



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

REGULAR MEETING

August 13, 2009



CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kathleen Plunkett at 6:02 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2009, at Spenard Recreation Center.

I. ROLL CALL

Roll call taken by Chris Conlon, Recreation Superintendent

Commissioners Present:

Chairperson Kathleen Plunkett
Commissioner Allyson Beischer
Commissioner Tim Benintendi
Commissioner Zareena Clendaniel
Commissioner Peter Crosby
Commissioner Dan Frank
Commissioner Meagan Krupa
Commissioner Victor Mollozzi
Commissioner David Wigglesworth

Commissioners Excused:

Commissioner Sara Boario

Staff Present

Chris Conlon
Holly Spoth-Torres
Suzanne Little
Diana Cramer

II. Consent Agenda

No changes to the Minutes of the June 2009 meeting were made.

Commissioner Mollozzi moved to accept the Minutes and the items on the Agenda.
Commissioner Benintendi seconded.
Unanimously approved.

It was then proposed to change the order of items on the Agenda, moving Appearance Requests after the Director's Comments in order to accommodate members of the public.

Commissioner Mollozzi so moved.
Commissioner Benintendi seconded.
Unanimously approved.

III. Director's Comments

Chris Conlon, Recreation Superintendent, spoke about the significant budget reductions faced by the Department and the Department's efforts to work with the Mayor on those reductions. The Department is facing the layoff of 13 employees due to those budget cuts.

Mr. Conlon also gave a brief summary of the projects and programs going on in the parks this summer and referred Commissioners to the staff reports contained in their packets for more information.

IV. Appearance Requests

Chair Plunkett then called for appearance requests on non-agenda items.

Summary of Public Comment

Goose Lake/Paddleboat Cafe

Jerry George spoke in support of the Paddleboat Café and the free meals for children program. Mr. George voiced his concerns that with the closure of the Paddleboat Café at Goose Lake the free meals program for the children will come to an end. He encouraged the Commission and Parks & Recreation to do whatever is necessary to keep this program operating and help it succeed, and to keep the building at Goose Lake available for the public as a meeting place and for public activities.

Ken Brown also spoke about the closure of the Paddleboat Café at Goose Lake, how Goose Lake Park and the building there are used by the public who view it as their neighborhood park. He desires to see the building there properly maintained and kept available for public activities.

3-Meter Diving Board at Service High Pool

Dale Williams, Executive Director of the Alaska Springboard Diving Association, voiced his concerns about pool closures, maintenance of diving boards, and, specifically, the removal of the 3-meter diving board at Service High pool. He strongly encouraged the Municipality to keep the 3-meter diving board because there are so few 3-meter boards in Alaska available for training competitive divers, who are able to use the experience and training to further their education through scholarships that might not otherwise be available to them.

Chelsea Ray, a Dimond High School graduate and current Missouri State student on that school's diving team, is attending college on a diving scholarship. She says it was the training and experience on the 3-meter board that enabled her to obtain that scholarship and gain a competitive advantage for college diving. She encouraged the Municipality to keep the 3-meter diving board at Service high.

Don Haas is the parent of a high school swimmer and a diver. He encouraged the Municipality to keep the 3-meter diving board at Service High and criticized the inconsistent scheduling at the pools which makes it difficult to plan diving and swimming programs.

Dalton Haas is a high school student and a diver. He anticipates being eligible for a diving scholarship for college and believes the 3-meter board will enhance that likelihood. Therefore, he encouraged the Municipality to keep the 3-meter diving board at Service.

V. Staff Reports

Chris Conlon, adding to the staff report already given as part of the Director's Comments, discussed the delays in construction at the Service and Bartlett pools, stating that there had been unexpected problems with construction, including the discovery of structural defects at Service, so that the pools will not open as soon as they had anticipated. The Department is working to keep all swimming and diving programs open by utilizing the other pools.

VI. Information Items

A. PRC 09-38 Lyn Ary Park Ballfield Realignment and Park Master Plan

Suzanne Little, Senior Parks Planner, gave an informational report on the Lyn Ary Park project. Because of the building of Marston/Foraker Road, there was a need to move

and realign the ballfield. This project was undertaken with significant help from the Turnagain Community Council, Anchorage West Little League, and interested neighbors. The project is anticipated to be completed within 60 days of the Notice to Proceed.

Lyn Ary Park is also undergoing a Master Plan process. There have been eight meetings held by the Turnagain Community Council and two on-line surveys in an effort to obtain public comment regarding the wishes of the community for the future of Lyn Ary Park. It is anticipated that a draft Master Plan will be presented to the Turnagain Community Council at its meeting on September 3, 2009, with the final master plan submitted to the Council in October and presented to the Parks & Recreation Commission for official action in November.

B. Community Park Rehabilitation: Goose Lake Park, Valley of the Moon Park and Jewel Lake Park

Suzanne Little, Senior Parks Planner, gave an informational report on the upcoming rehabilitation projects at three of our community use parks: Goose Lake Park, Valley of the Moon Park, and Jewel Lake Park.

A new dock is being contemplated for Goose Lake and input is being made at public meetings regarding proposed park improvements.

A Valley of the Moon Park Citizens Advisory Group has been formed and has met on seven occasions to discuss improvements at the park. A public meeting was held at the Park on June 24, 2009, for the purpose of gaining public input. The next steps are for the Citizens Advisory Group to meet and achieve consensus on park elements and priorities and present a revised plan to the Community Councils for consideration, after which the plan will be submitted to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Improvements contemplated at Jewel Lake Park include safer pedestrian access, picnic shelter upgrades, beach improvements and improvements to the fishing dock for erosion control purposes. Community input will be requested on these proposed improvements.

C. Lucy Gravel Pit Site Reclamation

Tim Potter, Dowl/HKM, reported on the Lucy Gravel Pit Site Reclamation project. The Lucy Pit is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Kincaid Road and Lucy Street, near the Westpark residential development. This project will complete the filling, grading and seeding of the park, with any additional park elements as defined in the conceptual park plan to be supported and funded by the community before they can be

implemented. The park is needed because there are no neighborhood use parks in this area within walking distance of the housing subdivisions in the area. The parcel will become either a community use or a neighborhood use park. The community has been very supportive of the conceptual park plan, which includes grading to provide hills of varying heights, an amphitheater, a children's play area, community gardens, natural vegetation, wetlands, and an outdoor education area. The project is scheduled to be submitted to the Municipality for a Conditional Use Permit in November 2009, to be heard by the Planning & Zoning Commission in January 2010, for construction to be started by April 2010, and completion of the project in 2015.

VII. Action Items

A. PRC 09-27 Far North Bicentennial Park – Trail Improvement Plan

Commissioner Tim Benintendi made a brief statement about the subcommittee that was formed at the May 2009 Commission meeting to formulate an Addendum to the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvement Plan. Subcommittee members were Tim Benintendi, Dan Frank and David Wigglesworth. A meeting with user groups and members of the public was held and that input was considered in preparing the Addendum. The Addendum was submitted to the Commission for action at this August 2009 meeting. The subcommittee recommends that public testimony be reopened for comment on the Addendum.

Kevin Doniere, Dowl Engineering, discussed the major issues, responses to public comment and changes included in the Addendum to the Draft Trail Improvement Plan, and he and Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Development & Natural Resources Manager, answered questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Benintendi then moved to rescind the Commission's action of May 14, 2009, which closed public testimony on this item, and to reopen public testimony only on items contained in the draft addendum.

Commission Frank seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public comment was then heard.

Summary of Public Comment

Steve Ryan spoke in support of the Singletrack Trails and development of more trails in Far North Bicentennial Park, and suggested better maintenance of all trails in the system.

Ann Gabler asked the Commission to postpone action on this item, stating that, in her opinion, the Addendum lacks public input and only represents the wishes of 4 user groups, not the whole community including equestrians, dog walkers, and hikers. She is concerned that the plan restricts use by equestrians. She opposes the plan.

Sue Brosnahan is an equestrian user of the park who voiced concerns about the "preferred user" classifications for the trails and whether or not that would restrict use by non-preferred users.

Janice Tower, Singletrack Advocates, stated that organization's support for the Trail Improvement Plan as a whole, and encouraged the Commission to keep the possibility of Phase 2 trails near Campbell Airstrip Road and east of the gasline open for future consideration and not close that area to development altogether. She commended the actions of equestrians in participating in public meetings and their efforts to clean up after themselves.

Karen Erickson is an equestrian also concerned about restrictions on use of the trails by equestrians.

Doug Lewis spoke in support of the Singletrack Trails, both Phase 1 and Phase 2, and would like to see more trails in the park. He commended the efforts by the equestrians to clean up in the park; however, he does not think it appropriate for equestrians to use the singletrack trails as they pose a safety hazard for bicyclists and the equestrians themselves.

Ann Burcham is an equestrian who would like to continue to use Far North Bicentennial Park multi-use trails.

Emily Rolfe is also an equestrian who would like to continue to use the trails in Far North Bicentennial Park.

Elodie Clayton is an equestrian who has been using the park for 19 years. She spoke about the natural beauty of the park, and encouraged equestrians to be responsible in their use and also encouraged all groups to work together to keep the park accessible to all.

Paul Iverson spoke in support of the singletrack trails and said he would like to see more trails like those in the park.

Joanne Schnelbacher is a runner, dog walker, and equestrian who uses the trails. She too is concerned about restrictions on activities on the trail, and had concerns about the lack of notice given to the public about this project.

Todd Schmid is a supporter of the singletrack trails and does not believe that the bear issue should prevent development of more singletrack trails. He also does not see that great a problem with equestrians using the trails.

Gabe Calvin stated his support of the singletrack trails and development of more trails, as well as continued use by equestrians.

Joe Ortner also voiced support of the singletrack trails and would like to see development of more trails.

Commissioner Benintendi moved to close public testimony, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Wigglesworth, and unanimously approved.

Discussion then ensued amongst the commissioners and staff.

Commissioner Benintendi moved that the Commission adopt the Addendum to the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvement Plan and advance it, along with the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvement Plan to the Urban Design Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wigglesworth.

After more discussion between the commissioners and staff, the Commission unanimously approved the Motion to adopt the Addendum.

Holly Spoth-Torres and Commissioner Benintendi will compose a resolution for signature.

VIII. Committee Reports

Commissioner Crosby gave an Aquatics Committee report, detailing the construction projects at Service and Bartlett, the delays in completing the projects on schedule, and encouraged people to go and check out the pools when the re-open.

IX. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Wigglesworth requested that the "highway-to-highway" project be placed on next month's agenda, with a representative of the Alaska Department of Transportation present to give a report. This project will likely impact Far North

Bicentennial Park significantly and the Commission needs to be involved from the beginning. This item will be put on the agenda for September.


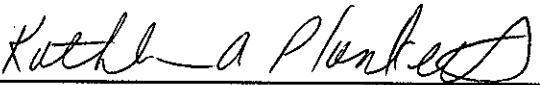
There was considerable discussion amongst the commissioners regarding the agenda, how items are chosen for the agenda, the work sessions and content thereof, and ways to cut down on commissioner and staff time. It was agreed that because of the changes Parks & Recreation is about to undergo due to the budget reductions, that monthly work sessions may still be necessary to help work through that process. The Commissioners also need to be aware that they may be asked to serve on various committees in order to facilitate the Mayor's plans.

Commissioner Crosby requested that the informational slide show about the "Eagle River Model" be obtained and shown to the Commissioners.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mollozzi, seconded by Commissioner Benintendi, and unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ___ day of _____, 2009:	
 _____ Director, Parks & Recreation	 _____ Chair, Parks & Recreation Commission