. Mike is a trail and park user and enjoys cycling the various trails and parks available in the Municipality and State.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. CIP Project Status Report-

John Rodda provided the project status report and extended thanks and appreciation to Mark Littlefield and the Eagle River Street Maintenance team for their assistance and cooperation in accomplishing several projects. 1) **The Loretta French irrigation line** issue was able to be accomplished in one day after identifying where and how the break occurred. Mark brought in his crew to make repair and we split the costs of repair to get the line back in operation. 2) **Paving of Beach Lake Road & Parking (Phase II)** is complete which improves access and will make maintenance much easier. The striping of the parking area is intended for this fall. 3) Street Maintenance has a project on **Oberg Road for safety upgrades and improvements** of turn out and cluster mailboxes located north of the entrance to the Oberg Soccer fields, and they needed more space from the park property to create the necessary safe margins for this work and Parks & Rec was glad to help. This project is well underway and should be completed this year. When completed this will be a good addition to the area that has been a bit of a safety issue for residents to access their mailboxes. 4) **Lower Fire Lake Access** is another issue that has come up repeatedly with concern for the safety of the people who use it, traffic issues associated with it when it becomes overcrowded on nice hot days and the unsafe conditions that occur and develop without people even noticing or paying attention to the hazards. At times this area becomes so bottlenecked and congested that a safety response

vehicle would not be able to get through. Mark and John went out and took a look at the area and concerns and Mark has provided the information that all of this area is under DOT/ROW jurisdiction so that changes our ideas and ability to make it safe and will require further discussion. For the interim this winter, we will again install the jersey barriers as we have for the past few years and work on a solution involving DOT and other agencies such as Fish & Game as necessary.

P&R Maintenance Shop – The shop is close to being done but unfortunately now has suffered a delay in accessing power that we have had no control over and is a result of the project management team missing an issue of a non-legal easement that was permitted by MEA for crossing to the backside of the property before we acquired the property in 2019. This non-legal permitted easement will now have to be vacated and a letter of Non-Objection from Parks & Recreation for right of entry (with the board's support) is required to rectify the issue and critical in accomplishing power to the facility.

The department has a term contractor by the name of Spernak & Sons who is currently working on the following projects: **Schroeder Park Tennis/Pickle Ball Court Improvements, Town Square Park concrete and light pole repairs, Beach Lake Lodge and Caretaker Cabin Piling replacement, Peters Creek Dog Park Parking and Loretta French Dug Out Hardening**

Chugiak Pool Assessment– Working with the Maintenance & Operations Department as the Project Management, Counsilman Hunsaker who is a reputable pool consultant firm from the lower 48 who will be in the state viewing work in various cities and will now also provide the necessary complete de-constructive assessment utilizing local contractors and engineers of the Chugiak Pool, and is anticipated to be scheduled for the end of this month. This assessment will provide a report with cost estimates. The goal is to make these full repairs right and at one time with one closure only as frequent and repeated closures for repairs make it very difficult to retain both patrons and staff.

BL Ski Trail Expansion – Taylor Keegan from the Anchorage office is the Project Manager on this project and she and John are working and coordinating with the ski team on a finalized plan for the expansion of the trails and possibly some lighting improvements as well but there is more work to be done by the ski club and we hope to have more information and movement by the next meeting.

We are also in the process of getting preliminary estimates for two of our playgrounds that are not inclusive, **Turner Park and Loretta French Park** and should be getting the scope and anticipated costs identified for these two turf projects.

Arctic Heat is one of the recipients of the round two ARPA grant funds and we will be coordinating with them on **Loretta French Improvements**.

CMBR is also a recipient of round two ARPA grant funds for **Beach Lake Trail Improvements**. A Comprehensive planning effort will be required on this to formally present a well scoped project for review and approval with clear and defined plans for how the funds will be used and where etc., with community council approvals and support.

Dave Whitfield at the planning department will need to work closely with Will to meet planning department conditions and processes. Will is hoping to leverage other funding sources as well to stretch dollars and resources as much as possible.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report – Facility Visits

Several board members were able to attend the site visits to the Dog Park, Horse Park, Beach Lake Lodge and the Chugiak Pool which allows the board to better visualize and understand topics and issues at these parks and facilities when being discussed.

Resulting from the Beach Lake Lodge visit Camilla has posed several questions about the facility. Karen provided answers to several of the questions and will follow up with the remaining items as time allows.

1. How much does it cost to maintain the lodge?
Staff will compile costs and provide this information at a later date.
2. How much does it generate in income?
Staff will compile rental income and provide this information at a later date.
3. Is the lodge listed in a visible public place on the Municipality's website?
Not yet, Maeve Nevin's (Park Planner) and Karen had been working for several years on a "Open House" roll out plan and advertising, once all needed improvements to the facility were accomplished, and those have been occurring over the past few years after we took management of the facility back in 2014. We did not want to oversaturate the lodge use until it was ready to sustain and receive more rentals. It is becoming well used for weddings, group events and private rentals already through public and staff promoting. The lodge also has a Face Book Page that is obsolete and will be updated and revised when all is done. Maeve is no longer with the Municipality so the plan for "Open House" will now have to be realized and resurrected with others when the time comes. The Municipal website is being revised and will eventually have the lodge information identified with other facilities that are available to the public.
4. Is there a general ledger/accounting sheet for beach lake Lodge?
No, the Lodge was managed by Barrier Free Recreation until 2014 when we took it over from them and operation falls under the operating budget as do the other parks.
5. Who gets called in to staff the lodge over the weekends and holidays/off hours?
Karen and Dan Hagarman are the Department Managers who respond to after hours needs and depending on what the need is, respond appropriately by utilizing staff or contractor call outs. Different needs often require different levels and degree of response.
6. Are Municipal/CER P & R employees paid overtime when they are called to maintain the facilities? *Yes, after hours call outs for staff are paid at an overtime rate.*
7. What is the process of reserving and renting the lodge? Who is the Point of Contact? Is there a phone log for that? *There is no phone log for the lodge as most inquiries are only tentative at the time of a call. Rental permit request forms are on the ER/C Parks Website. Public will submit the request form to front desk personnel via e-mail, fax or hand delivered. Staff review the requests and schedule for availability and work directly hands on with the customer and their rental needs to establish best pricing and a successful rental experience for each individual rental when possible.*

Barbara asked about the consistency of rentals. The lodge is rented more consistently lately with weddings, corporate parties, memorial services and reoccurring annual group return renters.

B. ER/C P&R Position Vacancies

The department has hired a new front office person by the name of Walter Reihle III (Trey) who is a long-time member of the community and a positive addition to the department and staff. Interviews for the Landscape Architect/Project Manager position are being conducted this week by a 3-person team of senior management from the Anchorage Department. They hope to have a candidate selected by the end of this week or next week if possible.

C. Return to in person meetings @ERTC

Peter would like to return to in-person meetings and proposed the October 10th board meeting to do so. Board members tentatively decided to return to in-person meetings starting in October 2022 with a final decision on this made at the September meeting.

VIII. ACTION ITEM

IX. INFORMATION

A. MEA Right-of-Entry – P&R Warm Storage (non-objection letter)

The board approved the non-objection to MEA Right of Entry request by a vote of 3 to 2.

B. Staff Summer Activities Recap

Department wide staff shortages have kept everyone busy trying to keep up with the needs. Permits this year have exceeded previous year permit numbers and staff have been feeling it. The parks are still looking good even though we have been missing two key full-time personnel (one of them being the maintenance lead) and were only able to fill half of our available seasonal positions due to lack of applicants. User group events have been very successful this summer and continue to grow.

X. DISCUSSION

XI. TABLED ITEMS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8: 25pm

Camilla Hussein-Scott
Camilla Hussein-Scott, Vice Chair

9/15/2022

Date

Mike Braniff
Mike Braniff, Director

10/3/2022
Date