



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**



**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**

MARCH 11, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The March 11, 2021 regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Kelly Chang at 6:10 p.m. The meeting was a virtual meeting held using Microsoft Teams.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Kelly Chang
Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Andrew Kastning
Commissioner Eric Milliken
Commissioner Alison Smith

Commissioners absent:

Commissioner Grace Johnston

A quorum was achieved with five members present.

Staff present:

Steve Rafuse
Tom Korosei
Maeve Nevins
Brad Muir
Nicolette Dent
Diana Cramer

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Dyson and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Agenda for the March 11, 2021 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Dyson and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission as amended were unanimously approved.

II. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Steve Rafuse, Park Superintendent, provided a report on activities at Parks and Recreation.

The 2020 construction season was slower this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff will be providing a recap later in this meeting. This year things will be very busy with a lot of park projects to look forward to. Staff continues to work on identifying grant opportunities, working with partners to acquire those grants, applying for the grants, and keeping an eye on state and federal opportunities for funding.

Restrictions on public gatherings have changed, so this year the Department can start holding larger events and permitting larger gatherings, but there will still be restrictions in place for those gatherings. There should be more opportunities for recreation programming and summer camp programs this year.

Park Maintenance is busy with snow removal, trail grooming and ice and lake rink maintenance. The Department is working on hiring seasonal employees for the summer.

There is a new Health and Safety Program at Park Maintenance which will be a year-round homeless camp abatement program, working closely with the Anchorage Police Department and the Mayor's Office, to get camps tagged and cleaned up. Because there is now storage space available for the belongings of those evicted from a camp, they should be able to tag camps for 24-72 hours at which time camps will be cleaned up and belongings stored. Five new permanent positions will be hired for this program. Funding is possible due to the new alcohol tax.

Nicolette Dent has been hired as a park planner and she will be giving a presentation at this meeting on park and trail usage during the pandemic.

Parks and Recreation is working on a "story map" which will include real-time information on trail grooming, ice and lake rink maintenance, outdoor recreation opportunities, and special events provided all in one place.

Proposition 6, the 3.9 million dollar park bond package, will be on the ballot before voters in this April's municipal election. A link to information on the bond will be sent to commissioners after this meeting.

The Department is working with the One Percent for the Arts program, which provides that 1% of every major capital development goes into a fund for the arts, to see

what opportunities are available for Parks and Recreation. One idea has been a Resident Artist program.

Commissioner Smith asked about the status of the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) Program this year. Brad Muir, Natural Resources Manager who oversees the YEP program, responded that the Department is in the process of hiring crew leaders and crewmembers. Three crew leaders have been hired and interviews for the crewmembers are expected to begin the first of April. A full report of expected YEP projects will be given to commissioners at a later time.

III. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dyson and seconded by Commissioner Smith, Kelly Chang was nominated to be commission chair. Ms. Chang accepted the nomination and her appointment was unanimously approved by commissioners.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Milliken and seconded by Commissioner Smith, Jon Dyson was nominated to be co-chair. Mr. Dyson accepted the nomination and his appointment was unanimously approved by commissioners.

IV. APPEARANCE REQUESTS

There were no appearance requests for non-agenda items.

V. ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION REPORT

There was no report from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. PRC 21-02 Ruth Arcand Orienteering Course

PRC Resolution 2021-02

Presented by Owen Nordstrom, Eagle Scout, Troop 209

Brad Muir, Natural Resources Manager at Parks and Recreation, introduced Owen Nordstrom, an Eagle Scout who approached Parks and Recreation with a plan to create a permanent orienteering course at Ruth Arcand Park. Also assisting in the presentation was Dom Van Nommelin from Arctic Orienteering. Mr. Nordstrom said orienteering is a sport where participants use a map and compass to find control points positioned at different places throughout a certain area. Orienteering courses are usually temporary, requiring control points to be set up before an orienteering event and removed afterwards. A permanent orienteering course has control points installed on posts or other structures so they can remain in place year round. The course he proposes has 19 control points and will provide a training course for beginners, as well as practice course for more experienced orienteers, and provide a fun, year-round opportunity for the community. The posts will be installed this year after the spring thaw. He provided maps and project

details to commissioners. Minimal impact to the park is expected in three areas: possible increased trail use, little impact on the environment because users will stay on the trail, and little impact to parking except when there is a large event occurring.

Mr. Nordstrom worked with Parks and Recreation, the Boy Scouts of America Council, Boy Scout Troop 209, Arctic Orienteering, and the Equestrian Club to develop his project. Abbott Loop Community Council unanimously supports the project.

Parks and Recreation staff recommend approval of this project.

There were no public appearance requests on this Action Item.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Milliken and seconded by Commissioner Dyson, PRC Resolution 2021-02 Ruth Arcand Park Orienteering Course was unanimously approved.

A copy of the signed resolution is attached to these Minutes as Attachment 1.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2021-02:

Aye: Commissioners Chang, Dyson, Kastning, Milliken and Smith

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioner Johnston

B. PRC 21-03 Parks Re-zone to PR Zoning Designation

PRC Resolution 2021-03

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner and

David Whitfield, Manager, MOA Planning Department

The Municipal Planning Department intends to rezone a number of parks to be consistent with Title 21 of the Municipal Code. Title 21 was updated several years ago. This rezoning will bring the zoning designations of dedicated park lands in line with the code for land use. The Planning Department characterizes this rezoning as a housekeeping measure. Parks and Recreation does not anticipate unintended changes to the use, appearance or character of the parks as a result of the zoning and recommends approval of the rezoning.

Mr. Korosei stated that there are two parks on the list are being removed from this rezoning effort – Muir Park and the Lake Otis Buffer Park – as they were dedicated by plat and not by ordinance. It is possible they will be brought back as part of future rezoning efforts in the future.

Dave Whitfield explained the inconsistencies that were found after the Municipality adopted revisions to Title 21, the land use code, and that this effort is to bring consistency by rezoning all parks to PR–Parks and Recreation District. It will impose requirements on parks adjacent that will provide additional protection for park lands.

Commissioner Chang requested that the revised resolution, with the two parks removed, be provided for Commissioners prior to voting on the resolution. The revised resolution was then provided to Commissioners for their review.

There were no public appearance requests on this Action Item.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Dyson, PRC Resolution 2021-03 Proposed Rezoning of Certain Park Lands to Parks & Recreation (PR) was unanimously approved.

A copy of the signed resolution is attached to these Minutes as Attachment 2.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2021-03:

Aye: Commissioners Chang, Dyson, Kastning, Milliken and Smith

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioner Johnston

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. PRC 21-04 2020 Construction Accomplishments

Presented by Maeve Nevins, Park Planner; Steve Rafuse, Park Superintendent; and Brad Muir, Natural Resources Manager

Staff provided details of construction projects accomplished in 2020. The total invested in Anchorage parks was \$4.93 million with 1500 volunteer hours. There were 8 YEP projects and 2 new playgrounds. The projects included:

- Campbell Creek Trail Rehabilitation Phase 4;
- Margaret E. Sullivan Park wayfinding kiosk, plaza, and parking lot re-striping;
- Kincaid Park 7 singletrack trail rebuilds;
- Folker Park reflexology trail;
- Westchester Lagoon bird viewing platform, benches, garden and signs;
- Chanshtnu Muldoon park Phase 2 development;
- Hamilton Park playground upgrade;
- Anchorage Bowl spruce bark beetle mitigation;
- Taku Lake Park fitlot and Phase 1 gateway improvements;
- Jewel Lake Park playground, circulation and drainage improvements;
- Campbell Creek Trail planning for wayfinding and signage at Lake Otis Parkway;
- Phase II: Scenic Foothills NE Connector planning, analysis and design; and
- Eight Youth Employment in Parks projects:
 1. Government Hill trail maintenance, BLM/Far North fuel break trail maintenance,
 2. Campbell Creek Trail bank restoration,
 3. Rabbit Creek Park trail construction,
 4. Tour of Anchorage Trail upgrades and resurfacing,

5. 5th Avenue Garden Beds planter rehabilitation,
6. Earthquake Park trail maintenance and upgrades,
7. Far North Bicentennial Park Campbell Tract trail maintenance and upgrades, and
8. Campbell Park tree planting.

Projects planned for 2021 include:

- Playgrounds at Frontierland Park, Tikishla Park, Elderberry Park, William B. Lyons Park, Taku Lake Park, and, tentatively, Fairview Recreation indoor playground.
- Neighborhood/Community Park improvements:
- Folker Park, Dave Rose Park parking lot expansion, Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Phase 2 continuation, University Lake Park parking lot upgrades, and Westchester Lagoon indigenous placename installation.
- Trails:
- Campbell Creek Trail-Taku Lake South Gateway, Campbell Creek Trail bridge replacement at Fairbanks Spur, and wayfinding at Kincaid Park and Campbell Creek Trail.
- Sports Fields:
- Mulcahy baseball field fence replacement and Mulcahy Kosinski field upgrades.
- Design and Master Plans:
- Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan, Jeff Dusenbury Bike Park at South Anchorage Sports Park, Government Hill Parks and Trails Plan, NE Connector Trail, Ship Creek Trail to Coastal Trail connection, and Fish Creek Trail to the ocean connection.
- A final list of Youth Employment in Parks projects for 2021 will be presented in the next couple of months.

B. PRC 21-05

Presented by Nicolette Dent, Park Planner

Anchorage Parks and Recreation conducted a survey asking how the Covid-19 pandemic is changing people's use of parks, trails and recreation centers in Anchorage. There were 1,469 responses to the survey. 12% of the responders were 65 or older, 40% had children, 49% were working from home, and 20% had lost a job, pay or had reduced working hours. Key findings from this survey:

- Park and trail use is up by 28%.
- Access to outdoor spaces is critical to public health.
- 55% of the respondents reported using trails more often than before Covid-19.
- Special use parks are good candidates for regular data collection in Anchorage.

Parks and Recreation will continue collecting data and sharing it with partners and other municipalities, look for new opportunities to strengthen the outdoor infrastructure, and use public opinion to make park management decisions.

VIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no commissioner comments.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, April 8, 2021, and will be a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Dyson, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2021:

Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Director
Parks & Recreation



**Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Commission**

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Tel 907-343-4355

URL www.muni.org/departments/parks



PRC RES NO. 2021-02

RUTH ARCAND PARK ORIENTEERING COURSE

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 Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission supports efforts of Eagle Scout candidates with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to plan and implement park, trail, or facility projects consistent with master plans and identified community needs; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project of Eagle Scout candidate Owen Nordstrom (Troop 209) to construct an orienteering course at Ruth Arcand Park will focus on utilization of park space and meet the orienteering community's desire for additional courses around Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project will include a new orienteering course with 19 control points, course information, and signage within the boundaries of Ruth Arcand Park; and

WHEREAS, the proposed improvements are supported by the Abbott Loop Community Council; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposed orienteering course project at Ruth Arcand Park as submitted by the Parks and Recreation Department.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 11th day of March, 2021.

Kelly Chang Digitally signed by Kelly Chang
Date: 2021.03.12 11:06:11
-09'00'

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST: 

Steve Rafuse, on Behalf of Director
Parks & Recreation Department

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska



**Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Commission**

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519



**Resolution No. 2021-03
Proposed Rezoning of Certain Park Lands to Parks & Recreation (PR)**

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 application of appropriate and consistent zoning designation is intended to provide consistent standards for development, protections for park purposes, and avoidance of unintended adverse neighborhood impacts;

WHEREAS, Anchorage's dedicated park lands now have a variety of zoning designations carried over since establishment as municipal parks;

WHEREAS, Title 21 of the Anchorage Municipal Code and the *Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan* provide that formally dedicated park lands shall be zoned PR, Parks & Recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Planning Department proposes the housekeeping process to implement the appropriate rezoning of dedicated park lands, beginning with the following park and greenbelt areas:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Bancroft Park | Papago Park | Taku School Park |
| Campbell Park | Rovenna Park | Waldron Park |
| Portions of Campbell Creek Greenbelt | South Anchorage Park | Whisper Faith Kovach Park |
| Lynnwood Park | Spruce Park | Wickersham Park |
| Meadow Street Park | Stanley Park | Winchester Park |
| Nadine Park | Taku Lake Park | Wolverine Park |

and further described in the attached draft Assembly Ordinance, with remaining dedicated park lands to be rezoned in later phases; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that the Anchorage Assembly adopt the attached ordinance generally as proposed for the purpose of rezoning these dedicated park lands to the PR, Parks & Recreation, Zoning District.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 11th day of March, 2021.

Kelly Chang
Digitally signed by Kelly Chang
Date: 2021.03.12 11:05:48 -09'00'

Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

Steve Rafuse, On Behalf of Director
Parks & Recreation Department