



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**



**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**

February 13, 2025

The February 13, 2025, meeting was held in person at the Spenard Community Recreation Center

CALL TO ORDER

The February 13, 2025, regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Brian Looney at **6:02 p.m.**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present:

- Commissioner Edwin Blair
- Commissioner Andrew Kastning
- Commissioner Brian Looney
- Commissioner GeorgeAnne Sprinkle
- Commissioner Scott Wamsganz

A quorum was achieved with **five** members present.

Staff present:

- Mike Braniff
- Shanna Gamble
- Taylor Keegan
- Tanya Hickok
- Ellen Devine

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion duly made by **Commissioner Blair** and seconded by **Commissioner Wamsganz**, the Agenda for the February 13, 2025, meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by **Commissioner Wamsganz** and seconded by **Commissioner Blair** the Minutes of the January 9, 2025, meeting was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director's Comments section was provided by Taylor Keegan, Park Superintendent and Mike Braniff, Park Director

1. **Capital Improvement Program:** Did a work session with the Assembly which demonstrates the process that we use to determine priorities
2. **Horticulture:** The horticulture crew is currently counting plugs to ensure we have enough flowers for our gardens.
3. **Tree Hazard App:** Allows members of the public to report down or damaged trees. Extremely useful in sharing location of trees that were damaged during weather events.
4. **Winter Cycling Conference in Finland:** We just recently had two members of our Planning division, and two members of our maintenance division attend a winter cycling workshop in Finland. This was the first time members of a maintenance team were able to participate.
5. **Fur Rondy:** As you know, this has been a low-snow year. This is impacting some of the Fur Rondy events. Keep an eye on the schedule as events may be moving.
6. **Valentine's Day Skate:** We are hosting a Valentine's Day skate at Westchester Lagoon. Please join if you are interested in checking out our amazing chariots and other fun creations our recreation team has been working on.
7. **Old Business Items:** Arctic Diving Club has been active at West Pool and are working on an agreement with YMCA to utilize East Pool. No diving meets are currently scheduled at any of our pools currently.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

Anchorage Park Foundation report was provided by Diana Rhoades, programs director.

1. **Funding:** We currently have seven employees and two are funded through a federal grant. It is a scary time for federal funding, but we have a lot of hope that we will continue with projects and current staffing levels.
2. **Challenge Grants:** We have a two-year rotation of challenge grants and many of our recipients are currently in progress.
3. **Park Bond:** We have a large park bond coming up in the local election that will impact a lot of park and trails projects. The Park Bond will help support the Fish Creek Connector Trail to connect the area from Rustic Goat to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail.

4. **Youth Employment in Parks:** Deadline is coming up for applications! We were working on a program for younger teens but with funding cuts we had to delay until 2026.

ACTION ITEMS

PRC 25-02: Campbell Airstrip Road Shaded Fuel Break PRC Resolution 2025-02

Presented by Jon Glover, Wildfire Division Chief (AFD)

Jon Glover, Wildfire Division Chief from the Anchorage Fire Department presented the proposed Campbell Airstrip Road Shaded Fuel Break. The Wildfire Division has recently been stood up again and is focused on assessing and prioritizing some of our most vulnerable areas that may be affected by wildland fire. In particular, the Basher community was identified as a highly vulnerable area, and we are initiating our first big project focusing on this area.

The Basher community has many residents relying on a single egress route, which also serves as the only access point for firefighters in the event of a wildfire. To enhance safety and resilience, we are proposing a proactive and strategic project that will provide significant value to the community.

The plan includes establishing a 150-foot shaded fuel break from the road's centerline. This approach balances fire mitigation with natural aesthetics by selectively thinning vegetation rather than clearing all trees. While the landscape will change, the benefits are substantial and will help provide safe egress in the case of a fire. Healthy white spruce over 20 inches in diameter will be preserved, along with some birch and other hardwoods, helping to maintain the area's natural character while improving fire safety. A treatment like this will require maintenance every 8-10 years and maintenance costs will cost far less than initial costs.

Funding for this project comes from a \$4M Forest Service grant. This project is supported by the Basher Community.

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Blair**, seconded by **Commissioner Looney**, and approved by a majority of commissioners present resolution PRC 25-02: Campbell Airstrip Road Shaded Fuel Break was passed.

PRC 25-03: Taku Lake Park Playground Improvements PRC Resolution 2025-03

Presented by Tanya Hickok, P.E., Civil Engineer II

Tanya Hickok, a Park Planner with Anchorage Parks and Recreation, presented the

proposed improvements for the Taku Lake Park playground. Taku Lake was acquired in 1973, and the existing playground was originally built in 2003 but unfortunately burned down in 2014. As a result, the park has been without a playground for the past 10 years.

We recently presented three design options to the community council, and if approved at this meeting, we can move forward with procuring equipment and installing the new playground this year. The project has approximately \$200,000 in funding, and the community-selected design fits within this budget. If additional funding becomes available, we may also be able to incorporate pour-in-place surfacing to enhance accessibility and inclusivity.

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Sprinkle**, seconded by **Commissioner Kastning**, and approved unanimously by commissioners, resolution PRC 25-03: Taku Lake Park Playground Improvements was passed.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items.

NON-AGENDA APPEARANCE REQUESTS

David Wigglesworth – Self

- I am here to share preemptively that I appreciate that the Parks and Rec Commissions decision to keep the Westchester Disc Golf course as a winter course. I am not aware of anyone desiring to expand it in the future but am here to say that the winter-only course is working well.

Matt McDaniel – Arctic Diving Club

- Provided before and after photos of work completed because of the legislative grant. As Mike mentioned, we are currently diving at East High School

Commissioner Comments:

- **Commissioner Kastning:** Are your numbers up since you moved to East?
 - **Matt McDaniel:** Yes! We currently have 25 divers participating and hope to have 40 soon.
- **Commissioner Wamsganz:** You are at East instead of Bartlett?
 - **Matt McDaniel:** Yes! We are hoping as we expand to be able to utilize additional facilities.

Mike Grunst – UACC

- I am here just to compliment you all for the work done to keep Cheney Lake a wonderful location to skate and recreate. I love the area, and it brings a lot of joy to folks.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at the Spenard Community Recreation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Kastining** seconded by **Commissioner Wamsganz** and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at **7:54 p.m.**

MINUTES APPROVED this ___ day of _____, 2025:	
<hr/> Brian Looney, Chair Parks & Recreation Commission	<hr/> Mike Braniff, Director Parks & Recreation

