



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING**

**October 14, 2010**



**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order by Vice Chair David Wigglesworth at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, September 23, 2010, at Spenard Recreation Center.

**I. Roll Call**

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Tim Benintendi  
Commissioner Sara Boario  
Commissioner Jon Dyson  
Commissioner Dan Frank  
Commissioner Kathleen Plunkett  
Commissioner Carl Propes  
Commissioner David Wigglesworth

There was a quorum.

Staff present:

John Rodda  
Holly Spoth-Torres  
Elizabeth Stanley  
Chris Conlon  
Diana Cramer

## **II. Consent Agenda**

- A. One Action Item was added to the Agenda: the YEP Urban Trails Curriculum resolution. Upon motion made by Commissioner Plunkett and seconded by Commissioner Boario, the Agenda as amended was unanimously approved.
- B. There were no additions or changes to the Minutes of the September 2010 meeting. Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Plunkett, and seconded by Commissioner Benintendi, the Minutes of the September 2010 meeting were approved.
- C. There was no old or unfinished business.

## **III. Director's Comments**

John Rodda, Director of Anchorage Parks & Recreation, gave a brief overview of the status of the Kincaid Project, the Campbell Creek Estuary Project, the Mayor's Marathon, and other Department matters. An agreement has been made regarding payment of the fine levied by the EPA, payment of which will be split 4 ways between the Municipality and the other parties involved in the Kincaid Project. The project will then move into a planning phase. Issues are still being ironed out by the Municipality regarding the Campbell Creek Estuary, but things are close to being resolved so that this project, too, can move forward. Parks & Recreation will continue to work with the University of Alaska on the Mayor's Marathon, although there will be changes to the agreement between them. The Department continues to work on the retooling of the Maintenance and Horticulture sections of Parks & Recreation. The Budget will go to the Assembly for a series of work sessions and public meetings prior to being presented at the Assembly's meeting on November 5, 2010.

## **IV. Anchorage Park Foundation Report – PRC 10-44**

Beth Nordlund, Executive Director of the Anchorage Park Foundation, reported on the Foundation's planning activities in preparation for the 2011 construction season and the 2011 Youth Employment in Parks program.

## **V. Appearance Requests**

Dianne Holmes spoke on behalf of Friends of Town Square, announcing a dedication ceremony for the "Ruth Moulton Plaza" at Town Square on Saturday, October 23, 2010 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Commissioners were invited to attend.

Claire Steffens spoke regarding her dissatisfaction with Parks & Recreation's public hearing process and the lack of public notice regarding changes to the meeting schedule and lack of access to relevant information on the Parks & Recreation website.

## VI. Action Items

### A. YEP Urban Trails Curriculum

Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent, requested the Commission pass a resolution in support of an Urban Trails Curriculum for the Youth Employment in Parks program. Parks & Recreation, in conjunction with Alaska Trails, Inc., seeks to develop an urban trails education curriculum for YEP participants. Participants will receive education and training focused on designing, building and maintaining urban trails. As part of the grant application for funds to support this program, a resolution of support from the Parks & Recreation Commission is required. Upon motion made by Commissioner Benintendi and seconded by Commissioner Frank, Resolution 2010-09 was unanimously approved as follows:

**Resolution 2010-09  
YEP Urban Trails Curriculum Development**

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

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;

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Park Foundation, in cooperation with Alaska Trails, Inc., proposes to develop a youth-oriented advanced trail-building curriculum, focusing on urban trails, for the Youth Employment in Parks program;

WHEREAS, the proposed plan also includes defining the concept of “urban trails” for sustainable construction within the Municipality of Anchorage, accounting for multiple user groups and age-groups;

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, in cooperation with the Anchorage Park Foundation and Alaska Trails, Inc., has a successful track record of providing training, education and trail maintenance projects on Anchorage park lands;

WHEREAS, a specific trails training curriculum for YEP is consistent with the program goals of fostering skills for diverse youth to work in the outdoors and natural resources fields and providing community benefit through enhanced recreation opportunities, parks and public spaces; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Trails Inc., the Anchorage Community Land Trust, the Anchorage School District (King Career Center) and REI, Inc. have written letters of support for this curriculum development;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission supports the Anchorage Park Foundation's plan to work with Alaska Trails, Inc. to develop and implement an advanced urban trails curriculum for the Youth Employment in Parks program.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2010.

### **B. PRC 10-45 Section 36 Master Plan**

Information regarding the Section 36 Master Plan planning process has been given in detail at several prior commission meetings. A resolution for approval of the Section 36 Master Plan is now brought before the Commission. The purpose of the Section 36 Master Plan is to identify appropriate improvements for an undeveloped 640 acres of park land located in the foothills of the Chugach Mountains in southeast Anchorage. Section 36 is currently managed by the Heritage Land Bank and is slated to be transferred to Parks & Recreation management upon the completion of the Master Plan. Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent, provided a summary about the project, the planning process and public involvement, the project vision and goals, a history of Section 36, and the preferred concept (Concept 2) being proposed by the Department for commission approval. The preferred concept establishes a new natural resources park with community use elements in southeast Anchorage; identifies outdoor recreation opportunities suitable to the area and recommends low levels of development including parking lots and multi-use trails; provides a framework to develop a network of multi-use trails, both lit and unlit; establishes connections to Chugach State Park, Rabbit Creek Greenbelt, Little Rabbit Creek Greenbelt, Storck Park and Bear Valley Elementary School; and preserves the Class A wetlands on the south side of Clark's Road while providing an opportunity for outdoor education.

Public Comments: In addition to the summary of public comments the Department received by e-mail and in writing, which was provided to the Commissioners, public comment on Section 36 was heard at this time.

1. Steve Ryan read a statement from Janice Tower of Kincaid Singletrack Advocates, which organization supports a network of single track trails developed in Section 36. Mr. Ryan also expressed his personal support for this trail network.

2. Chris Alexander is a paraglider who would like to see a landing area for paragliders in Section 36.

3. Jim Cardwell would like to see the development of a trail system in Section 36.

4. Jack Brown, speaking for Arctic Air Walkers, gave a background of his organization and described paragliding in the Anchorage area. His organization would like to use a section in the southcentral area of Section 36 as a landing spot for paragliders. John Rodda, Director of Parks & Recreation, encouraged Mr. Brown to engage in discussions with the Department regarding a permit for his organization to use the area.

5. Laurie Holland was a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Section 36 and is a member of the Bear Valley Community Council. She has concerns regarding a permit for the paragliders to land in Section 36, which centered around increased traffic and parking congestion in the park. She is concerned about the removal of trees for the development of a trail system, stating that many diseased trees in the area have already been removed by Firewise crews and she does not want trees removed for trail development. She encourages the use of professional trail designers and builders who will take the special topography and drainage issues of Section 36 into consideration. She believes the trails should be multi-use trails and that lighting on the trails should be minimal in order not to be a nuisance to the homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

6. Bob French is a member of the Government Hill Community council and is also a paraglider. He enjoys all the amenities a natural resource park has to offer. He stresses that this is a community park to be developed for multiple uses and accessible to many people, and believes there is a need for ski trails at higher elevations because of mild winter conditions and lack of snow at the lower elevations in Anchorage.

7. Claire Steffens spoke regarding the Citizens for a Wilderness Park and their efforts to create a simple wilderness park in Section 36. The organization opposes intense, dense use of the park such as presently exists in Kincaid Park and believes Section 36 should be preserved for nature lovers, people who want quiet, undeveloped natural parks. They oppose lighting on the trails and removal of trees for trail development.

8. Dianne Holmes supports the preferred concept, stating that it allows the flexibility to provide for a variety of users.

After further discussion among the commissioner members and staff, motion was made by Commissioner Plunkett and seconded by Commissioner Benintendi, and Resolution No. 2010-10 Section 36 Master Plan was approved by the Commissioners, with Commissioner Propes abstaining, as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Resolution No. 2010-10</b> <b>Section 36 Master Plan</b></p>
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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, the purpose of the Section 36 Master Plan is to identify appropriate improvements for an undeveloped square mile of park land, which provides unique and valuable opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, an extensive public involvement process was conducted including the establishment of a Community Advisory Committee, representing a wide cross-section of interests and segments of the community, to provide public input during the project and assist in development of a project vision, goals, and use program and incorporating the information from past processes and settlement agreement; and

WHEREAS, the planning process resulted in three preliminary concepts providing a range of development density, from very limited recreational development to more intensive recreational development; and

WHEREAS, of the preliminary concepts, Concept 2 provides the best balance and combination of elements, is consistent with the vision and goals based on public input, the attention given to viewsheds, connections to greenbelts, potential trail development, and sensitivity to natural resources, providing generally low levels of development, primarily trails, trailheads, and parking, while being responsive to context;

NOW THERE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the Municipality of Anchorage adopt Concept 2, the preferred concept, as the Section 36 Master Plan.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2010.

## **VII. Information Items**

### **A. PRC 10-46: Abbott-O-Rabbit Little League**

Tom Hozma of the Abbott-O-Rabbit Little League spoke about the improvements needed at the ballfields leased by his organization from the Municipality of Anchorage.

Abbott-O-Rabbit Little League has a Cooperative Use Agreement for the baseball fields in Ruth Arcand Park located at Lake Otis and O'Malley Road in Anchorage. Abbott-O-Rabbit Little League has always fulfilled its obligations under that agreement, performing all maintenance and upkeep as required. Presently some upgrades are needed at the Ruth Arcand ballfields, specifically improvements to the parking area, building handicapped-accessible walkways from the parking area to all of the ballfields, and construction of a new concession stand. His organization is asking for financial support from the Commission and the Department to facilitate these improvements.

#### **B. PRC 10-47: Russian Jack Springs Park: North Side Public Involvement Scoping Summary**

Peter Briggs of Corvus Designs, along with Anne Brooks & Associates, was hired by Anchorage Park Foundation to facilitate public outreach for the Russian Jack Springs Park, North Side project. Mr. Briggs provided a summary of the public scoping process on the project. They have completed the initial "brainstorming" phase with the public, gaining information, ideas, and preferences from the community, and if the Commission feels they have completed that task and fulfilled that obligation, believes the process is ready to move on to the next phase of providing concrete designs plans to the community. One of the concerns brought forward by citizen Marc Grober and also by the Northeast Community Council is whether or not the Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan should be updated prior to moving forward with this project. In fact, the Council It is the opinion of Corvus Designs and Parks & Recreation staff that improvements to Russian Jack Springs Park North are not counter to the intent of the Master Plan. The improvements have been requested by community and there is tremendous support from the public, the Mayor's office, and state legislators. The process was initiated in order to bring value to this park asset. Improvements should not have to wait for an update to the Master Plan.

#### **C. PRC 10-48: Operating Budget 2011**

Due to time constraints, no oral presentation regarding the 2011 operating budget was given. Commissioners were referred to the materials provided in their packets.

### **VIII. Staff Reports**

Again, due to time constraints, PRC 10-49, 2011 Park Construction Accomplishments, and PRC 10-50, Recreation Superintendent Report, were put off until the November meeting.

### **IX. Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports.

**X. Commissioner comments**

There were no commissioner comments.

**XI. Upcoming Meetings**

The November Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on November 28, 2011, at Spenard Recreation Center.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010:

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Director Parks & Recreation

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Chair, Parks & Recreation Commission