



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING**



June 9, 2016

**I. Call to Order**

The June 9, 2016 regular meeting of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Jon Dyson at 6:00 p.m., at Spenard Recreation Center.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by John Rodda, Director, Parks and Recreation.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner James Balamaci  
Commissioner Jon Dyson  
Commissioner Michael McCambridge  
Commissioner James Winchester  
Commissioner Harlow Robinson  
Commissioner Levi Robinson  
Commissioner Alison Smith

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Richard Mystrom  
Commissioner Peter Murphy

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

John Rodda  
Josh Durand  
Diana Cramer

### **III. Consent Agenda**

#### **A. Agenda**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Michael McCambridge and seconded by Commissioner James Winchester, the Agenda for the June 9, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

#### **B. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner James Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Harlow Robinson, the Minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

### **IV. Director's Comments**

Director John Rodda provided the following information:

**Anchorage Football Stadium:** The project is nearing completion, with the building now partially functional. However, Parks and Recreation still does not have permission to use it for the Women's Run on Saturday June 11. The ceremony to rename the stadium the "Robert O. Robertson Stadium" is on Sunday, June 12, 2016, at 1:00 p.m.

**Inclusive playgrounds:** Six inclusive playgrounds will be installed in Anchorage this summer and three will be installed in Eagle River.

**Town Square Park:** The fountain at Town Square Park has been removed and planning is underway for renovations and improvements to the park. The final plan will come before the Commission for approval.

**Illegal camps:** This is the thing that is keeping Parks and Recreation busy this summer. The number of man hours Community Work Service has put into cleaning up camps, as well as the volume of garbage hauled to the dump, has increased dramatically this year. At the request of the Mayor, Parks and Recreation has been authorized to hire between 8-16 employees who will be dedicated solely to cleaning up the camps. Community Work Service employees deserve a lot of credit for their efforts.

**Electric bikes:** An issue regarding the use of electric bikes on trails and in parks has been introduced to the Assembly. Parks and Recreation has not yet been asked to provide a position on this but it will be at some point. This item will come back before the Commission at that time.

## **V. Appearance Requests**

There were no appearance requests on Non-Agenda items.

## **VI. Anchorage Park Foundation Report**

The Anchorage Park Foundation held its Youth Employment in Parks opening dinner on the same night as this meeting. Therefore, no presentation was given by the Park Foundation.

## **VIII. Action Items**

### **A. PRC 16-18 Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail Resolution No. PRC 2016-16 Presented by Jonny Hayes, Landscape Architect**

#### Presentation

Using a PowerPoint slide show and printed information provided to Commissioners, Jonny Hayes presented the proposed plan for improvements of the neighborhood connector trail known as the "Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail" and the associated trailhead at Margaret Eagan Sullivan Park to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The trail is located at Spenard Road and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, alongside the banks of Chester Creek. The trail is one of Anchorage's oldest accessible nature trails. The purpose of the project is to restore the trail corridor to its original condition, provide access from the adjacent neighborhood to the south bank of Chester Creek, and connect to the Bunker Street trail spur of the Chester Creek Trail. The existing parking area, amenities and trail are in an unusable condition, due to deferred maintenance, age and damage from cottonwood tree roots, and the project will repair and replace these items, and improve trail and parking lot lighting. A new boardwalk with viewing overlooks as well as streambank restoration and installation of a learning lab for environmental education is also proposed. The project is "shovel ready," all necessary permits have been acquired, and it is supported by the community, North Star Community Council, South Addition Community Council, the Anchorage Park Foundation, the Anchorage Museum, Anchorage Public Works, and the Anchorage Schools on Trails program. It is anticipated that construction could begin as early as June 2017.

#### Staff Recommendation

For the last 10 years the community has been requesting that this trail be repaired. It is ready to be rebuilt and returned to the community as part of our greenbelt trail system.

Parks and Recreation staff recommends that the Commission pass a resolution to support the project.

Public Appearance Requests

Glen Hemingson is with the Schools on Trails program and has been working on getting a project to rehabilitate and revitalize the trail for many years. The project is part of the Trails Initiative and the Live.Work.Play Initiative. In 2015 he was awarded a Challenge Grant for this project and those funds are focused on the interpretive signage and outdoor classroom space. He pointed out that there are 7 public schools within walking distance of the park and all of these schools have expressed great interest in the project. Both Northstar Community Council and South Addition Community Council have expressed enthusiastic support. He requests the Commission approve the resolution in support of the project.

Discussion and Resolution

After discussion, upon motion duly made by Commissioner James Winchester and seconded by Commissioner James Balamaci, PRC Resolution 2016-16, Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail, was unanimously approved as follows:

PRC Resolution No. 2016-16  
Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan recommends development of facilities in support of School-Park Partnerships to enhance the potential community benefits of such associations; 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, the West Chester Lagoon Nature Trail project rehabilitates and updates an existing park asset to meet current codes and standards for accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department partnered with local Project Champions, Community Councils, community organizations, stakeholders and user groups to identify and prioritize desired improvements for the Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail; and

WHEREAS, the improvements proposed are based on community and stakeholder input, and was designed and permitted to meet multiple Agencies Having Jurisdiction requirements for improvements in a sensitive habitat, adjacent to wetlands and located within the Floodplain and Floodway of Chester Creek; and

WHEREAS, the North Star and South Addition Community Councils have been engaged throughout the project and process, and have long supported improvements to the Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail and trailhead parking area for improved access, safety and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the proposed plan minimizes short- and long-term impacts to sensitive habitats, ecosystems, and adjacent property owners by removing impervious surfaces, maintaining the existing footprint to the extent practicable, and constructing improvements that encourage environmental observation and education; and

WHEREAS, the Schools on Trails program—under the Anchorage Trails Initiative of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, Live.Work.Play—is supported by the Anchorage Park Foundation with a challenge grant to develop a Learning Lab and educational resources that benefit seven (7) nearby ASD Schools and their educational mission; and

WHEREAS, the grantees have worked with the schools, educational organizations, and the community to develop plans to improve the Nature Trail and install features to establish the Learning Lab funded by the challenge grant and Schools on Trails programs; and

WHEREAS, the accessible Learning Lab, Overlook Decks and Boardwalk would be a valuable asset to the community and enhance the park for educational use and increase appreciation for natural resource values of the park, in particular the flora, fauna, streams, and ecosystems; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves in the proposed plan for the rehabilitation of Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail and trailhead parking area at Margaret Eagan Sullivan Park generally as proposed.

**PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of June 2016.

Voting Record PRC Resolution No. 2016-16, Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail:

In favor	Commissioner Jim Balamaci Commissioner Jon Dyson Commissioner Michael McCambridge Commissioner Harlow Robinson Commissioner Levi Robinson Commissioner Alison Smith Commissioner Jim Winchester
Opposed	None
Abstained	None
Absent	Commissioner Peter Murphy Commissioner Richard Mystem

**B. PRC 16-19 Campbell Park Parking Lot  
Resolution No. PRC 2016-17  
Presented by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent and  
Jacques Boutet, Boutet Company**

Presentation

Parks and Recreation proposes development of a parking lot at Campbell Park. The parking lot is needed due to increased use of the park since installation of the new playground. The park is also popular access point for Campbell Creek Trail users. The parking lot will be located across the creek from the park on the site of a former fire station. The fire station was demolished earlier this year. The plan includes landscaping, ADA parking and trail connections to the park and trail system. The parking lot will be closed in winter.

The project is supported by the community and development was recommended by the area's Assembly representative for fast tracking. Funding will come from the 2016 park bond package. The addition of a parking lot in this location will help alleviate the problems caused by park and trail users parking on neighborhood streets and conflicts with park neighbors.

Staff Recommendation

Parks and Recreation recommends that the Commission approve a resolution supporting this project.

Public Appearance Requests

There were no public appearance requests for this agenda item.

### Discussion and Resolution

Discussion amongst Commissioners and staff centered on safety, neighborhood concerns, and maintenance. It is believed improved lighting, visibility and positive use of the area will decrease negative behaviors. The cost of adding this property to the maintenance inventory is negligible.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner James Balamaci and seconded by Commissioner Alison Smith, PRC Resolution No. 2016-17, Campbell Park Parking Lot, was unanimously approved as follows:

**PRC Resolution No. 2016-17  
Development of a New Parking Lot at Campbell Park**

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, Campbell Park is a neighborhood use park located on the Campbell Creek Greenbelt in the Midtown-UMED area of Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 playground upgrades at Campbell Park has provided for positive recreational opportunities for Anchorage's youth and families; and

WHEREAS, the popularity of the park and playground have created additional traffic and parking on local neighborhood streets, causing congestion and negatively impacting property owners; and

WHEREAS, the development of a new parking lot with 35 spaces is sufficient to meet parking demand and would help address the negative impacts of park users parking on local neighborhood streets;

WHEREAS, the project was identified by the Campbell Park Community Council as a priority and was included in the 2016 Parks Bond, which was approved by voters, and has been recommended for fast tracking by the area representative to the Assembly.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposal to develop a new parking lot at Campbell Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of June, 2016.

Voting Record PRC Resolution No. 2016-17, Campbell Park Parking Lot:

In favor	Commissioner Jim Balamaci Commissioner Jon Dyson Commissioner Michael McCambridge Commissioner Harlow Robinson Commissioner Levi Robinson Commissioner Alison Smith Commissioner Jim Winchester
Opposed	None
Abstained	None
Absent	Commissioner Peter Murphy Commissioner Richard Mystrom

**C. PRC 16-20 Proposed Amendment of Anchorage Municipal Code  
to Prohibit Smoking in Town Square Park  
Resolution No. PRC 2016-18  
Presented by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent**

Presentation

The Anchorage Assembly seeks to propose a ban on smoking in Town Square Park and adjoining areas. This is a similar proposal to one presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission in September 2015. The intent of the proposed amendments is to promote health by reducing exposure to second-hand smoke, including the vapors from electronic smoking devices.

Anchorage Municipal Code "16.65.010 – Prohibition of Smoking" currently prohibits smoking in and near entrances of many enclosed public places such as recreation facilities and schools, as well as in seating areas of outdoor arenas, stadiums, and amphitheaters. The Assembly seeks to amend AMC 16.65.010 to include the following language:

*Smoking is prohibited at the following places:*

*9) All areas of Town Square Park. Smoking in Town Square Park includes use of an electronic smoking device*



10) *All Alaska Center of the Performing Arts property. Smoking on Alaska Center of the Performing Arts property includes use of an electronic smoking device*

A public hearing before the assembly is tentatively scheduled for June 21, 2016.

Mr. Durand read the contents of the Commission's written statement to the Assembly dated September 11, 2015. The concerns stated there were that it was not clear that extending the smoking ban would improve health and safety, enforcement, and whether imposing such a ban in one park sets an unintended precedent for a smoking ban in all parks.

#### Recommendation

Parks and Recreation requests that the Commission provide a written recommendation or resolution to the Assembly.

#### Public Appearance Requests

There were no public appearance requests for this agenda item.

#### Discussion and Resolution

Commissioners again expressed concerns that such a resolution is unenforceable, questioned why just one park was being singled out for this ban, stated concerns about the precedent set by such a ban, and questioned whether or not the smoking ban actually would promote health and safety. Commissioners noted that the amended language did not address the Commission's concerns stated in September 2015. It was noted that enforcement is not the problem of Parks and Recreation but rather the Anchorage Police Department.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner James Winchester and seconded by Commissioner Harlow Robinson, the following resolution, PRC Resolution No. 2016-18, Ordinance Amending AMC 16.65 to Prohibit Smoking and "Vaping" in Town Square Park, passed with a vote of 5-2:

PRC Resolution No. 2016-18  
Ordinance Amending AMC 16.65 to Prohibit Smoking and  
"Vaping" in Town Square Park

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 by design as well as overall size draws visitors of all ages into relatively close proximity, at times in large numbers as for special events; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission concurs with efforts to promote Town Square Park as a unique and safe area offering a public venue free from second-hand smoke and similar airborne substances that diminish the enjoyment of the area for many; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends adoption of the proposed ordinance amending AMC Chapter 16.65 to prohibit smoking and "vaping" in Town Square Park and adjacent public areas.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of June, 2016.

Voting Record PRC Resolution No. 2016-18, Campbell Park Parking Lot:

In favor	Commissioner Jon Dyson Commissioner Harlow Robinson Commissioner Levi Robinson Commissioner Alison Smith Commissioner Jim Winchester
Opposed	Commissioner Jim Balamaci Commissioner Michael McCambridge
Abstained	None
Absent	Commissioner Peter Murphy Commissioner Richard Mystrom

## IX. Information Item

### A. PRC 16-21 Anchorage Land Use Plan Map

Presented by Tom Davis, MOA Planning

Tom Davis presented an overview of updates to the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan. Items discussed were designation of park and natural areas, open spaces, and public facility and natural areas, greenway supported development, and using parks and open spaces as a planning strategy. A copy of the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan Map, Community Discussion Draft, and detailed maps were provided to Commissioners.

In August, Commissioners will be asked to review the public hearing draft of the Land Use Plan Map and provide a resolution to the Planning and Zoning Commissioner. At this time, Commissioners were requested to provide verbal or written feedback regarding parks, open spaces, and greenbelt elements of the draft Land Use Plan Map.

### **B. PRC 16-22 Delaney park Tennis Courts**

Presented by Josh Durand, Park Superintendent

#### Presentation

In April 2016, Anchorage resident Albert Swank sent a letter to the Municipality of Anchorage objecting to the annual installation of windscreens at the Delaney Park tennis courts and requesting that screens on the north and south fences be removed. The screens are installed seasonally by the Alaska Tennis Association to facilitate play on the courts. The Park is currently home to 9 tennis courts, located between C Street and E Street and 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Mr. Durand provided a history of development of the tennis courts and use of the windscreens, the concerns of and negative impacts on residents as cited in Mr. Swank's letter, and the benefits the Alaska Tennis Association believes are provided by the windscreens. Commissioners were provided with a copy of Mr. Swank's letter stating the residents' concerns and a briefing from the Alaska Tennis Association outlining the activities of the Association and the benefits of windscreens.

#### Staff Recommendation

Parks and Recreation requests that the Commission provide direction to the Department on this matter.

#### Public Appearance Requests

There were three public appearance requests on this item.

Albert Swank, representing the homeowners: After some discussion between Chair Jon Dyson, Director John Rodda and Mr. Swank, it was agreed that Mr. Swank would address the Commission first, would be allowed five minutes to speak, would be given an additional five minutes for rebuttal after other members of the public had given their statements to the Commission. Mr. Swank reiterated the concerns stated in his letter. He objected to continued development of the tennis courts and stated that the Municipality is in violation of the terms of transfer of the park from the federal government to the city of Anchorage. He stated that the windscreens obstruct the view of the homeowners and are not required for tennis play, and that the screens are owned by the Tennis Association not the Municipality. He also indicated that he had requested

copies of agreements between the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation and the Alaska Tennis Association but he has not received those documents.

Mike Kreger, Alaska Tennis Association: Mr. Kreger stated that in the 1980s and 1990s there were windscreens owned and installed by the Municipality that were often left up all year long and eventually they deteriorated so much that they were removed completely, and that in 2009 the Anchorage Park Foundation provided funds to purchase new windscreens. He stated that Alaska Tennis Association volunteers install the screens and maintain them; the screens are put up in May and taken down in the fall; the screens enhance tennis play but are not a requirement and are not there for privacy or aesthetics, but do minimize outside distractions and reduce wind play; and that parking is not the problem of the Tennis Association or the Parks and Recreation Department. He believes that increased usage of the tennis courts reduces negative activities.

Brad Owens, individual and tennis player: Mr. Owens plays tennis at the courts and likes the windscreens. He remembers the old windscreens the Municipality had installed and how they flapped in the breeze because they were so tattered. He appreciates the screens being put up and maintained by the Tennis Association, and requests that the Commission support that.

Albert Swank, rebuttal: Mr. Swank stated that prior to 2009 there were no screens. The current 600 feet by 10-12 feet high screens block the entire visibility of six property owners. He commented that the quantity of usage and all the competitions and activities going on there result in negative impacts to the neighborhood. He thinks the screens could be put up before and taken down before every tournament and that there is no reason for the screens to be up all summer long. The quantity of usage of the tennis courts and selling of parking permits on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue create parking issues all over the neighborhood. He again stated that the terms and conditions of the Federal Government's transfer to the Municipality are being violated.

### Discussion

John Rodda, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that there were windscreens installed by Parks and Recreation from the late 1980s until the mid-2000s. He admitted the screens were not maintained as they should have been, and were sometimes left up all year round. During the resurfacing and upgrade project Anchorage Park Foundation made funds available for purchase of quality windscreens and the Alaska Tennis Association partnered with the Municipality to install and maintain them.

Commissioner Alison Smith noted that she took the opportunity to visit the site, talked to tennis players and park users, and looked at the view from the sidewalk in front of Mr.

Swank's house. She was not impressed by whatever view he might have absent the windscreens. Park users and tennis players she spoke to were very supportive of the windscreens, some stating that the windscreens are why they play tennis on Delaney Park Strip. She recommends that the no action should be taken, and the windscreens should remain.

It was noted that the Parking Authority has control over parking on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and has the right to sell parking permits to generate revenue and otherwise regulate parking.

No official statement was made by the Commission on this topic.

### IX. Commissioner Comments

Commissioners generally discussed the problem of homelessness and its impacts on our parks and trails.

### X. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled to be held at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, July 14, 2016, at Spenard Recreation Center.

### XI. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner James Winchester, seconded by Commissioner Harlow Robinson, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016:

  
Chair Jon Dyson Director  
Parks & Recreation Commission

 FOR  
DIRECTOR JOHN RUDDA  
Parks & Recreation