



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING

February 14, 2019

I. Call to Order

The February 14, 2019 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 Catherine Bodry
Commissioner Kelly Chang
Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Grace Johnston

Commissioner Erin Kirkland
Commissioner Eric Milliken
Commissioner Alison Smith
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent:

Commissioner Shannon Kuhn

A quorum was achieved with eight members present.

Staff present:

John Rodda
Josh Durand
Diana Cramer

III. Approval of Agenda

Upon motion made by Commissioner Bodry and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Agenda for the February 14, 2019 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion made by Commissioner Chang and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Minutes of the January 10, 2019 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

V. Director's Comments

Director John Rodda, provided the following information:

East Pool sustained serious damage as a result of the November 30th earthquake. It will remain closed until at least the end of March pending completion of structural repairs to be accomplished by the Anchorage School District.

The Small Business Administration and FEMA have set up earthquake assistance service centers at Spenard Recreation Center, Loussac Library, and Eagle River Town Center, to assist the public in gaining access to the post-earthquake services they provide.

Community Work Service's work on homeless camp abatement will start up again in April. Right now the Department is focusing on a large, compound-type camp at Taku Lake Park. The camp has been causing a lot of problems and concerns in the area. Next week, Anchorage Police Department will begin to evict clear the illegal tenants from the area after which clean-up can begin.

South Anchorage Sports Park – North: The Commission will be hearing about plans to develop the area of the park on the North side of Minnesota between Minnesota and 100th Avenue. The plans will likely include a contractor chosen to extract and use the fill on the site, and in exchange the contractor will provide Parks and Recreation with a developed site.

Government Hill Square/Round Dance Building: This building has been closed for well over a year due to water damage. Rather than complete the expensive repairs and renovations on the building, the Municipality has decided to demolish it and then make a determination on how to use that site in the future.

Mulcahy Stadium: The box seats at Mulcahy will be removed and replaced. A Major League Baseball-Minor League Level game will be held at Mulcahy on June 11, 2020. The stadium has about 18 things it needs to accomplish to meet the standards

required for that event. Mulcahy will be shut down for two months later this year to get everything ready.

3rd & Ingra Master Plan: Mr. Rodda provided Commissioners with a draft copy of the Heritage Land Bank's Master Plan for the 3rd & Ingra. This Plan will likely involve Parks and Recreation as it is developed. Commissioners can provide comments on the Plan at Heritage Land Bank website.

Youth Employment in Parks positions have been advertised and recruitment will close on March 8.

VI. Appearance Requests

There were no public appearance requests on non-agenda items.

VII. Anchorage Park Foundation Report

Beth Nordlund, Executive Director of the Anchorage Park Foundation (APF), gave the Anchorage Park Foundation Report on various topics:

Youth Employment in Parks – recruitment for positions has begun. She encouraged Commissioners to share this information with friends and family, and to consider volunteering to participate in the interview process.

The Challenge Grant program 2019 – the first workshop will be at Fairview Recreation Center on February 26, and a second workshop at Spenard Recreation Center on March 6. Challenge Grant applications are due April 14. Commissioners were encouraged to share this information with family and acquaintances.

APF is actively promoting the Vote by Mail program for the April 2019 election.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – legislation was passed in Washington, D.C., that will fund the LWCF program yearly, making it more likely that the Anchorage Park Foundation can obtain that money for Anchorage parks every year.

Inclusive playgrounds – an inclusive playground map, showing the location and amenities at each playground, is being developed and will be made available to the public. New inclusive playgrounds for 2019 are the Fairview Recreation Center indoor inclusive playground, Jewel Lake Park, Frontierland Park, and Fairview Park.

In response to questions from Commissioners, Ms. Nordlund discussed various committees, such as the Health on Trails and the Inclusive Play Group, in which Commissioners could participate in order to become more involved in getting people to use our parks and trails more effectively, and suggested Commissioner can help disseminate information by forwarding APF's information email and announcements to others.

VIII. Information Item

PRC 19-02 Proposed Chester Creek Singletrack Trail

PRC Resolution 2019-02

Presented by Van Le, R&M Consultants

Parks and Recreation is exploring options for an urban singletrack trail to be constructed along the existing Chester Creek Trail from Valley of the Moon Park to Goose Lake Park. The plan is to utilize existing social trails along the Chester Creek Trail to create new multi-use, singletrack mountain bike trails. A professional trail designer/builder has been retained to work with the Department, the project advisory group, and the community to identify 2.5 miles of trails to be constructed in 2019. Youth Employment in Parks crews will be utilized for construction. \$150,000 was received from a 2017 park bond for construction. It is believed the trails will increase the appeal of the greenbelt by providing more options for recreation for parents, children, bicycle commuters, recreational bike riders, runners and hikers. Trails previously established at Far North Bicentennial Park and Kincaid Park have proven to be very popular. The growing popularity of fat biking and mountain biking has created a demand for more trails. Open houses, public meetings, and advisory group meetings have been held. Attendees overwhelmingly support the project. Public comment received was received and was largely positive. A printed packet containing details of the project and copies of written public comment was provided to Commissioners.

Parks and Recreation believes formalizing the existing social trails along the Chester Creek corridor into singletrack trails will benefit the community by providing more recreation opportunities and easing congestion on the Chester Creek Trail. The Area Wide Trails Plan identifies mountain biking as a popular trail use. The proposed 2.5 miles of singletrack trails will improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, the greenbelt, and many destinations along the Chester Creek Trail. Community outreach has demonstrated support for the project. The Department believes the plan is consistent with the Park Plan, the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, and the Anchorage Bicycle Plan.

The Parks and Recreation Department requested that the Commission approve a resolution supporting the project at this concept phase. Staff will return to the Commission prior to construction with detailed project plans.

Commissioner Chang asked questions about the effect on those homeless persons displaced by construction. Ms. Le responded that it is recognized that construction of the trails will likely displace homeless people who are camping in the area. The CAP team and the Municipal Homeless Coordinator Nancy Burke have been included in this process to best determine how to proceed.

Commissioner Johnston asked if bird cherry abatement was part of the project. Mr. Durand stated that removal of bird cherry trees will be part of the project.

Commissioner Milliken asked if something could be done to prevent flooding of the trail. Mr. Durand responded that drainage is one of the key components of trail design, which is why the Department works with professional trail builders.

Commissioner Bodry mentioned that one of the people who commented on the project expressed concern about the number of trees that would be removed. Mr. Durand said that, as safety is a primary concern of the community, some tree removal to improve sightlines and thus safety will occur.

Commissioner Smith raised concerns about the Class A wetlands and the soils in the corridor. Mr. Durand assured her that the project will stay out of Class A wetlands unless there is a critical need for a connection or a boardwalk of some sort. He noted that there is no budget to do that at this time. Specific problems with soils have been identified and a professional trail builder has been retained to address those concerns.

There were two public appearance requests:

1. Marilyn Houser stated that she is not a fan of singletrack trails. She owns a home adjacent to the Chester Creek greenbelt and is concerned that displacement of the homeless camps will just move them closer to homes along the corridor and about the effects on wildlife that the new trails will cause. Another concern she has is about the use of phosphates in Anchorage Park Foundation's bird cherry abatement program and its effect on the parkland.

Mr. Durand responded to Ms. Houser by stating that Parks and Recreation has received recommendations from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding good sightlines and visibility to protect both wildlife and people, and Parks and Recreation will adhere to those recommendations. It is unknown if the trails, in fact,

will influence the homeless population to move elsewhere but it is believed that bringing positive activities into an area will likely cause that to happen. It could also cause them to move onto private property or into even more remote areas where abatement would be difficult. He acknowledges that building trails will not solve the homeless problem. Regarding the bird cherry program, the Department has no information regarding the plan for 2019. Because the bird cherry trees are in close proximity to the creek, the use of phosphates will not be allowed.

2. Christina Grande, stated that she, along with Zach Fields, introduced this idea to the Commission in 2016, and that they have promoted and worked on the project at all stages. She is a board member of Singletrack Advocates (STA), which organization STA supports this program but will not be involved in its maintenance as they are on Hillside and Kincaid. She believes these trails will help a lot of people learn mountain bike riding skills, be of benefit the community, and provide a great recreational opportunity.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Bodry and seconded by Commissioner Kirkland, PRC Resolution 2019-02, Proposed Development of Singletrack Trails in a Portion of the Chester Creek Greenbelt, was approved on a vote of 7-1 (voting record follows resolution text).

PRC Resolution No. 2019-02
Proposed Development of "Singletrack" Trails in a Portion of the Chester Creek
Greenbelt

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, community members initiated an urban singletrack mountain bike trail project along Chester Creek greenbelt trail corridor in 2016 and gained support from North Star and Fairview Community Councils; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed PRC 17-11 Chester Creek Single Track Trails at the February 9, 2017 meeting; and

WHEREAS, Anchorage voters approved a \$150,000 Municipal Park Bond for the planning, design and implementation of this project in April 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage has seen rapid growth in the mountain and fat bike communities since the first singletrack trail project nearly a decade ago; the increased popularity has resulted in heavy trail congestion, safety concerns with user conflicts on existing trails, and demand for new beginner trails in easily accessible locations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed urban singletrack in Chester Creek greenbelt from Valley of the Moon Park to Goose Lake Park will provide children and adults in neighboring communities who do not have access or the ability to drive a bike to singletrack at Far North Bicentennial Park, Hillside or Kincaid the opportunity to experience beginner singletrack from their door; creating a more inclusive and inviting recreation opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department proposes to provide new accessible recreation opportunities through the addition of singletrack trail options connecting with and adjacent to the popular paved Chester Creek Trail and by improving portions of the existing social trail network to improve safety of various multiuse groups; and

WHEREAS, the proposed urban singletrack segments are accessed from and in close proximity to the existing paved, lighted and highly used Chester Creek Trail, providing increased safety through visibility and expanding the active use area; bicycle commuters, recreation riders, runners and hikers alike will have a secondary option for traveling the corridor when the paved pathway is crowded, groomed for skiing, blocked by a moose, or when users want a more challenging experience; and

WHEREAS, the proposed plan includes the design and construction of trail segments to create a network of singletrack within the Chester Creek greenbelt: soft-surface, relatively narrow trails sustainably built for two-way travel and multiple uses, including mountain biking and foot traffic, will be constructed primarily from the alignment and surface of existing social trails; and

WHEREAS, the proposed design features include improvements to the existing unmarked and unregulated intersections of social trails and the Chester Creek trail, including the use of signage, wayfinding, and sightline clearing; and

WHEREAS, the *Areawide Trails Plan* identifies mountain biking as a popular form of trail use that provides good commuting and recreation possibilities and a singletrack network in Chester Creek greenbelt is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Park Plan, Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, and the Anchorage Bicycle Plan; and WHEREAS, the North Star and Fairview Community Councils and the participating public provided written support for this project and the Parks & Recreation Department supports the public process undertaken to develop the proposal;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Commission supports the Park & Recreation Department's plan to design, construct, and maintain the Chester Creek Urban Singletrack Trails project that includes 2.5 miles of singletrack and trail improvements in the Chester Creek greenbelt from Valley of the Moon Park to Goose Lake Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14th day of February 2019.

Voting record, PRC Resolution 2019-02:

Yea: Commissioners Bodry, Chang, Dyson, Johnston, Kirkland, Smith and Winchester.

Nay: Commissioner Milliken

Abstained: None

IX. Information Item

Anchorage Parks and Recreation 2018 Accomplishments

Presented by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent

In addition to the following information, Mr. Durand provided a summary of each of these projects:

A. Trail Projects

1. Campbell Creek Trail Rehabilitation Phase 2 (completed) and Phase 3 started (to be completed in 2019): project total \$950,000; construction \$774,000; and soft costs \$176,000.
2. South Westchester Lagoon Bridge replacement: project total \$1,365,00; constructions \$1,167,000; and soft costs \$198,000.
3. Coastal Trail retaining wall at Earthquake Park emergency structure repair: project total \$40,000; construction \$35,000; and soft costs \$5,000.

4. Greenbelt trail mile markers with wayfinding design, mileposts and emergency locators: project total \$370,000; construction \$254,000; and soft costs \$116,000.
5. Chester Creek LED lighting: project total \$134,000; construction \$115,000; and soft costs \$19,000.
6. 4.5 miles of Hillside singletrack trails: project total \$240,000; donations 50% corporate and grants, and 50% individual; and volunteer hours 1,700.

B. Planning and Design Projects

1. Lake Otis Parkway/Campbell Trail Overpass Study: project total \$35,000.
2. Taku Lake Park Master Plan: project total \$56,690. Status – adopted September 2018, construction summer 2020.
3. Tikishla Park Master Plan: all work performed in-house. Statutes – adopted October 2018, construction summer 2020.
4. Town Square Park Master Plan: project total \$118,526. Status – pending approvals in 2019.
5. Fairview Park Master Plan and Fix-it Events: project total (cash) \$5,550; volunteer match \$12,300.

C. Neighborhood and Community Park Upgrades

1. Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Phase 1 Development: project total \$1,890,000; construction \$1,600,000; and soft costs \$271,000.
2. Ruth Arcand Park, NW Improvements: project total \$40,000; and constructions \$40,000.
3. Whisper Faith Kovach Park, playground upgrade and off-leash dog park: project total \$284,000; construction \$258,000; and soft costs \$26,000.
4. South Anchorage Sports Park, dog park development: project total \$141,000; construction \$121,000; and soft costs \$20,000.
5. Chugach Foothills Playground (upgrade and site drainage): project total \$319,000; constructions \$303,000; and soft costs \$16,000.
6. Jewel Lake Park (playground circulation, and drainage): project total \$153,974; \$142,271; and soft costs \$11,703.
7. Wolverine Park (outdoor classroom/meditation circle, trail upgrades, interpretive signs, new picnic tables): project total \$52,000; constructions \$36,000; and soft costs (volunteer and donated professional time) \$16,000.
8. Sand Lake Outdoor Classroom (outdoor classroom, trail, gateway): project total \$67,000; construction \$66,000; and soft costs (volunteer and donated professional time) \$1,000.
9. Jodhpur Parking Lot at Kincaid (expansion, paving, landscaping, installation of lighting): project total \$447,000; constructions \$380,000; and soft costs \$67,000.

- D. Youth Employment in Parks Projects – total \$327,500
1. Davis Park disc golf course – \$78,000.
 2. Campbell Creek Trail bank restoration – \$72,000.
 3. Bragaw Community Garden pathways – \$7,500.
 4. Wolverine Park trails – \$20,000.
 5. Jewel Lake Park trails – \$24,500.
 6. Far North Bicentennial Park bank restoration – \$43,000.
 7. Shibe Park maintenance – \$20,000.
 8. Coastal Trail revegetation – \$14,500.

E. Volunteers
Hours – 6,057
Value – \$149,547

F. Summary of Accomplishments
Total investment in Anchorage parks: \$6,100,000
Total construction costs: \$4,700,000
Soft cost without MOA burden: \$1,000,000
Soft cost with MOA burden: \$1,400,000
Soft cost % without MOA burden: 16%
Soft cost % with MOA burden: 23%

Zach Fields asked Mr. Durand about plans to complete a trail connection to the Campbell/Diamond area. Mr. Durand referred Mr. Fields to the Planning Department's non-motorized plan for information.

X. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Chang said that she will be working out of town from March through June 2019 and asked about participating in the meetings telephonically. Mr. Durand told her that we will work with her to arrange that participation.



XI. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 14, 2019, at the Spenard Recreation Center.

XII. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Chang, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this 14th day of MARCH, 2019:

 _____ Chair Parks & Recreation Commission	 _____ Director Parks & Recreation
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