

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 07, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar



A. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Chairman Christopher Mertl called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Chris Mertl, Makayla Chappell, Josh Anderson, Danika Swanson, Portland Highbaugh, Emma Van Nes, Paulette Schirmer

Absent: Charles Westmoreland, Christina Mounce

Staff Present: George Schaaf, Parks and Recreation Director; Eric Moots, Parks and Recreation Staff Liaison; Annie Carroll, Parks and Recreation Staff Liaison; Michelle Hale, Assembly Liaison

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Anderson motioned to unanimously approve the agenda for the meeting. Mr. Mertl proposed an amendment to add introductions of new people present, and approval of April 4, 2023 minutes to the meeting agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

D. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Mertl introduced Michelle Hale as the new Assembly Liaison, and Annie Carroll as the new Parks and Recreation Staff Liaison to replace Eric Moots.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from August 15, 2023

Ms. Highbaugh motioned to unanimously approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes from April 4, 2023

Mr. Anderson motioned to unanimously approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - None

G. AGENDA TOPICS - None

H. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Regulation of Large Events**— *Presented by G. Schaaf*

Mr. Schaaf began by explaining that currently there is no law requiring people to get permits for noncommercial events in public parks, trails, open spaces, or recreational facilities. Increasingly there have been large gatherings such as weddings and music festivals which have led to resource damage, increased littering, and the presence of harmful debris in parks.

Mr. Schaaf presented a proposed change to the city's code of ordinances that would require organizers of an event in public parks to obtain, and comply with the conditions of, a noncommercial permit if they expect to have more than 100 people in attendance at a gathering. The criteria for a noncommercial permit include 10 days advance notice for events of 100-250 people and 30 days advanced notice for more than 250 people to allow

for coordination with other city departments. Organizers will also be required to provide and arrange for, Porta Potties and trash cans to support the needs of hundreds of people. Mr. Schaaf noted that the department is limited in regulating the time, place, and manner of these activities to reasonable conditions that protect the public facilities and property.

Mr. Anderson inquired about the cost of noncommercial permits. Mr. Schaaf answered that the cost has yet to be determined but noted that it would be determined by the fee schedule provided by the city manager. Mr. Anderson asked how the cost of preparation and cleanup would be quantified by the city. Mr. Schaaf explained there is a provision for a deposit based on the size and likely impact of the event. A benefit of implementing this permit policy is that event organizers will be known and contacting them after an event has concluded would be possible.

Ms. Swanson asked what the consequence would be for organizers whose event drew more attendees than anticipated, thus increasing the impact of the gathering. Mr. Schaaf acknowledges proving culpability as a challenge and explained that the department would work with JPD to gather evidence and write a citation for a minor violation, which the organizer could contest in court.

Ms. Chappell asked about projected occupancy limits for each individual space, and about how limited ticketed events may differ from those open to the public in regard to this policy. Mr. Schaaf explained that using knowledge of the planned event, and guidelines for specific parks, a decision on if the proposed use would exceed the capacity of the park would be made at the Directors' discretion.

Mr. Anderson noted that if rules are to be established, the consequence of breaking the rules needs to be significant enough to effectively dissuade people from non-compliance. Mr. Schaaf explained that the size of the civil fine the city can impose is limited and that a deposit for larger events will help in this regard.

Ms. Highbaugh inquired about when this proposed change would take effect if accepted, and when and how would the public be made aware of the change. Mr. Schaaf answered that code ordinances take effect 30 days after adoption, and a date would be set for new regulations. He added that there would absolutely be publicity about these new requirements. Ms. Hale added that the assembly would be interested in seeing the fees before the change is proposed to the assembly.

Mr. Mertl suggested that a distinction could be made between developed parklands which have facilities such as shelters and restrooms, and undeveloped parklands which do not. He further explained that capacity limits could be established based on what facilities are present to support group gatherings. Mr. Mertl also suggested that a streamlined application process would be beneficial for events held annually.

Ms. Chappell noted that methods of safe transportation, and adequate parking space should be considered when granting permits. Mr. Schaaf agreed and acknowledged that reasonable conditions could be imposed on a permit using the proposed system.

Mr. Schaaf concluded that he would take the PRAC's questions and comments and work with staff to incorporate any changes and will bring new proposals back to the December PRAC meeting.

b. Naming Policy – Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf began by explaining that once or twice a year the Parks & Recreation Department receives requests to name or rename parks or facilities. The goal of this proposal is to establish a naming policy for Parks & Rec that has been vetted by the PRAC to provide guidance on how to evaluate name proposals that then can be handed off to the Assembly for a final decision. The current draft took into consideration the naming policies from 20 different Parks & Rec departments across the country and includes guidance for considering indigenous place names, and for renaming existing facilities. Additionally, this policy provides guidance on sponsorships and donations of land and money for Parks & Rec facilities.

Ms. Hale raised the question of how we get more place names for women, Filipino people, and Alaska native people. She notes that this is a question she will bring up with the assembly.

Ms. Swanson proposed that one way to avoid needing to rename facilities is to discourage naming places after people as humans are flawed and any given person's legacy may be controversial if actions they've taken were offensive.

Mr. Mertl asked how selections will be made with equity and fairness if multiple name proposals are received for a park. Mr. Schaaf stated that a recommendation could be made but the department would not disqualify any proposals and ultimately the Assembly must make the decision.

Mr. Schaaf shared a comment by a member of the public and the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC), Gary Gillette. Gillette requested that the department consult HRAC regarding names associated with historic events, people, and places. Mr. Schaaf added that consulting HRAC about properties that are on a historical inventory could be added to the policy. Mr. Mertl acknowledged this comment and concluded that further discussion and approval will be handled in the December PRAC meeting.

c. FY2025-FY2031 Capital Improvement Program – Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf gave an overview of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Mr. Schaaf explained that the department is asking for the CIP funding to be increased from \$550,000 to \$750,000. This funding will go into 3 different buckets: CIP for trail

maintenance, CIP for maintenance of sports fields and facilities, and a CIP for parks and playgrounds. One difference to this year's plan is the removal of deferred facilities maintenance from the Parks & Rec CIP to better focus on the core work of the department. The CIP proposal must be submitted in December to the Engineering and Public Works Department to be built into the budget that will be presented to the Assembly in the spring. Mr. Schaaf asked the PRAC for input on the plan.

Ms. Van Nes inquired about the certainty of grant funding for unscheduled projects. Mr. Schaaf explained that it depends on the project as the process of securing funding is ongoing and different for each project.

Mr. Mertl asked why the 35 Mile ORV Park project is split evenly between FY25 and FY26 instead of being finished in one year. Mr. Schaaf explained that this is due to capacity to do the work, and limits of the permit for phase one of the project.

Ms. Schirmer inquired about the Community Center & Facilities Maintenance Shop and its funding to which Mr. Schaaf explained that the 2019 Parks & Rec Master Plan for Juneau noted lack of indoor gym space is a major gap in services. Community groups have approached the department requesting indoor gym space, and since Juneau has no community center this has been a high priority with considerable community support. There is not a fully refined proposal currently which is why there is a preliminary request for initial funding in FY25. Ms. Hale mentioned the Juneau Commission on Aging has an interest in creating a senior center. Mr. Mertl concluded stating that a decision on this will be added to the agenda for December's PRAC meeting.

d. Draft of Legislative Capital Priorities— Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf presented the Legislative Capital Priority List in which Engineering and Public Works requests the PRAC rank their priorities for the city to request funding from the State and the Federal legislative delegations. Ms. Hale shared with the PRAC that projects on the priority list need extra funding to move forward and that the Assembly is interested in knowing how PRAC ranks priorities.

Mr. Anderson informally put forth his ranking of the priorities in the order of 35 Mile ORV Park, Lemon Creek Multimodal Path, Jackie Renninger Park, and The Community Center. His ranking received support from Ms. Chappelle and Ms. Schirmer. Ms. Van Nes proposes ranking the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path as the first priority, as cycling in the Lemon Creek area is a safety hazard. Ms. Swanson agrees public safety is crucial and suggests either Lemon Creek Multimodal Path or Jackie Renninger Park rank first.

Ms. Highbaugh motions that the PRAC rank the projects in the order of: 35 Mile ORV Park, Jackie Renninger Park, Lemon Creek Multimodal Path, and The Community Center. Ms. Swanson and Ms. Van Nes opposed and the motion carries.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

J. STAFF REPORTS – Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf updated PRAC on Parks & Rec promotions such as the Winter Pass, upcoming Turkey Bowling at Treadwell Arena, and the State Swim/Dive Championships at Dimond Park Aquatic Center. Finally, he shared that the department will be sending a resolution to the Assembly asking that they urge the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to make available the full amount of funding in the Land and Water Conservation Fund for cities, boroughs, and tribes. He added that DNR has not offered any grants in the last 6 years and has spent over 90% of the funding on their own projects.

K. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Hale let the PRAC know that the Assembly is holding their annual retreat on December 2nd which will be open to the public. Mr. Anderson shared that the Youth Activities Board (YAB) will be meeting on November 14th and is currently working to simplify the YAB grant application process.

PRAC members decided which boards they would be liaisons to. Mr. Mertl will be the liaison to the Lands, Housing & Economic Development Committee, Danica Swanson will be the liaison to Trail Mix, Emma Van Nes will be the liaison to the Eaglecrest Board, Josh Anderson will be liaison to the YAB and 1% for Art.

L. NEXT MEETING DATE - December 5, 2023

M. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Anderson at 7:31pm

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll on 11/28/2023. Minutes approved at the December 5th PRAC meeting.