



Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Ltd.
750 West 2nd Avenue, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 279-5650

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Title: Peratrovich Park Community Discussion
Meeting Date: August 19, 2020
Summary Dates: August 28, 2020

Meeting Participants:

Michael Fredericks, Consultant/Facilitator, Anchorage Downtown Partnership Ltd.
Lisa Noland, Chief Executive Officer, Choices, Inc.
Robert Newman, Owner, Grizzly's Gifts (in the Historic Anchorage Hotel) and Phillips Cruises & Tours
Susan Knowles, Managing Partner of Downtown Investments; Downtown Building Owner
Laile Fairbairn, ADP Board Member; Managing Partner, Snow City Café and Crush
Larry Michael, New ADP Board Member; Owner/Operator, Arctic Fox Inn B&B
Steve Ellis, Owner/Operator, Stewart's Photo
Michelle Klouda, ADP Board Member; Principal, Rim Architects
Eric Ritner, New ADP Board Member; Managing Partner/Broker, Real Estate Solutions of Alaska; Managing Partner, PRK Management
Amanda Moser, ADP Staff
Roger Branson, Advocate for Mental Health Consumer, Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness Advisory Board
Joe Lumpkin, ADP Board Member; Owner/Operator, Regal North Commercial; Family-owned downtown restaurant (MyThai Downtown)
Sgt. Jennifer Haywood, Anchorage Police Department
Steve Rafuse, Superintendent, Anchorage Parks
Katherine Jernstrom, ADP Board Member; Owner, The Boardroom
Ptery Lieght, Advocate, Homeless Resource Advocacy Council + Other Boards
Bruce Bustamante, President/CEO, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
Demetric Tuggle, Operations Director, ACDA EasyPark
Dakota Orm, Outreach Coordinator, Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
Julie Saupe, President/CEO, VisitAnchorage
Kenny Petersen, Co-Owner, Allen & Petersen Cooking Appliance Center; New Connections Project Founder
Taylor Donovan, Director of Ops, Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
Matt Samuel, ADP Board, Regional Director, McKinley & Dimond Parking
Lisa Aquino, CEO, Catholic Social Services
Rebecca Barker, Community Resource Coordinator, Loussac Library
David McCarthy, ADP Board Member, Owner, 49th State Brewing Co.
Christopher Schutte, ADP Staff

Summary

1. Meeting Opening

- a. The purpose of the meeting was to host a community discussion about Peratrovich Park, located at 500 W 4th Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska.
- b. The expected outcome was to work together to find possible short-term, long-term, and innovative solutions to issues within the park.
- c. The process was to summarize findings from the open house hosted on Friday, August 14th, 2020 and work in smaller groups to brainstorm possible short-term and long-term solutions.
- d. The facilitator reviewed the following understandings and ground rules:
 - Understandings
 - ADP understands larger conversations are occurring.
 - ADP understands that this is a larger community issue and that these issues will not be solved with one meeting.
 - ADP believes that continued conversation with diverse stakeholders is important in considering community issues.
 - Ground Rules
 - Listen and speak respectfully, without interrupting.
 - Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
 - Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
 - Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
 - Allow everyone the chance to speak.
 - Avoid assumptions.

2. Review of Open House Discussion (See attached presentation)

- a. Ms. Fredericks presented the stats of the Anchorage Downtown Partnership Call Log, as provided by ACDA EasyPark; she pointed out the two categories:
 - (1) Park Calls – *from public park users who contact APD/ADP to report issues at/near the park*
 - (2) Business Calls – *from park-adjacent businesses who contact APD/ADP to report issues at/near the park.*
- b. The log indicates that during the six-month period from January to June 2020, *Park Calls* represented just over 5% of total calls, while *Business Calls* represented approximately 8% of total calls.
- c. Ms. Fredericks provided meeting attendees a summarized list of the feedback/comments from the Open House Discussion—*frequently-raised issues were categorized together in the summary (See Presentation)*

3. Group Break-Out Sessions

Group Guidelines:

- Each group would include five participants.
- One person in each group would record the information, take notes and report to the full group.
- One person in each group would be the timekeeper.

a. BREAK-OUT QUESTION #1: *What Short-Term Solutions Can You Suggest for Issues in the Park?*

Group 1: Melinda Gant/Speaker + Bruce Bustamante + Eric Ritner + Demetric Tuggle

- Humane ideas for the park
- More visible park ambassadors, especially during the summer
- Get APD more visible downtown
- Recognized that individuals in the park who conduct illegal activity are often repeat offenders, not really the homeless
- Video camera in park to increase response time for ADP – who would it be monitored by
- More accessible services are needed
- Possibility of a private security outfit to patrol the area during the summer
- Consider Peratrovich Park as Anchorage’s “main park” due to its downtown location

Group 2: Lisa Noland/Speaker + Lisa Aquino + Rebecca Barker + Dakota Orm + Laile Fairbairn

- Use funds that are still available for the Park Ranger Program
- Reduce the number of individuals in the park area by limiting access/space
- More activated space.
- Consider who is currently occupying the park and why are they there
- Move away from policing as the answer
- Develop a “good neighbor” attitude to better communication is needed

Group 3: Katherine Jernstrom/Speaker + Joe Lumpkin + Julie Saupe + David McCarthy + Sgt. Jennifer Haywood

- Install more signage by the Anchorage Police Department, Anchorage Downtown Partnership, adjacent businesses, etc.
- Be proactive to move people along
- Consider increasing usage of security cameras
- Ensure crowds remain dispersed
- More security or permanent presence in the park

Group 4: Bob Newman/Speaker + Roger Branson + Larry Michael + Kenny Petersen + Matt Samuel + Ptery Lieght

- Fill-in pit/seating area with gravel to prevent people from gathering in groups around the seating area
- Remove park benches (near the Log Cabin)
- Increase the police presence in this park area
- Work with corporate groups with issues associated with homelessness so that more voices are heard

- Consider building a fence to close-off hidden areas and/or increase lighting
- Convert the space to create a safe/healing camp
- Increase the voice of the homeless in their endeavors

Group 5: Steve Rafuse/Speaker + Steve Ellis + Taylor Donovan + Susan Knowles + Christopher Schutte

- Consider why there is an increased presence this year (COVID-19 pandemic, economy, etc.)
- Employ a full-time police officer in the park
- Host events to maintain public/community presence

b. BREAK-OUT QUESTION #2: *What Long-Term Solutions Can You Suggest for Issues in the Park?*

Group 1: Melinda Gant/Speaker + Bruce Bustamante + Eric Ritner + Demetric Tuggle + Gail Quinn

- Church presence in the park to offer social services
- ADP CAP team to look at environmental design to offer long-term solutions for safety
- ANMC bus to pick up folks to a ride to social services or the Native hospital
- Is there anything within the Ordinance to enforce behavior?
- Offer social service programs to come to the park to provide connections
- Enforce the open container law, clean up the drinking
- Offer more education to businesses so that everyone is on the same page about rules and regulations about what can be enforced in the park

Group 2: Lisa Noland/Speaker + Lisa Aquino + Rebecca Barker + Dakota Orm + Laile Fairbairn

- Day engagement center with shuttle because folks are gathering in the park because they feel included and their friends are there
- Downtown social services center with a collective of services to do outreach – social service substation
- Mobile resource hubs – to meet people where they are at, in the park and other places
- Groups of outreach workers target specific groups
- Expanded funding for housing

Group 3: Katherine Jernstrom/Speaker + Joe Lumpkin + Julie Saupe + David McCarthy + Sgt. Jennifer Haywood

- Drug rehab/detox/treatment centers are needed
- More outreach providers and more security/foot patrol
- Increased availability of housing
- More on-the-job training
- Permission to trespass people from parks
- Stopping the public to bringing food and money to people in the park
- Funding needs

Group 4: Bob Newman/Speaker + Roger Branson + Larry Michael + Kenny Petersen + Matt Samuel + Ptery Lieght

- Reinforce rules and utilize more signage

- Consider closure of 4th Avenue to utilize as a pedestrian-only street; likely only able to do in the summer
- Engage with homelessness advocates to become a part of the bigger solution
- More creative business solutions for managing socio-economic impacts in the area
- Make the park a sculpture park to draw visitors and locals

Group 5 : Steve Rafuse/Speaker + Steve Ellis + Taylor Donovan + Susan Knowles + Christopher Schutte

- Who is main user of the space? How does the design influence the use of the space?
- East side of old City Hall is a bad area in park
- Removing benches could make the park unfriendly
- Business owners noted that the lack of traffic/COVID-19 pandemic are big contributors to increased presence during summer 2020
- Avoid stigmatizing individuals who are homeless, they are not the people causing trouble.
- Power of programming – vendors, positive bubbles of activation
- Creating something for kids and families

c. BREAK-OUT QUESTION #3: *What Type of Innovative Solutions Can You Suggest for Issues in the Park?*

Group 1: Melinda Gant/Speaker + David McCarthy + Eric Ritner + Demetric Tuggle + Gail Quinn

- Events to activate more presence
- Kiosk for play equipment and tourist info
- In use 365 days a year
- Community sponsorship by local organizations and businesses
- Bring back ice sculpture display in winter with lights and vendors, etc.

Group 2: Lisa Noland/Speaker + Rebecca Barker + Dakota Orm + Laile Fairbairn

- Playground installed; encourage more people to use the area to add value and diversity
- Employ an Activity Director to plan/conduct activities for the public: i.e. story time, native crafts/drumming, chessboards/carving, food vendors, etc.
- Partner with Native Heritage Center for Alaska-themed art installations
- Welcome musicians to the park area

Group 3: Katherine Jernstrom/Speaker + Joe Lumpkin + Julie Saupe + David McCarthy + Sgt. Jennifer Haywood

- Community Gardens and Native Artwork
- Permanent homelessness solutions: look at practices in Europe (*housing-first models*) and Denver
- Address attitudes of the Alaskan public – NIMBY and pick yourself up by your bootstraps

Group 4: Bob Newman/Speaker + Roger Branson + Larry Michael + Kenny Petersen + Matt Samuel + Ptery Lieght

- Put yourself in the place of the opposite party – ie. imagine yourself as a homeless person or imagine yourself as a business person
- Current park users are drug/alcohol abusers who are causing problems; turn the space into a talking circle to create a united environment
- Pedestrian mall would be ideal for a fun, family-friendly place with no traffic
- Sculpture park created by First Nations

Group 5: Steve Rafuse/Speaker + Steve Ellis + Taylor Donovan + Susan Knowles + Christopher Schutte

- Family activities: art shows, food vendors, performance area
- Convert area into a giant sandbox/play area for children
- Investing in more social services
- Park Rangers to address park-specific issues (*with safety mechanisms in place*)

4. Wrap Up & Next Steps

- Summary of this Community Discussion will be provided to all participants
- ADP assess what they can bring forward and share with others that can move ideas forward
- Contact Michael Fredericks, meeting facilitator, with any additional thoughts and/or questions