



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**June 13, 2019**



**I. Call to Order**

The June 13, 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 Jon Dyson  
Commissioner Grace Johnston  
Commissioner Erin Kirkland  
Commissioner Shannon Kuhn  
Commissioner Eric Milliken  
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent:

Commissioner Kelly Chang  
Commissioner Alison Smith

A quorum was achieved with six members present.

Staff present:

John Rodda  
Josh Durand  
Steve Rafuse  
Diana Cramer

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Kirkland, the Agenda for the June 13, 2019 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Kuhn and seconded by Commissioner Johnston, the Minutes of the May 9, 2019 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

### **V. Director's Comments**

Director John Rodda reported on the following items:

The box seats at Mulcahy were done just in time for baseball season.

A very active, busy summer in our parks is anticipated with many special events and park shelter rentals already scheduled.

### **VI. Appearance Requests**

There were no appearance requests for non-agenda items.

### **VII. Anchorage Park Foundation Report**

There was no report from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

### **VIII. Action Item**

#### **PRC 19-08 Town Square Park Master Plan**

Resolution 2019-07

Presented by Steve Rafuse, Park Planner

Town Square Park is located in downtown Anchorage, between 5th & 6th avenues, E & F streets. Mr. Rafuse provided a history of the park, how it came to be a park and the development that has taken place over the years. The Town Square Park Master Plan presented here is the product of two years of extensive public meetings, technical and citizen advisory group meetings, and presentations before community councils and this

Commission. Through that process, the planning team was able to development guiding principles and recommendations for the park.

Guiding principles:

- Improve the Relationship of the Park to Surroundings “and Surroundings to the Park.”
- Activate Town Square Park with Programming and Events.
- Create a Park for All Seasons.
- Manage the Park as an Important Asset.
- Provide Amenities to Support Use.
- Incorporate an Iconic Feature.
- Improve Access, Circulation and Connectivity.
- Improve Safety and Security.
- Flowers and Green Space are a Valued Asset.
- Promote a Strong Identity and Sense of Purpose.

Recommendations were organized into four categories: (1) public safety, (2) programming, (3) design, and (4) management.

(1) Public safety is essential to the success of the Park, and the Plan includes ideas for safety through design, safety through management, safety through programming, and safety through security.

(2) Programming includes development of an annual calendar of events to promote activities in the park, support of the Anchorage Downtown Partnership's events, develop sponsors for events at the Park, encourage and support small-scale activities such as entertainers and food carts, provide resources to guide people through the permitting process, encourage all-season events, support public art displays, and install amenities to support programming and events.

(3) The preferred design concept provides a representation of the community vision for Town Square Park, and includes time-honored elements such as flowers and green space, while encouraging new features and amenities.

(4) A sustainable management approach is needed to ensure the long-term success of the Park. The park is an important civil and cultural institution with the potential to be a catalyst for economic development in downtown Anchorage. Long-term funding and management is critical to the success of the Park. Future management includes sustainable funding for maintenance and operations,

resources for programming and events, resources for security and public safety, a 2 or 3 year operational plan, an outline of organizational roles and responsibilities, ongoing stakeholder participation, and development of public-private and community partnerships.

Mr. Rafuse discussed in detail how each category is addressed in the Master Plan. Using a Power Point presentation, design concepts and ideas were shown to Commissioners, and Commissioners were provided with a complete printed copy of the Master Plan.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Town Square Park Master Plan as it is the product of a comprehensive, thorough process of public engagement, and attempts to balance diverse perspectives of the community to bring forth a common vision and desire for positive change.

#### Public Appearance Requests

There were fourteen public appearance requests:

Patrick Regan, speaking for himself, would like the park master plan to include ADA access for the Performing Arts Center.

Caren Mathis, a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the Town Square Park Master Plan, supports the Plan, believing that it builds on assets already in the park, and looks to the future. She read the vision statement from the Plan: "Town Square Park is a safe and welcoming destination in the heart of downtown Anchorage where residents and visitors gather year-round for celebration, socializing, cultural exchange and community building."

Jonny Hayes, also a member of the Technical Advisory Group, endorsed the Plan.

Henry Penny and Nancy Harbour, represented the Performing Arts Center. Mr. Penny described the access problems and provided suggestions for including the Performing Arts Center access in the Plan. Ms. Harbour says she sees Town Square Park as the Performing Arts Center's front yard. She also would like to see Performing Arts Center access addressed in the Plan.

Cindy Hamilton, who works at the Performing Arts Center, would also like to see access included in the Plan.

Kimberly Pace, is an avid Performing Arts Center user and park user. She thinks the plan is "stunning," well designed, and well researched, but that it is incomplete without inclusion of access for the Performing Arts Center.

Kathryn Harvey, works in the area of Town Square Park. She thinks the master plan addresses the public safety aspect. We need to keep moving forward to implement the plan.

Dianne Holmes, a member of the Citizen Advisory Group for Town Square Park, was also part of the original Town Square Park planning process. She does not want berms in the park removed, she does not want trees removed, and she would like to switch the play area with the stage area. She suggested ADA access for the Performing Arts Center could be had by utilizing the space under the sky bridge.

Julie Millington also would like to see ADA access for the Performing Arts Center included in this Plan.

Shela Selkregg was active in supporting the original Town Square Park Master Plan. She thinks the Plan includes everything it should, except ADA access for the Performing Arts Center.

Melinda Gant also participated in the original Town Square Park plan. She is pleased with this design but was surprised to see that Performing Arts Center access was not included.

Suzanne Ishii-Regan discussed the problems people with disabilities have with parking and access to the Performing Arts Center, and believes this should be included in the Master Plan.

Derrick Chang, a member of the Technical Advisory Group, he thinks the Plan is mostly for the summer season, and does not address winter activities. He thinks there needs to be some discussion about the identity of the park – whether it is a park that belongs to downtown or a park for the entire community. He noted that construction of new buildings on neighboring sites will increase density and cause a shadow effect on the park.

John Rodda, Director of Parks and Recreation, addressed the ADA accessibility issue. He stated he believes this Plan is a good result. ADA access was discussed during planning; however, Parks and Recreation was tasked with development of a master plan for Town Square Park, not to address parking and ADA access for the Performing Arts Center. Parking and ADA access have been a problem for the Performing Arts

Center ever since it was built and Town Square Park is not necessarily the problem. A new process has been started to address the parking and accessibility issues. It is a process separate from the Town Square Park Master Plan process. Once the study on accessibility is finished, adjustments to the Town Square Park Master Plan may be needed to accommodate that determination and integrate it into park plans.

Commissioners then asked questions of Mr. Rodda and Mr. Rafuse.

Commissioner Milliken requested that Performing Arts Center representatives and Mr. Chang be allowed to respond to Mr. Rodda's statements. Mr. Chang, Ms. Harbour, and Ms. Pace then spoke again to the Commissioner.

Commissioner Kuhn noted that we want people to be both users of the Performing Arts Center and Town Square Park.

Commissioner Kirkland stated that Commissioners do care about the accessibility issue and are interested in seeing the results of the study and how it will affect the Town Square Master Plan.

After discussion and upon motion duly made by Commissioner Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Johnson, PRC Resolution No. 2019-7 Town Square Park Master Plan, was unanimously approved as follows:

PRC Resolution No. 2019-7  
Town Square Park Master Plan

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, Town Square Park is an important park and civic space located in the heart of downtown Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, Town Square Park has a long history of citizen engagement and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* was initiated to address ongoing public safety concerns as well as the community's desire for positive change; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* is the product of a comprehensive and collaborative process driven by public engagement and stakeholder input; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* identifies community priorities and provides vision for the next 20 years at Town Square Park; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* establishes guiding principles and recommendations for the future management, design, programming, and public safety of Town Square Park;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the Town Square Park Master Plan as submitted by the Parks and Recreation Department.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13th day of June, 2019.

Voting record, PRC Resolution 2019-7:

Yea: Commissioners Dyson, Johnston, Kirkland, Kuhn, Milliken and Winchester

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Chang and Smith

#### **IX. Information Items**

There were no information items presented at this meeting.

#### **X. Commission Comments**

There were no commissioner comments.

#### **XI. Upcoming Meeting**

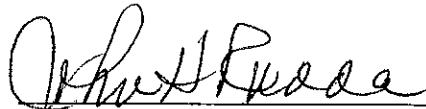
The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, July 13, 2019, at Spenard Recreation Center.

**XII. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Winchester, seconded by Commissioner Kuhn, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this 8 day of August 2019:

  
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Chair  
Parks & Recreation Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Parks & Recreation