



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

April 02, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/94184441385> or +1 669 444 9171 US Webinar ID: 941 8444 1385

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[1.](#) Minutes from March 5, 2024

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

[2.](#) letters received from the public

F. NEW BUSINESS

[3.](#) PRAC Annual Report

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H. STAFF REPORTS

[4.](#) Jensen-Olson Arboretum Update

I. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

J. NEXT MEETING DATE

K. ADJOURNMENT

ADA accommodations available upon request: Please contact the Clerk's office 36 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made for closed captioning or sign language interpreter services depending on the meeting format. The Clerk's office telephone number is 586-5278, TDD 586-5351, e-mail: city.clerk@juneau.gov.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE **DRAFT** MINUTES

March 05, 2024 at 5:30 PM



Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/94184441385> or +1 669 444 9171 US Webinar ID: 941 8444 1385

A. CALL TO ORDER

PRAC Chair Chris Mertl called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM

B. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Charles Westmoreland, Christina Mounce

Staff Present: George Schaaf, Parks & Recreation Director; Lauren Verrelli, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director; Michelle Hale, Assembly Liaison; Annie Carroll, Parks & Recreation Staff Liaison

C. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. March 5th Director's Report

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer to approve the agenda. *No objections were heard, and the agenda was approved.*

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Minutes from February 6, 2024

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer to approve the minutes for the February 6, 2024 PRAC meeting. Mr. Mertl stated that the minutes should be amended as the motion to recommend the Director accept the donation of an aquatic weed harvester for Riverside Rotary Park Pond was passed under the condition that the department receives consultation and evaluation from the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. *No objections were heard, and the minutes were approved as amended.*

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - None

G. NEW BUSINESS

3. Court Reconfiguration at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park – Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf presented the PRAC with the department's plans to replace fences, resurface, and reconfigure the existing two tennis courts, and two basketball courts at Adair-Kennedy to be 4-6 pickleball courts, one basketball court, and one tennis court. He explained that this is to improve the condition of the court as issues have arisen with frost heaving of the fence footings, and the existing asphalt requires resurfacing and painting. He explained that the Pickleball community, and the Juneau commission on aging, have approached the department with interest in more outdoor courts to play pickleball. Mr. Schaaf says that this reconfiguration will make the most of the preexisting facilities to meet the needs of as many user groups as possible.

Ms. Schirmer asked if the basketball court should be kept at the facility if it is being used infrequently. Mr. Schaaf answered that the reason for keeping it is because it is the only full court basketball court that Parks & Recreation has in Juneau. He explains that there is a half-court at Cope Park, and covered courts at valley elementary schools but they cannot be accessed by adult users during the school day.

Mr. Mertl asked how many tennis, basketball, and pickleball courts are in Juneau. Mr. Schaaf answered that there are two tennis courts at Cope Park; one of which is striped for pickleball use, and two tennis courts currently at Adair-Kennedy. He added that there is one half-court basketball court at Capital Park and the two courts currently at Adair-Kennedy. Mr. Anderson asked if there are any pickleball courts, to which Mr. Schaaf confirmed there are no dedicated pickleball courts in Juneau.

Mr. Mertl asked if there were plans for the pickleball or basketball courts in the Adair-Kennedy Master Plan from years prior. Mr. Schaaf answered that he does not believe pickleball courts were specified in those plans.

Ms. Hale asked if the school consolidation and potential repurposing has been considered in the planning process of this reconfiguration. Mr. Schaaf answered that the department is aware that Floyd Dryden is slated for closure, and that they are very interested in the gym space for programs. He added that having an outdoor sports space that does not require staffing is of value to the department and user groups in the area.

Ms. Swanson asked what feedback the department has received about shared use of the tennis court that is striped for pickleball in Cope Park, and how often it is in use. Mr. Schaaf answered that after building the tennis courts there were immediate requests for pickleball lines to be added, but some members of the community opposed this, so the decision was made to add the lines to only one court. He added that he is not personally aware of any conflicts among user groups at the park.

Ms. Schirmer shared that she lives in the vicinity of Adair-Kennedy and when the pickleball courts are full she can hear it from her house, leading her to be concerned about noise pollution. She also raised concerns about the 1-hour time limits being ignored and bleachers being placed over the existing lines which prevent people from playing tennis. She then asked if an impact study had been performed to see how the noise from the courts is impacting the neighborhood. Mr. Schaaf answered that a study has not been done but the department has received complaints from residents in the area during football and baseball games. He shared that the department has worked with user groups to help mitigate the impact and manage the hours of activities there as well.

Mr. Mertl noted that since the basketball courts at Adair-Kennedy are used very infrequently, and pickleball has no dedicated space at all, it may be best to find a facility elsewhere to accommodate basketball. He then asked if any full court basketball courts have been included in future proposed parks projects. Mr. Schaaf answered that there are currently no plans to add additional basketball courts to other parks.

Ms. Swanson noted that there are tennis programs in the schools, and asked if there are any pickleball programs. Mr. Schaaf answers that there is no pickleball program to his knowledge.

Ms. Schirmer asked if the proposed Community Center would have a space for indoor pickleball courts. Mr. Schaaf answered that that project would likely include Gym space no larger than approximately two basketball courts in size and would be programmed for multiple uses to optimize the space. He added that should the Community Center be built it could accommodate pickleball inside, but it would be an indoor staffed facility that would be open at set hours.

Ms. Van Nes asked if the department has contacted The Alaska Club to see how often their courts are being used by each group. Mr. Schaaf answered that they have not talked to The Alaska Club directly but are aware that they are now open 24 hours with card access for paying members.

Ms. Pfaff asked how many spots there are for playing pickleball at the Adair-Kennedy courts now. Mr. Schaaf answers that there are two.

Mr. Mertl asked if lines could be added to the full-sized basketball court to convert it into a multiple use full-sized tennis court as well. Mr. Schaaf answered that this cannot be done as the dimensions are not compatible. Mr. Schaaf followed up by asking what the schedule is for this project. Mr. Schaaf answered

that this project will take place this summer along with other small maintenance projects to fix paving and fences will likely take a few weeks to complete. He added that a decision at this meeting would be best so contracts can be issued in April for potential work in May or June when the weather is best.

MOTION by Mr. Anderson for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to recommend that the department reconfigure courts at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park to provide four-six pickleball courts, one tennis court, and one basketball court.

Public Comment

Melehoko Maake, an Auke Bay Resident, expressed her support of the pickleball community in Juneau and how it brings people of all ages together. She shared that her children introduced her to the sport and play it with her. She expressed that pickleball is excellent for improving physical and mental health, and the community is embracing and welcoming for new players. He shared that as the community has grown, they have held tournaments and round robins and trying to find a place to adequately accommodate all the pickleball players has been a challenge. She added that the six additional courts will not be enough, and she hopes more facilities for indoor play will become available.

Lauren Smoker, a Thane Resident, shared that she has been playing tennis regularly for the last 12 years which has led to incredible improvements to her health, fitness, and overall emotional wellbeing. She said that the tennis community is not interested in creating conflict and that she is supportive of the creation of more Pickleball courts, but she does not believe they should be created at the expense of tennis and Basketball courts. She acknowledges that pickleball has exploded in popularity but notes that tennis has had a huge growth spurt as well. She shares that the United States Tennis Organization reported that there are 8.9 million pickleball players, and 23.6 million Tennis players in the country in 2022. She added that they also reported a 33% increase of almost 6 million tennis players since 2019 and that this does not reflect a sport that is in decline. She also brought up that the tennis team at the high school needs places to play around town that are free unlike the Alaska Club where you must pay for membership and court privileges. She agrees that the tennis courts are in poor shape, and resurfacing will be greatly appreciated. She stated that CBJ has already removed three outdoor courts when building Treadwell arena, and that the pickleball lines at the cope park courts makes it difficult to call line shots. Mr. Mertl asked if she believes removing the basketball court to maintain two tennis courts would be a better option. Ms. Smoker answered that it is a tough call, and that she attended to represent tennis, and can't act as representative for the basketball community in Juneau as she is not involved in it.

Steve SueWing, a downtown Resident, shared that he is testifying on behave of his family of 4 who a have all been avid pickleball payers since 2019. He said in his experience playing pickleball avidly at Cope Park in the summer that the tennis court there without pickleball lines is in use less than half of the time. He acknowledges that removing tennis courts to make pickleball courts is not ideal, but that the best tennis court in town is at Cope Park, and it is frequently going unused. He also shared that during the summer he often meets visitors off the cruise ships who have are interested in playing pickleball in Juneau both at Cope Park and Adair-Kennedy. He concludes by stating that having dedicated pickleball courts would be a benefit to the community, a good use of space, and a great attraction for visitors. Ms. Swanson asked if playing pickleball and tennis next to each other is a problem. Mr. SueWing stated that in his experience tennis players may prefer a quiet atmosphere for their game, but as a pickleball player he has not had any issues.

Kueni Maake, a valley Resident, shares that she believes pickleball brings families and communities together. She shares that the sport has allowed her to play with all members of her family and engage in sports in a way that never happened in the past. She expressed that pickleball culture is happy, and therapy for the soul. She thanks Parks & Rec for considering this reconfiguration and said that she and her family would be willing to show up and lend a hand cleaning, painting, and weeding if they're

needed. She closes by reiterating her support for the project, and for bringing Juneau the happiness of pickleball.

Meliame Veikoso, a valley Resident, shared that she is here to support pickleball, and that she agrees with the sentiments of the other players who have spoken. She adds that she must pay a lot of money for her family to play pickleball at the Alaska Club and their time playing is limited to two hours. She says that she's the secretary of the Alaska Crimson Bears Pickleball club, and she reached out to Parks & Rec in hopes that they could help provide more spots to play because players are forced to sit around and wait due to how few courts are available. She concludes by sharing that she is thankful for the opportunity to share how much the community loves playing pickleball here with their families.

Viliami Pongi, a valley Resident, shared that he moved to Juneau 3 years ago and he showed up to the meeting and brought his newborn baby to support pickleball, and illustrate that it brings families together, and fosters love and support. He closes by thanking everyone and saying that with more pickleball courts comes more fun.

Feao Veikoso, a valley Resident, shared that he has lived in Juneau since 1997 and is here to support the pickleball club. He shares his experience going on cruises with his family and seeing how pickleball is a big attraction for travelers. He states that if you build more pickleball courts you will bring more people to Juneau. He shares that the noise that pickleball players create is happy noise, and that it is no reason to stop the sport that so many love. Lastly, he noted that he would be greatly appreciative of an indoor space to play pickleball in the winter.

Sharon Denton, a valley Resident, shares that she moved to Juneau in the 1970's and began skiing because she could do it with her kids but found that pickleball was a better fit for her, and for players of any age. She expressed her desire for a place to play pickleball indoors, and for lessons to be offered in Juneau. She notes that the players at The Alaska Club are very advanced, and that it isn't the best place for new players to learn. She feels pickleball has become the biggest sport in town, and other sports like soccer are declining in popularity here. She recounts that during covid the pickleball players in town placed temporary lines of the courts themselves, demonstrating that there is demand for more space and the project should be done. Ms. Swanson asks if the pickleball players also struggle to play on courts with lines for tennis, as the tennis players have shared that it is difficult. Ms. Denton answered that the lines are different colors, and she does not have a problem with it. Ms. Swanson follows up to ask how many Pickleball courts the space in Cope Park accommodates and how many pickleball and tennis players are waiting to play. Ms. Denton answered that there often are still people waiting to play pickleball when all the spots are in use, but not as many waiting to use the tennis court. Ms. Schirmer asked where the pickleball players taped lines. Ms. Denton answered that they added lines at Glacier Valley, Dzantik'i Heeni, and that some other party added lines at Auke Bay.

Elenoa Lehauli, a valley Resident, shares that at her position with Alaska Airlines she often introduces Juneau visitors to pickleball and welcomes all her friends to come and play with her. She explains that her husband introduced her to the sport, and she found it to be so fun and great for her health. She recounts visiting different places in the country and finding that there are so many courts available unlike here in Juneau where you must go to The Alaska club and pay membership fees to play. She stressed that the community is also in need of indoor courts to play on when it's cold outside. Ms. Schirmer asks what the membership fees are at The Alaska Club, to which Ms. Lehauli answers that it is \$175 a month for her family of three and they must draw their own lines on the court.

Jill Lawhorne, a valley Resident, begins by introducing herself, and disclosing that she is also the director of community development for CBJ but is here in a personal capacity to support pickleball. She shares that to her understanding the Juneau School District occasionally invites coaches to teach pickleball during gym class but there is no dedicated program at this point. She also brings up the point that membership fees at The Alaska Club are a challenge for people, and the club limits how many single day

passes you can buy before they require you to purchase a full membership. She mentions that the covered areas at the schools are also not ideal for pickleball as the floors are concrete and very slick. She notes that High school students will be moving to Juneau Douglas High School (JDHS) next year and the tennis team will be less likely to practice at Adair-Kennedy Park. She emphasizes the welcoming nature of pickleball which contributes to its growth in popularity and wide age range of players. Ms. Swanson shared that she has taken a pickleball class and found that she still needs more lessons. She then asks how much work she will have to do before she can play with the groups at the park. Ms. Lawhorne answers that she thinks anyone can join in and play, and that creating more courts would provide better opportunity for beginners to sharpen their skills playing with people at their level, and she hopes we can move in that direction.

Jacqueline Tupou, a valley resident, shares that she has a big pickleball family and her children from age 11 to 21 go to the park to play with their father often. She shares that her 11-year-old son Vance has been able to foster multigeneration friendships with people in his community which fills him with joy. She explains that his pickleball friends come to support him when he is speaking at church and often bump into him at the grocery store. She expresses that pickleball is doing good things for the community. She says that currently the community comes together to provide nets and lines for the courts, and having CBJ support the effort would be an important step forward. She addressed noise complaints by saying that concerns about loud laughter is such an amazing problem to have. Having multigenerational, multiethnic groups together laughing and happy should be the goal of this town and pickleball epitomizes that. She states that it is forward thinking to provide pickleball courts for the city and she is excited because often there are 20-25 people waiting to play at Cope Park

Dale Kromarek, a Lemon Creek resident, shares that he grew up in Juneau and is a lifelong product of Parks & Rec sports in the area. He notes that in his experience having a good surface to play sports on is critical for safety and fun, and that resurfacing is an absolute must at the courts. He also shared that the pickleball players have been providing their own removable nets and he believes the area could still be a good spot for tennis since the nets don't have to be permanent. He shares that his 86-year-old father plays with him and so do 7-8-year-old children. He says this is the first time he has been able to play such multigeneration sports activities in Juneau and it is amazing. Ms. Schirmer asked if the lines from 6 pickleball courts would make it difficult for tennis players to share the court space. Mr. Kromarek says that the tennis lines are bright white and pickleball lines are a darker red, blue or brown color so the conflict is usually for the pickleball players who have trouble seeing their lines or misinterpreting the tennis lines which are easier to see because of the high contrast.

Having no more participants for public comment Mr. Mertl asked Mr. Schaaf what the timeline is for needing a decision from PRAC on the reconfiguration, and if they should wait for input from the basketball community and consider the option of reconfiguring the basketball court into a tennis court. Mr. Schaaf answers that they would like to strike a compromise and not eliminate an option for a whole user group when it comes to the basketball court since it is the only full court.

Ms. Swanson asked if everything has been explored in terms of other places that can be reconfigured for tennis. Mr. Schaaf answered that currently there are not any courts that would fit the requirements. She shared that the estimate for constructing an eight court pickleball facility using asphalt paving, and including new fencing was nearly two million dollars.

Mr. Anderson notes the PRAC received approximately sixteen written testimonies in support of tennis and one for pickleball, and the in-person testimonies totaled ten for pickleball and one for tennis. He stated that he supports the reconfiguration. He says he likes to hear the comments about all the happy laughter and isn't concerned by the noise created by pickleball players.

VOTE

Aye: Makayla Pfaff, Josh Anderson, Emma Van Nes, Danika Swanson, Portland Highbaugh, Chris Mertl

No: - None

Abstain: Paulette Schirmer

The motion carries.

4. RED FOLDER - Public Comment on Court Reconfiguration at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

I. STAFF REPORTS

5. Christopher Trail Reroute Project Update – Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf begins by presenting a map illustrating the Christopher Trail reroute project which the PRAC discussed in September of 2022. He explains that the then Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation Michele Elfers, and the Executive Director of Trail Mix Ryan O'Shaughnessy presented this project to the PRAC with the purpose being to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists on the Flume Trail. The owners of the Flume AEL&P reached an agreement with the city in 1989 to prohibit bicyclists from being used on the trail due to safety, so this project was intended to provide an alternative route between perseverance trail and the downtown area.

Mr. Mertl asked if there will be a dedicated biking trail and a separate pedestrian trail, and if conflicts are arising because the project is unfinished. Mr. Schaaf explained that the area on the map indicated by the red line is largely completed and that the trails alignment and design is primarily intended for bicycles, but it is not exclusively for bicyclists.

Public Comment

Rob Roy, a downtown resident, shared that in the past someone fell off the Christopher trail and got hurt leading to the trail being repaired which transformed into this reconfiguration project. He stated that prior to this reconfiguration there were no conflicts because mountain bikes were not on the trail. He says that the trail has been used by pedestrians for a long time, and that he appreciated the effort to repair the trail but does not support the transformation of it into a mountain bike trail. He shared that though hikers and walkers can still use the trail, that it is very dangerous and there is a section that is essentially a 40-foot drop into gold Greek onto rocks. He shares that the crew that is working on the trail has dropped trees onto the path making it unusable for walking people. He wishes that there had been more robust outreach to the community saying that Christopher trail is being transformed into a mountain bike trail. Mr. Mertl asked if cleaning up the section of the trail with the dropped trees would help solve the problem. Mr. Roy answers that that could be a solution, but then the mountain bikers would be confused about which trail to use. He is also concerned about the blind corners on the trail as configured because bikers moving at high speeds could easily hit pedestrians.

Mr. Mertl asked Mr. Schaaf if additional signage could help this situation, or if an alternative parallel trail should be established. Mr. Schaaf answered that the department, and a hired engineering firm, looked into the social trail that ran up the waterline from Cope Park in hopes of rehabilitating and preserving pedestrian access to the water, but a solution could not be reached. He mentions the cast-off snow coming off basin road above was an insurmountable problem. As for signage, he says that is certainly something that can be done and that he and those at Trail Mix have discussed adding elements to the design to slow down bicyclists and improve sightlines.

Mr. Mertl asked Mr. Roy if he had any follow-up to these potential solutions. Mr. Roy said that because of the abandoned roadbed above the flume, mountain bikes are being directed onto the flume. He reiterated that he wished the Christopher trail project had been presented as a transformation into a mountain bike trail and not just an update when it was brought to PRAC in 2022, as he says there would have been more public output if that were the case. He wishes mountain bikers would be more

considerate of pedestrians as proper trail etiquette is to dismount and walk past hikers, but that this is not always the case, and he worries it may end in someone getting injured.

Mr. Mertl thanked Mr. Roy for bringing this to the PRAC and said that they will continue to monitor the situation and that he looks forward to Mr. Schaaf's updates as the project approaches completion.

6. Division Update— Presented by G. Schaaf

Mr. Schaaf presented the PRAC with an update to the current events and programs for each division and provided some additional information about the Amalga Cabin reservation system.

Mr. Mertl offered his congratulations on the grand reopening of the Augustus Brown swimming pool and acknowledged the good work done on the mechanical upgrades and other improvements.

Ms. Schirmer asked what Floorball is, in response to its inclusion in the update on Treadwell Arena. Ms. Verrelli answered that it is essentially hockey but not on ice and the department is working on offering it at Treadwell in the summer. She shares that it may be a more accessible option as players don't need to be skilled at ice skating.

J. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Hale expressed her interest in the fascinating conversation at the meeting and shared that the Assembly met to approve financing that the school board had requested for the district and that has been the main focus currently.

Mr. Mertl reminded the PRAC that their terms on the committee may be coming due, and that a tour of facilities will likely be scheduled for May. He also updated them on Lands, Housing, and Economic Development's progress toward disposal of unclaimed property on Renninger drive. There was also discussion of Mayflower Island and how the Bureau of Land Management may put it out for sale or give it to CBJ.

Ms. Swanson updated the PRAC on Trail Mix saying that you can still get a passport, and punch cards are still going on. She shares that she received her auctioneer license and is excited for next year's trail mix auction.

Mr. Anderson updated PRAC on the Youth Activities Board's progress toward reviewing and scoring Youth Activities Grant applications. He says they will be meeting next month to discuss and move toward officially awarding the grants.

K. NEXT MEETING DATE – April 2, 2024

L. ADJOURNMENT Ms. Schirmer motioned to adjourn. No objections were heard, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:18pm

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll, Administrative Assistant 2/28/2024

CBJ Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee:

March 13, 2024

I looked out our dining room window last night and saw the new LED light shining over the St Anne's path down to Savikko Park and the Children's Sliding Hill.

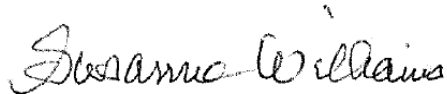
I drove my car down to look closer at it. The arm is just over the path and lights the hill top nicely.

This will help make the hill top safer for children and their parents when our weather allows good sledding.

It will be good on dark days, when people walk down in the evening to enjoy the park fields, other events, paths and Treadwell Arena.

Thank you so much, also to P &R Staff and Alaska Electric Light and Power.

Susanne Williams

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susanne Williams".

From: [Sally Saddler](#)
To: [Parks Rec](#)
Subject: Saddler concern about losing tennis courts
Date: Monday, March 25, 2024 4:33:32 PM

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Hi George and PRAC members,

I am writing to express my dismay at the potential loss of one of Juneau's most rare treasures...a tennis court! One of the things that helps keep me in Juneau is the ability to play tennis. I pay tennis membership fees at the racquet club, in spite of the fact that we have gone from 6 courts to two courts and now have to scramble to get a tennis court amidst the pickleball players.

I think it's wonderful that so many embrace pickleball, a healthy albeit injure-prone sport. However, just Because p-ball uses a net does NOT mean they need to use tennis courts when they can erect nets chalk lines on any of the many concrete surfaces in Juneau.

Please, please, please have some consideration and provide at least 3-4 outdoor courts in Juneau who those of us who play tennis.

Thanks for what all you do with what I know can be a thankless task and for the hours you invest. I just hope that we are able to keep going one of my favorite things and one of the reasons that helps keep me in Juneau.

Cheers!
Sally Saddler

Sent from my iPhone

Juneau Tennis Community Survey – Summary Results (44 respondents)

Summary

On the afternoon of 3/4/24, the tennis community received an email saying that the PRAC would be voting the next day to remove the two existing tennis courts at Floyd Dryden (FD) and install a single court in the area currently taken up by two basketball courts. We were told that we would need to submit comments by close of business that same day if we wanted them to be read by the PRAC before their meeting. Given the lack of notice, many tennis players were unable to adequately weigh-in on the issue. The PRAC voted to move forward with the plan to create 4 to 6 dedicated pickleball courts, and leaving only 1 dedicated tennis court and 1 dedicated basketball court at FD.

Days later, tennis players measured the space and determined that it was 14 feet too short to meet minimum standards for a recreational tennis court. We assumed that a new plan would come back to the PRAC, and we sent out a survey to obtain the user group input that was lacking the first time around.



Sunday morning ladies' tennis group at Floyd Dryden, 2019. This group has 22 members, ranging from high schoolers to players beyond 70 years old. They have not been able to play at Floyd Dryden regularly for the last couple of years due to inability to get on the courts.

After our survey was released, we learned that a new plan had been put in place that we believe is fundamentally different from what the PRAC approved on 3/5. The pickleball plan was the same, but the tennis and basketball communities would now share a single, overlapping space, so only one group could play at a time. Rather than the approved plan to provide dedicated courts to each of the three user groups, it prioritized the needs of one group, and pitted the other two against each other to battle it out for a single, shared space. Under this plan, if people are playing basketball, tennis would not be played, and vice versa.

Forty-four tennis players responded to the survey during the five-day period that it was posted. 91% of respondents gave permission for us to provide their names and contact information to CBJ, in case data authenticity is in question. We attempted to reach players who are not Alaska Club members (and who only use the public courts). Due to lack of time and resources, we only reached a small number of this group that would likely be most impacted by the proposed significant (25%) reduction of public tennis court availability in Juneau. If you have questions about this report or about any of the data, please contact Colleen McKenna at comckenna@gmail.com.

UPDATE: Tennis players Lauren Smoker and Colleen McKenna met with Parks and Rec Director George Schaaf and Parks and Landscape Supervisor Colby Shibler on 3/28 and discussed compromises that would help to avoid user group conflicts and meet the needs of each group. Details from this discussion are included on pages 5-6.

Tennis players were overwhelmingly opposed to the plan to create a single mixed-use tennis / basketball court.

"...not an equitable solution..."

"...this again puts two sports up against each other and increases risk of conflict..."

"...this proposal puts tennis players in the position of pushing hoopsters out of their space."

"I've never seen this hybrid anywhere else."

"In Anchorage there were basketball courts over tennis courts. Basketball always trumped tennis. "

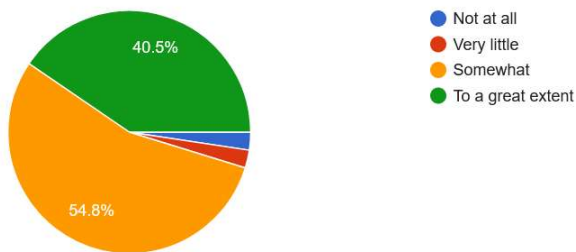
"I'd like to know more about how much use the basketball courts are getting and if there are other courts nearby for kids to use."

"There are plenty of other basketball courts available in Juneau compared to tennis courts."

"...proposal reduces public tennis courts in the valley from 2 to a single shared resource."

"There will be conflicts between tennis and kids wanting to play basketball"

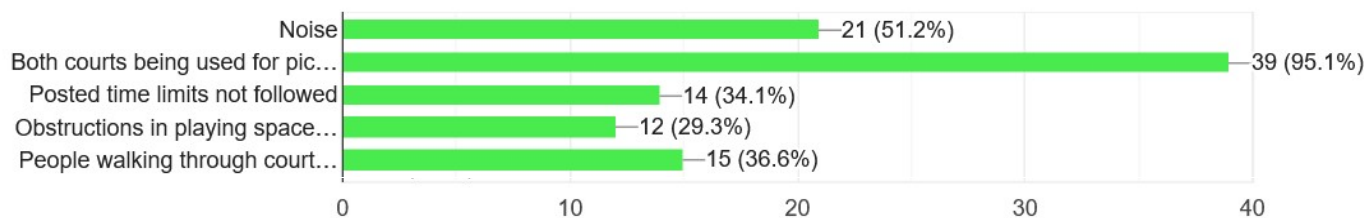
Has pickleball impacted your ability or desire to play tennis at Floyd Dryden?



Testimony and committee discussion at the 3/5 PRAC meeting erroneously indicated a lack of demand for tennis at the Floyd Dryden (FD) courts. 95% of tennis players found that pickleball impacted their ability to play there (55% chose “Somewhat” and 40.5% chose “To a great extent”).

Observed or anecdotal “usage levels” do not equal demand.

If your tennis play at Floyd Dryden has been impacted by pickleball, what were the contributing factors? Select all that apply.



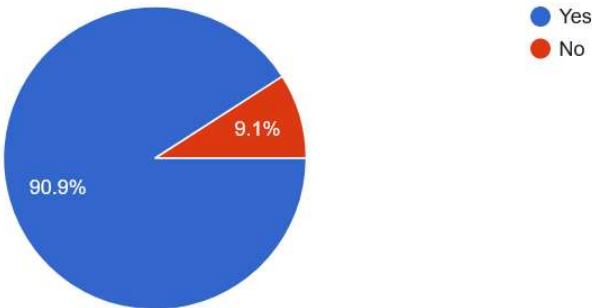
95% of respondents said that “Both courts being used for pickleball” impacted their desire / ability to play at FD. Write-in responses included “[I] felt intimidated”, “the pickleballers camp out ... and arrive early to stake claim”, and “duct tape on the courts is slippery when wet and makes a tripping hazard”.

Observed usage levels are not a valid measure of demand.



Beginners playing tennis at Floyd Dryden in summer 2019.

If Floyd Dryden courts were resurfaced, would you play there more often?



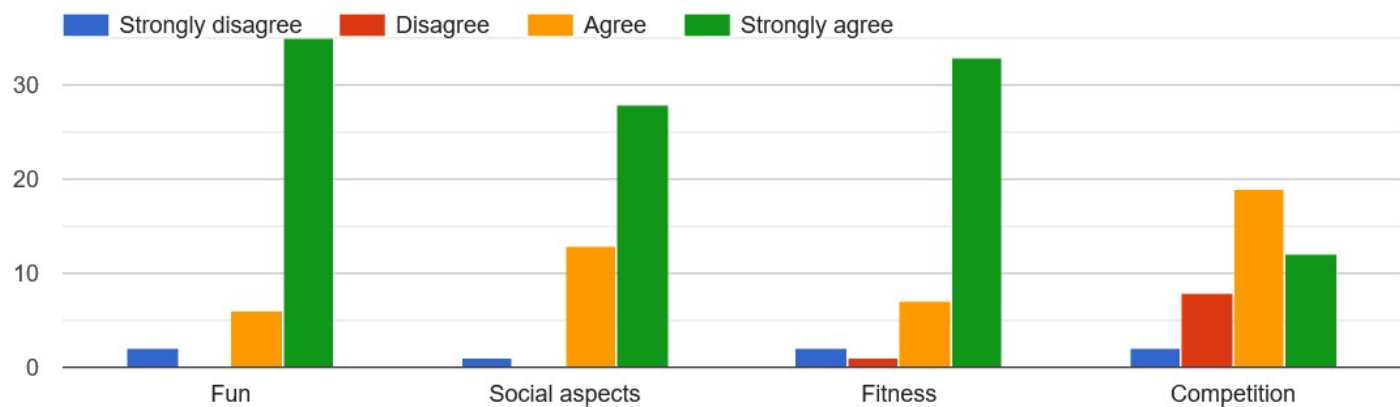
After the court(s) get resurfaced, expect higher demand from tennis players.

“The tennis courts never became available because pickleballers dropped in and out over an entire day, keeping the courts unavailable for tennis throughout the day.”

“There were about 30 kids on the high school tennis team and another 30 younger kids in the “youth program”. Give these children a “place to play”.”

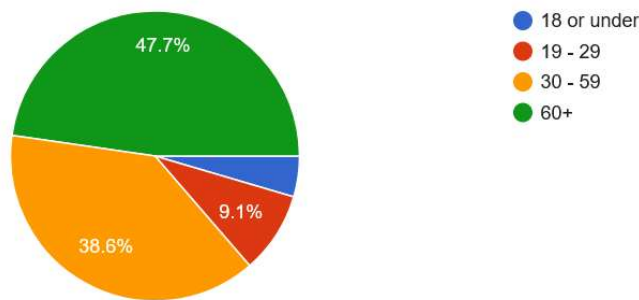
“I think it is great that so many people are playing pickleball. What I don’t understand is why additional pickleball courts are always at the expense of tennis courts. You can put a pickleball court almost anywhere.”

Which of the following reasons describes why you play tennis?



Tennis improves “Quality of Life” factors for Juneau players (and it is “social” and “fun”, just like pickleball!)

What is your age?*



*Survey was distributed mainly to current Alaska Club members, which likely represents a higher age group with more financial stability.



Players of all ages and abilities play with the high school team every year to help prepare them for tournaments (minors are blocked out).

The Alaska Club is not a viable solution to fully serve the needs of tennis players in the valley. It is difficult to get prime court time, since the space is mixed-use with pickleball, and it is expensive. The Alaska Club has no obligation to continue to provide tennis courts (as demonstrated by repeated cuts to tennis courts and availability over the years). Consider these comments from survey respondents regarding tennis at the Alaska Club:

“It’s too hard to get a court, Used to play very regularly. Pickleball took over, despite there being many other suitable venues in Juneau, Pickleball took over one of the only indoor tennis option in Juneau. TAC membership price was not worth it to never, get a chance to book a tennis court (especially when you are constrained by normal 9-5 M-F work schedule). Pickleball can be played in any of the many, many indoor gym spaces in town. Tennis can only be played on one of two indoor courts in Juneau. It’s really sad because my wife and I fell in love with tennis, but because Pickleball infiltrated the limited tennis resource in Juneau, we can’t play anymore without traveling out of town.”

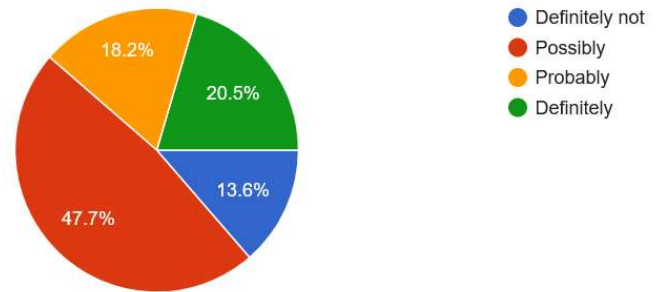
“Existence of Alaska Club courts with an expensive membership is not a justification for reducing outdoor tennis courts.”

“It’s disheartening to have public committee members disregard your concerns for equitable treatment, and instead recommend “go pay to play somewhere else”.”



Juneau players on the beautiful tennis courts in Whitehorse at the annual “Sister City Capital Cup” tennis tournament.

If there were no longer any places to play tennis in Juneau, would you consider moving out of town?



Only 14% of respondents would “definitely not” consider moving out of Juneau if there were NO tennis courts here. When considering only seniors (aged 60+, 21 respondents), 100% would at least “possibly” consider leaving Juneau.

Survey comment: “Incorporating community perspectives and input on use of these community spaces is important.”

Survey respondents were presented with several potential solutions and asked which one(s) they could support. All options were aimed at compromise and acknowledged a limited budget. Options below are listed in order of levels of support. The basketball/tennis mixed-use option was not included in this list because we learned about it after the survey went live. That question was added separately (some comments are included on page 1).

Please select all ideas that you would support:

Option	# in support	% in support*
Keep the two tennis courts where they are, make them tennis-only, and leave the existing fence. Put in dedicated pickleball courts where basketball courts are now. Use money saved from fencing to add sound proofing between pickleball courts and nearby houses. Require that players use commonly available noise-reducing paddles.	27	63%
Reallocate the money that was designated for resurfacing and re-fencing the current tennis courts to create a separate dedicated pickleball area elsewhere (possibly in an existing covered basketball court). Resurface the current basketball courts and dedicate them to basketball. Paint the current tennis courts and dedicate them solely to tennis.	25	58%
Make both courts at Cope Park into dedicated tennis-only courts (remove pickleball lines on 2nd court), and create dedicated pickleball-only courts at Floyd Dryden.	22	51%
Turn both tennis courts into hybrid tennis/pickleball courts and leave the two basketball courts where they are now.	12	28%
Convert tennis courts into pickleball courts, and create one tennis court within the current basketball area (note that it would need to be turned sideways in order to fit, and would eliminate both basketball courts).	4	9%
Stick with the approved plan to have a shortened, dedicated tennis court that takes over one of the basketball courts, and to eliminate the other tennis court (note that the new court will be 14 feet shorter than the minimum standard for recreational courts).	1	2%

*Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

What to do?

On 3/27, tennis community members Colleen McKenna and Lauren Smoker met with CBJ Parks and Rec Director George Schaaf and Parks and Landscape Supervisor Colby Shabler to provide them with input from the tennis user group. We discussed possible compromises that would reduce the potential for user-group conflicts and provide equitable access to courts for each of the three affected user groups.

This was a productive and positive conversation, with the following outcomes and action items. While the “alternative court configuration” described below would require slight compromises by each user group, it is designed to balance their varying needs, and would be a temporary workaround until the Master Plan is completed and each of the three groups has its own, dedicated court space.

The notes below represent Colleen (and Lauren’s) recollections from the meeting and were compiled the day after the meeting. We wanted to submit this to the PRAC with enough time for them to read it before the 4/2 meeting, so George and Colby have not yet had a chance to confirm their agreement that these notes fully reflect the details of our conversation. *Italicized items below were not discussed during the meeting, and were added after the fact.*

Alternative court configuration:

We discussed an alternative configuration at Floyd Dryden that would preserve two public tennis courts, while accomplishing P&R’s goals of having dedicated pickleball courts and a full remaining basketball court. This layout would use the current tennis court space to accommodate three dedicated pickleball courts and a mixed-use tennis court with two pickleball courts on the other side, with a new fence down the middle (rough sketch below). All four of us saw this as a viable alternative that would consider the needs of all three user groups, provided the math works. The basketball court area would still be converted to a mixed-use single tennis court with a single full basketball court across it.

Action item: George and Colby were going to run the numbers to determine if it could work and get back to Colleen and Lauren within a few days (*Colleen subsequently ran the numbers and found that it would be very close, and suggested the possibility of a very small increase to the surface area, and/or small compromises on court sizing in order to fit within the allotted space*).

Implement reservation system:

We discussed using the existing CivicRec system to implement a court reservation system for all courts (including those at Cope Park) in order to reduce conflict between the three affected user groups. We discussed parameters for the system and agreed upon the following (provided the system supports it):

- Same day, one-hour reservations only, to open at 6 AM or so.
- One reservation per person.
- Non-reserved courts are first-come, first-served, with reservations taking priority.
- People with reservations must be able to produce a printout or phone reservation to take over a court, if asked. This will be self-policed, similar to cabin reservations.
- For courts with mixed-use tennis and pickleball, the reservation would cover the entire tennis court space, so a single pickleball reservation gives the reserver one hour on the entire tennis court space, whether they are using one or four pickleball courts. If they are not using all two / four pickleball courts, the rest would be available for walk-ons during that hour.
- *Additional thought: could you also add a field to CivicRec asking the user which of the three sports they are using the court for? This could be helpful data for determining usage levels. CivicRec appears to support the addition of custom fields.*

Action item: George said that this was an easy fix and could be implemented within days, including for the two Floyd Dryden courts prior to the reconfiguration. He said he would check with P&R staff to ensure that this is, indeed, an easy addition and would get back to Colleen and Lauren by the end of the week.

Clear signage:

George said they will post clear signage to help alleviate conflicts between user groups, including information about the reservation system, priorities for usage (i.e. which sports can use which courts), and court etiquette. He encouraged us to provide input on what the signage should say.

Action item: Colleen and Dave will research signage at mixed-use facilities they have visited in the lower 48, *vet their ideas through the two local USTA pros (Mona Mametsuka and Austin Stefanich)*, and provide input to George. They will provide this within two weeks (unless it is needed sooner). George and P&R will have final say on the wording.

Low-contrast lines on mixed-use courts:

We all agreed that pickleball and basketball lines on the mixed-use courts need to be painted in low-contrast color, following best practices. *We discussed this in the context of the Floyd Dryden courts, but I would also ask that the next time Cope Park lines get painted, they are also painted in a low-contrast color so the court can be used for tennis matches.*

Action item: Colleen and Lauren will research best practices and consult with the two local USTA tennis pros for their color suggestions. We will provide this information to P&R within two weeks (unless it is needed sooner).

New door in fence at Cope Park:

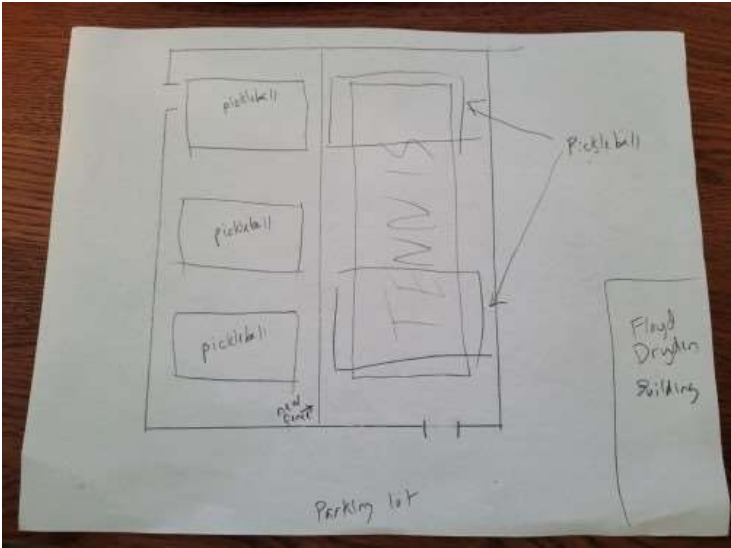
We discussed adding a new door in the fence to provide direct access to the far court at Cope Park to alleviate user-group conflicts and interruptions of play. Colby said this would be an easy fix that could be implemented soon, pending availability of the fence contractor.

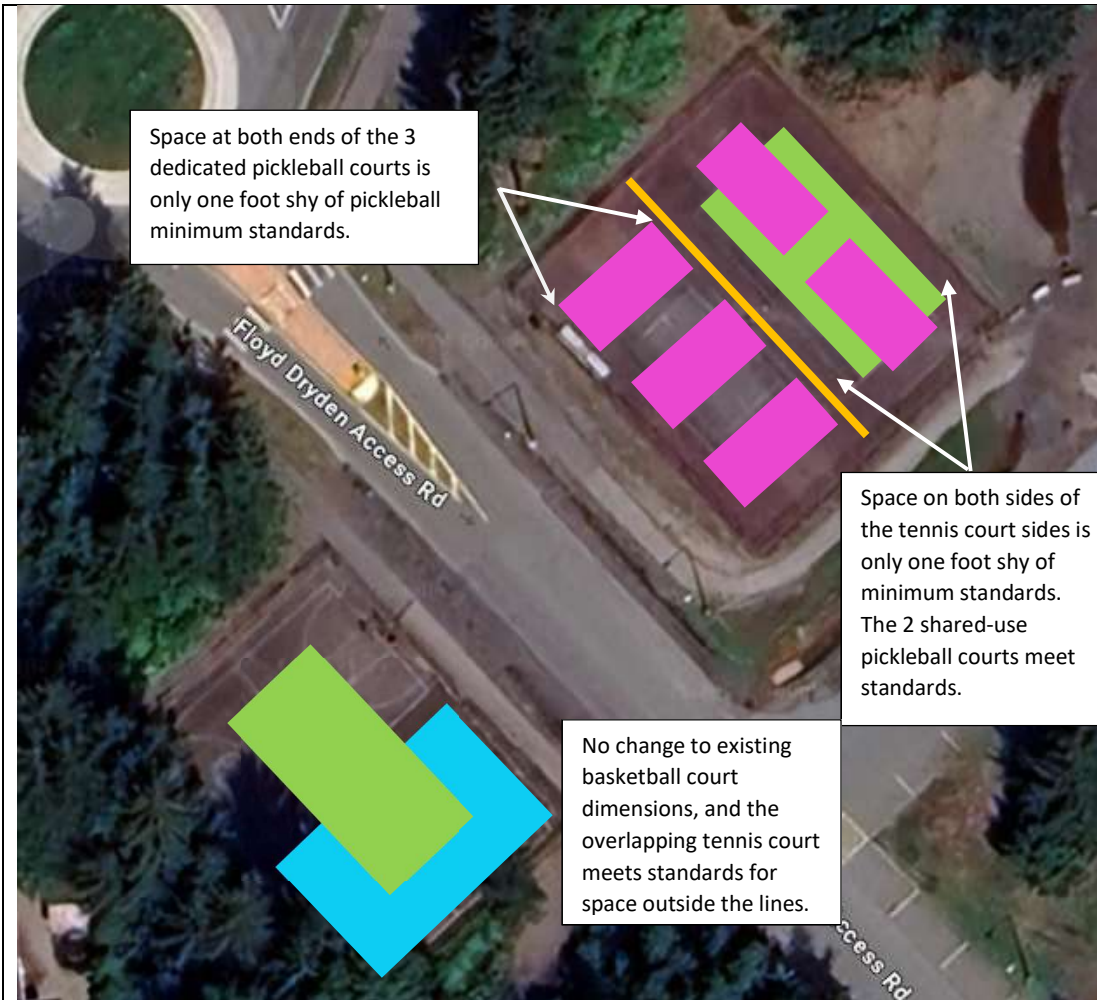
Action item: Colleen and Dave will look into door placement practices at facilities they have used in the lower 48 (*and consult with local USTA pros*) and will provide this information to George and Colby within two weeks (unless it is needed sooner).

The master plan:

We discussed the master plan and how CBJ plans to build a dedicated pickleball facility at another site (*Renninger and/or Dimond Park?*). George and Colby said that once that facility is in place (likely in five years), the courts at Floyd Dryden will be converted back to two dedicated tennis courts.

Action item: *Colleen will keep this on the radar of the Juneau Tennis Community and will encourage them to continue to advocate for CBJ to keep this promise.*





- Pickleball – 5 courts (3 dedicated, 2 shared)
- Tennis – 2 shared courts
- Basketball – 1 shared court
- New fence

Courts are all standard size (although not to scale in this drawing), with **no change to the footprint** of either of the two surfaces.

Spacing around the outside of the pickleball and tennis courts in the upper right corner would require a very small sacrifice of space at the ends of the 3 dedicated pickleball courts and on the sides of the tennis court. **However, the Alaska Club pickleball and tennis courts have even less space around them (considerably so for pickleball) and there's no shortage of players there.**

For competitive pickleball players, the two shared use pickleball courts meet standards for the space outside the court, and for competitive tennis players, the tennis court that is shared with the basketball court meets standards.

Per Director Schaaf, **this entire project is a temporary configuration** that is planned to revert back to 2 dedicated tennis courts in five years, after the new dedicated pickleball facility is built as part of the Master Plan. As such, both user groups may be willing to sacrifice a very small amount of surrounding space (less than they currently sacrifice at the Alaska Club) to provide the maximum number of courts that can fit in the area.

A reservation system (particularly on the mixed-use courts) would provide equitable access to all three user groups and would minimize the potential for conflicts.

- Minimum pickleball court & space dimensions:
<https://northstateresurfacing.com/blog/pickleball-court-space>
- Minimum tennis court & space dimensions:
<https://www.msfsports.com.au/tennis-court-dimensions/>

Layout C

This layout is based on a conversation between tennis players Colleen McKenna and Lauren Smoker, Parks and Recreation (P&R) Director George Schaaf, and Landscape Supervisor Colby Shabler on 3/27/24. We all agreed that it was a viable possibility, provided the measurements work. P&R staff are looking into this possibility. Details in this diagram reflect Colleen McKenna's measurements and ideas based on this concept. Credit to Lauren for coming up with the idea.

From: [Mona Mametsuka](#)
To: [Parks Rec](#)
Subject: PRAC Decision - Floyd Dryden Tennis Courts
Date: Friday, March 29, 2024 2:01:47 PM

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Greeting PRAC Comittee Members,

I'm writing in response to the recent decision to make significant changes to the Floyd Dryden Tennis Courts.

Your decision was made with poor information. Second, a change (not approved by the PRAC) is being made by Parks & Rec to the configuration that will further reduce the valley tennis courts.

1) Pickleball, tennis and basketball need separate facilities. The needs for each sport are very different and are not compatible in a mixed environment.

2) Tennis needs to retain 2 courts in the valley. Tennis has a growing youth tennis population and many adult community members that do not have private Alaska Club memberships. Support pickleball but not at the expense of tennis.

3) Tennis use is under-represented. People avoid the public courts when large groups are playing pickleball. Tennis players are not willing to ask a large ongoing group of pickleball players to vacate the court after an hour.

4) The new configuration change is to completely overlay one tennis court with a single basketball court. This further reduces valley tennis courts from two dedicated courts to a single shared resource and will shift use conflicts between tennis and basketball.

5) Mixed use creates access and noise issues. The format of play for tennis and pickleball is very different. Tennis is a quiet sport played in small groups. Pickleball is played for hours with larger groups that play ongoing short rotations often with music. 1 hour court limits are not conducive to pickleball play.

Please reconsider your decision and look at alternative options to create equitable resources for tennis. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Mona Mametsuka

From: [Mike Notar](#)
To: [Parks Rec](#)
Subject: Adair-Kennedy Pickleball Plans...
Date: Saturday, March 30, 2024 2:00:51 PM

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Thank you PRAC for your planning for the dedicated pickleball courts. We (too many to count of all ages {I am 72}) have utilized and enjoyed playing pickleball at the existing tennis/pickleball courts there when the weather has not been inclement for some years now. The plan you've all devised will serve the community and the rapidly growing sport of pickleball well. People off of the cruise ships have paid money to taxi out to the courts to get a few games in while in port, and that too has been a fun experience for all. I know of a few couples that are coming back this summer, because they so enjoyed the experience. Again kudos for your recognition of this community desire and need. Get 'er done soon! Again, thanks!!

Best regards,
Mike Notar

From: [RICHARD C. LEE](#)
To: [Parks Rec](#)
Subject: Floyd Dryden tennis courts
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:51:59 AM

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

To PRAC,

I am writing to support the latest revised proposal by Lauren smoker and Colleen McKenna for the remake of the FD tennis and basketball courts which maintains the option of 2 tennis court and a possible reservations system.

As a pickle ball and tennis player I support the long term effort to develop a dedicated Pickleball area and the temporary solution they are proposing.

Colleen and Lauren both speak for me as well.

Thanks,
Richard Lee

From: Alejandra Duby
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 12:33 PM
To: George Schaaf <George.Schaaf@juneau.gov>
Subject: HUGE Thank you!

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Good afternoon Mr. Schaaf,

I'm writing to express my gratitude to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and to you Mr. Schaaf for your hard work and support on the dedicated pickleball courts for the Juneau pickleball community.

My family and I have been playing with the pickleball family for a few years now and really enjoy playing pickleball. We love pickleball because it is a sport that brings lots of families together, different family members of different age groups can play together or against each other. Also, because it fosters a healthy lifestyle, fun, opportunity to play, and a sense of community for all ages in this community, including young, elders, single moms with little ones.

For the last few years, I have seen the pickleball community grow and the need for pickleball courts, so we really want to say thank you for providing this community with some dedicated courts to play pickleball.

Thank you and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for your support, kindly.

Respectfully,

Alejandra Duby

Member of the Juneau Crimson Bears and a strong Juneau Pickleball supporter.

From: Mark Kasberg
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 3:23 PM
To: George Schaaf <George.Schaaf@juneau.gov>
Subject: Pickleball in Juneau

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Hi George,

My wife and I want to thank you for your support of Pickleball in Juneau. My wife and I have both been actively playing in Juneau for several years now. Its popularity in Juneau has grown and is growing rapidly. Pickleball in Juneau has a diverse age group (10-80+) and a mix of skill levels. We are looking forward to playing on the six real pickleball courts that are planned for Floyd Dryden!

Mark & Jane Kasberg



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

155 Heritage Way
Juneau AK 99801
(907) 586-5226

To: Assembly Human Resources Committee

From: Christopher Mertl, Chair
Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee

Date: March 25, 2024

Subject: Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee 2023 Annual Report

The City & Borough of Juneau Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) meets the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. The PRAC is comprised of nine members appointed by the Assembly for three-year terms. Of significance this year was the ordinance by the City Assembly to reorganize and consolidate the Aquatics Board, Treadwell Arena Advisory Board, the Jensen-Olson Arboretum Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The PRAC supported this action and was the topic of discussion and public input for several meetings. Existing PRAC members were formally dissolved in April 2023.

We were fortunate that many PRAC members reapplied to be on the new PRAC and re-appointed members included myself, Makayla Chappel, Josh Anderson, Danika Swanson, and Christina Mounce. Newly appointed members included Portland Highbaugh, Emma Van Ness, Charles Westmoreland, and Paulette Schirmer. I feel we have a diverse membership that fills the roles of the previously dissolved Advisory Boards. I would like to give thanks to past 2023 PRAC members: Emily Haynes, Brandie Hofmeister, Will Muldoon, and Taylor Murph for their time and insight.

The process to dissolve, review applications, and appoint a new PRAC took several months and the newly appointed PRAC first met in August 2023. PRAC met a total of six times during 2023.

While the PRAC received updates, took public comment and provided input to the Department, several larger issues came before the PRAC this year. These included:

- 35-Mile ORV Park, this is huge for us and has been a PRAC priority for over 15 years! This year the park received its permits, funding, and initial design. It is amazing that use is finally expected to start in the summer of 2024.

- Adoption of the Montana Creek Recreation Area Plan, public and multi-agency project that included the USDA Forest Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Transportation, Trail Mix, and a variety of local user groups. Several meetings were dedicated to receive public comment on this adopted plan.
- FY2025-FY2031 Capital Improvement Program. Over the last few years, we have been actively involved with the Department in providing input and recommendations for the Parks and Recreation CIP. We take great pride in assisting with this endeavor.
- Draft of Legislative Capital Priorities. Again, we have been working with the Department over the years in developing this list with the Department and appreciate the opportunity to help craft these.
- And as stated previously, the reorganization and consolidation of the Advisory Committees and PRAC.

Additionally, the PRAC took public comment on a wide range of issues, providing support for several Parks & Recreation initiatives, and making recommendations to the Department and the Assembly. Recommendations and informational highlights of 2023 include:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Regulations for Large Events in Parks (11 CBJAC 01.010) • Park Naming Policy (Policy-100-005) • Youth Activities Board Updates • Kaxdigoowu Trail Rehabilitation • Parks and Recreation Operations Update • Hank Harmon Rifle Range Improvements • P&R Winter Pass Program • Treadwell Arena Roof and HVAC Replacement • Marine Park Planning and Design • Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Update • Aquatics Division Update (increased staffing, current programs, and progress on the Augustus Brown) • Adopt-A-Flower Program • Savikko Park and Playground Improvements • Urban and Community Forestry Program Funding Opportunities • Sledding at Savikko Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for Additional Public Use Cabins • Eaglecrest Summer Recreation Planning • Turkey Bowling at Treadwell Arena • Treadwell Arena Hosting the 12U State Tournament • State Swim/Dive Championships at Dimond Park Aquatic Center • Marine Park Deck Over • Jensen Arboretum Update • Resolution to the Assembly asking the Department of Natural Resources to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund • Treadwell Ditch Trail and Bridge Improvements • Dog Day at the Pool • Walk Southeast Program • Movie in the Park Program • Augustus Brown Pool Renovations • Zach Gordon Youth Center • Juneau Candy Cane Hunt • A Variety of P&R Organized Sports Programs from Youth to Adults |
|--|---|

I wanted to take a minute to recognize our Assembly liaison Greg Smith. His input and support were greatly appreciated. We welcome Assembly liaison Michelle Hale.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the passion and dedication at all levels within the Parks and Recreation Department; from the Director, his staff, the many volunteers, and all who have contributed to continuing the mission of the Department and providing outstanding service and programs to our community. Once again recent community surveys indicate that quality of life and access to recreation are the top reasons for living in Juneau; and the Parks and Recreation Department plays a critical role in meeting this need. I wanted to personally thank the Assembly for supporting and funding these recreation projects and the staffing that provides the programming that makes Juneau a great place to work, live, and play in.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve our community. If you would like more information please call me at 907-988-9000.



Christopher Mertl
PRAC, Chair

Attachment: 2023 Attendance Record

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PRAC)

ATTENDANCE 2023 – Assembly Chambers & Zoom Webinar

Tuesdays @ :30pm unless specified	8/15	9/5	10/3	11/07	12/05	1/2	2/6	3/5	4/2	5/7	6/	7/	8/	9/
Christopher Meritl <small>Chair 2/5/19</small>	P	C	C	P	A	C	P							
Makayla Chappell	P	C	C	P	A	C	P							
Josh Anderson	P	C	C	P	A	C	P							
Danika Swanson	P	C	C	P	P(T)	C	A							
Portland Highbaugh	P	C	C	P	A	C	P(T)							
Emma Van Nes	P	C	C	P	P	C	A							
Charles Westmoreland	P	C	C	A	P	C	P(T)							
Paulette Schirmer	P	C	C	P(T)	P	C	P							
Christina Mounce	P	C	C	A	P(T)	C	P(T)							

LEGEND: **A** – Absent / **P** – Present / **P(T)** – Present Telephonically / **C** – Canceled

Canceled Meetings:

- September 5, 2023 Clerks using Assembly Chambers for election
- October 3, 2023 Clerks using Assembly Chambers for election
- January 2, 2023 No Quorum



Jensen-Olson Arboretum Introduction

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, April 2024

Submitted by Ginger Hudson, JOA Manager, ginger.hudson@juneau.org

Introduction to JOA for new PRAC members

This is an abbreviated summation of how JOA came to be and current management. For more detailed information, the Administrative Agreement and Conservation Easement can be found through the Parks & Recreation department. For current management practices and contemporary questions, feel free to contact Ginger Hudson, JOA Manager.

This year JOA celebrates its 17th year as a CBJ Parks and Recreation facility.

The property that is now JOA was homesteaded in the late 1880s by John and Marie Peterson who immigrated from Germany. They also staked a gold claim along and up Peterson Creek. Their mining was quite successful, affording them a winter home in downtown Juneau. The Peterson's grew their own vegetables, and the garden site is still in production today as part of the arboretum. John and Marie had two daughters who continued the mine operation even after one home burned down and John's death soon after. One daughter, Irma stayed on the property while the other moved away. Irma married Charles Olson and they remained on the property caring for Marie until her death. Once the gold was mined out, Irma built a milk farm and sold vegetables locally. Irma and Charles had one child that died young. Irma outlived Charles. She also cared Marie on the property in their wood-sided house until Marie's death. Irma had no other heirs so her nephew Carl Jensen inherited the property.

Carl married Caroline and they built the existing residence and garage from a kit plan purchased out of Topeka, KS. Carl was a shipwright and Caroline was an accountant. In addition to working for local businesses, she helped Carl with his business. Caroline developed the ornamental horticultural aspect of their property that set the foundation for the arboretum. Carl and Caroline continued to cultivate vegetables in the garden started by the Peterson's. Carl pre-deceased Caroline and they did not have children. Caroline did not want the property that had become her home sold or developed. At the encouragement of friends and conservationists in Southeast Alaska, Caroline worked with the Southeast

Alaska Land Trust, SEALT, to create the first conservation easement through SEALT and the first in SE Alaska. She started with an administrative agreement with CBJ in 1998. The property was transferred to CBJ in 2006 upon Caroline's death and it opened as a public garden in 2007. It was Caroline who gave the name Jensen-Olson Arboretum.

The Conservation Easement defines the use of the JOA property. Guidelines are set to preserve the beauty and educational aspect of the property. Some include: no industrial-commercial tourism such as large cruise ship busses; no fishing or hunting; no fence can be built to decrease access of wildlife; major changes or construction must be approved by SEALT; access should always be available for educational purposes including local schools and UAS; free admission to the general public; maintenance of the manager's residence, and more.

The homestead of the Petersons covered much more land including a field near Peterson Creek cultivated for feed for the horses and even a cow that Irma tended. All but fourteen acres were sold in order to focus the property for conservation. Caroline used funds from land sales and her and Carl's savings to create a \$1.8 million endowment managed by CBJ to be grown in perpetuity and used to help maintain the property. At the end of FY23 the endowment was worth \$2.74 million. Each year a 5-year average is calculated and 4% is drawn off the average to apply to the JOA budget. The remaining fiscal year budget is drawn from CBJ general revenue. JOA's approved FY24 budget was \$239,100.

JOA is managed by CBJ P&R department. Staff includes one full-time salaried manager, one seasonal full-time groundskeeper assistant with benefits, and one seasonal groundskeeper assistant without benefits. Seasonal assistants are employed generally May - September. Other P&R landscape staff provide assistance with big projects as well as with large equipment. The manager lives onsite and tends to the property year-round, including assessing for weather damaged trees and plants, and clearing snow from the parking lot. JOA staff maintain the Pt. Caroline trail. Heavier trail repair is done by Trail Mix. Ginger is only the second resident manager. Each manager has lived onsite with their spouse. It needs to be made clear to the advisory committee and CBJ management, one single individual could not maintain JOA alone. Each manager's spouse contributes countless hours of support work be it snow removal, tree removal, coordinating volunteers, communicating with outside agencies, cleaning rain gutters, mitigating incursions from bears and porcupines, and much more. These partners fully support the success of their manager spouse even though they too have full time jobs. The visitors to JOA benefit greatly from their help.

The city formed the Jensen-Olson Arboretum Advisory Committee to help guide CBJ and JOA on the use of the property and the endowment. The first JOA manager Merrill Jensen set the foundation for interactions with JOAAB and ensured the endowment would not be the sole source of funding for JOA. JOAAB was dissolved in 2023 at the recommendation of P&R Director George Schaff. PRAC now encompasses JOA. The Endowment Committee from JOAAB remains as a subcommittee of PRAC.

Funds from the manager's rent, currently set at \$900 per month, and wedding rentals, currently set at \$300, go toward a part of the general funds called discretionary funds. New in 2024 are commercial use permits. These are CBJ Parks & Rec site use permits that are required during the summer season from other large tour operators. JOA permits target taxis and other small tour companies. The permits are \$250 per year, and there is a per-head fee.

Facilities on the property include a 20-spot parking lot along Glacier Hwy, the residence built by Carl and Caroline, a double garage, and the gardeners shed. The residence houses the arboretum manager, currently Ginger Hudson and her husband Ken Murphy. Ginger is the second manager in the arboretum's history. The garage houses JOA's power equipment, firewood for seasoning, hand tools, and other supplies. It is not heated and has a dirt floor. There is one shallow well onsite for residence water. The residence is heated with fuel oil and the stove is run on propane. The gardeners shed holds hand tools and other supplies. It is the main break room for seasonal gardeners and serves as volunteers for events. The shed is heated with a wood stove, there is electricity but no running water. JOA provides a water dispenser with service from Alaska Pure Mountain Spring Water for summer staff. There are two exterior water faucets for landscape care. Part of the Pt. Caroline trail is on JOA property. The trail is accessed from the same parking lot.

Recent improvements were updating the residence water filtration system and internet service. The internet had not been updated since original installation in 2006. That service was not able to support online meeting platforms. The well water collected from the tap in the residence tested high in lead and iron. Sulfur smell was prevalent and strong. In FY21, Ginger began work with the former JOA Advisory Board and P&R management to request financing from the discretionary funds to cover the update costs. This was the first-time discretionary funds were accessed for property improvements. In the spring of 2023, the residence plumbing was replaced and a new multi-stage water filtration system installed. In the summer of 2023 CBJ IT installed Starlink internet service after Ginger proved it was viable for the area. In the fall of 2024, the original single pane windows will be replaced by a capital improvement deferred maintenance budget.

A special feature that puts JOA on the map internationally is holding the Nationally Accredited Collection™ of the Genus *Primula*. *Primula* are known commonly as primroses. Caroline adored primroses and had many in the garden beds. JOA's first manager Merrill Jensen built upon that collection to acquire accreditation in 2012. At the same time Merrill acquired official arboretum accreditation from ArbNet through the Morton Arboretum. These certifications and other public garden memberships place JOA in the professional botanical garden sphere. Visitation to JOA averages about 10,000 guests per year.

An independent nonprofit, all volunteer group, Friends of Jensen-Olson Arboretum, FJOA, helps support JOA through grant acquisition, site improvements, and educational programming. A major improvement FJOA accomplished was coordinating construction of a permanent bathroom. For the first 15 years of its existence, JOA rented a port-a-pot each summer. The restroom is a concrete forest-service style vault toilet. There is no running water in it, but it is beautifully painted inside and lovingly maintained. FJOA has also raised funds and/or acquired grants to purchase a riding lawn mower, buy plant and interpretive signage, build the Chilkat View Shelter, build a covering over the potting bench area, purchase computers and a contractor to update the plant collections database, buy plants, and much more. FJOA coordinates the family and adult educational events onsite such as Tidepooling with Families, BugDay, photo workshops, and watercolor painting workshops. It is requested that donations go through FJOA as opposed to CBJ due to the time and cost of processing. FJOA holds their own funds and has an established fund through the Juneau Community Foundation. More information can be found at friendsjoarboretum.org.

Currently JOA is open in summer, April-October on Wednesdays - Sundays from 9a -5p. It is open in winter, November - March on Fridays - Sundays, 9a - 4p. Dogs are not allowed in the arboretum per CBJ code. Dogs are allowed on the adjacent Pt. Caroline Trail.

Learn more at: <https://juneau.org/parks-recreation/jensen-olson-arboretum>

<https://www.facebook.com/CBJJOA/>

friendsjoarboretum.org



Jensen-Olson Arboretum Introduction

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, April 2024

Submitted by Ginger Hudson, JOA Manager, ginger.hudson@juneau.org

JOA Annual Report for PRAC

This annual report is based on calendar year, not CBJ fiscal year.

The state of the arboretum is stable, with high praise and appreciation from the community of Juneau. Weather events and wildlife have affected plant collections and facilities onsite, but not so extreme as to close the grounds or drastically change operations.

Since approximately 2016, winters have become warmer with more snow turning to rain. This is documented by regional professionals from NWS, NOAA, and UAS. More rain with less snow cover has affected SE Alaska's native plant communities and the botanical collections at JOA. The effects of wet soil have rotted plant crowns, caused plants to fall over including native trees, and expose plants to freezing temperatures without snow as a buffer. Consequently, in the late winter of 2023, many *Primula* specimens died from freezing. *Primula* are the base of the arboretum collections. To maintain JOA's Nationally Accredited Collection™ for the Genus *Primula*, the manager/horticulturist will perpetually be researching and selecting species and varieties that can adapt to the climate. As part of JOA's duty to maintain the collection, I acquired many new varieties to the arboretum and started them from seed in the fall of 2023.

Another effect of the changing climate is the temperatures increasing and increasing when it is raining. The combination sets the stage for plant funguses to thrive. So far only native fungus has affected plants at JOA. One fungus is a variety that is commonly found on SE Alaska's native shore pine. The fungus also affects an ornamental species of pine onsite, Pyramid Pine. That pine will be monitored and removed if it cannot recover this year.

Outbreaks of black-headed budworm and hemlock sawfly of recent years have left the tops of native trees dead. USFS entomologists believe the outbreaks have waned and encourage landowners to monitor trees for two to three years. They say in the worst case, wind could break off the tops of these

trees. There are several heavily damaged hemlock and spruce at JOA and on Pt. Caroline that are being monitored.

With successful appropriation of non-discretionary funds for updates to the manager's residence at JOA, two major projects were completed. In late spring 2023, CBJ Facilities Maintenance changed out the plumbing and installed a new multi-stage well water filtration system. This was to reduce lead that had been leaching into the tap water from aged plumbing. The filter system has an individual filter to remove iron, as well as carbon and particulate filtration. New testing will be performed in spring 2024. In the summer of 2023, CBJ IT installed business Starlink internet service, improving access speeds over 150X. The manager can now attend and offer online meetings. Additionally multiple staff can access at the same time without slowing down. It must be made clear that I conducted most of the research on options even purchasing personal residential Starlink to prove the service worked at JOA.

The years of weather have also affected the facilities at JOA. The manager's residence still has the single-glaze windows installed when Carl Jensen built the house in 1961. To help mitigate weather, the windows also had storm windows. The storm windows were wood framed and all of them have failed. Many just plain rotted, some became so mis-shaped that they do not attach to the house frame anymore. Exterior paint has been peeling and damaged by the years of extreme weather in addition to plants being too close to the buildings. CBJ Facilities maintenance was aware of the issues and kept the windows and paint on a deferred maintenance list. The two items finally rose to necessity and plans were drawn up in 2023. As soon as I began work at JOA in 2021, I have been removing plants that were too close to the buildings. There is still work to do and that will continue this year. After the plants are moved, I plan to install a 2-foot-wide gravel walking area adjacent to the foundation for maintenance access. CBJ engineering estimates the windows will be done in October-November 2024, and painting will be done in summer of 2025.

There is one fleet vehicle at JOA which is five years past due for replacement. I began the process of trying to replace the vehicle on my arrival in the position in 2021. However, supply chain issues were holding CBJ back from buying new vehicles. I attempted each budget year to replace the vehicle. Due to lack of written procedure and poor communication it has been a challenge. Deputy Parks&Rec Director Lauren Verrelli has suggested that Fleet Service stay observant of fleet vehicles that need replacement. The JOA budget has been applying funds to a vehicle and I have made it clear to Fleet that JOA needs to be on the list for FY25.

During the summer of 2023, the Friends of Jensen-Olson Arboretum hosted Tidepooling for Families, Mother's Day-our biggest visitation day usually sees 200 people, Primrose Day, Alaska Public Gardens Day, Bug Day, a watercolor workshop, and the local garden clubs picnic celebrating JOA's anniversary. FJOA contracts one individual to coordinate the educational events. She recruits volunteers in respected fields to lead programs for families and children. Other events led by myself included a native plant walk, opening of the grounds for holidays, Alaska Arbor Day tree planting, orientation for local tour company, and plant sales. Other uses included the Sons of Norway picnic, a performance by Theater Alaska, one wedding, traditional canoe landing by CES 4H Alaska Experience Camp, planting and harvesting of Tlingit potatoes by TLCC school children, a visit from residents at the Pioneer Home, and a memorial celebration for Cheri Fluck who was a friend of Caroline Jensen. In all, approximately 10,000 guests visited JOA in 2023. (a 2024 Events listing included with this packet)

As part of their duties in holding the conservation easement to the property at JOA, SEAL Trust makes two site visits per year. One is an annual assessment of the grounds visit usually conducted in May. There are less formal visits at other times of the year. SEAL Trust creates a document of the formal visit, it is available upon request.

Over the winter of 2023-2024, I received approval from P&R Director George Schaff to close the arboretum in December. This was for two reasons, low visitation, and my need for vacation. JOA is not well visited in the winter. Weather prevents folks from driving out-the-road, especially if there is heavy snow. It may take a full day before DOT clears the highway. On good weather days, 1 - 4 people might visit. Since our busy season keeps me onsite from generally April - October, I do not take vacations in the summer. I took most of December off and it was nice not to have to find someone to open and close the gate at JOA.

During the winter I work with P&R staff to update the FY budgets. These were completed with adjustments requested by the city manager in February. Other winter tasks include clearing and archiving files, working with FJOA to create the seasonal event program, planning the vegetable garden plant scheme, and starting seeds. I also attend local garden club meetings and have been a regular presenter at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle in February.

For the past three years JOA has had a returning groundskeeper assistant in the full-time seasonal benefitted position. That person informed me that they would not be returning for multiple reasons. They were of great benefit because they are interested in horticulture. However, that person is a student at UAS and this is their last year. They may have an opportunity for a field biology class which would take them

away from Juneau part of this summer. A large factor for not returning was lack of employment stability. Working only six months of the year made it difficult to find winter work. I have been in discussions with P&R management on extending the hours of this position incrementally over the years, moving to eight months, then ten, and so on. There is administrative work, as well as garden work, that could be done that justifies a second year-round employee. Another reason the benefitted assistant will not return is due to pay scale. Surprisingly, this past winter they found a tourism industry job answering phones that pays more.

For the past three years the second seasonal groundskeeper assistant that is non-benefitted has been different each year. In 2023 this person lived nearby and would return if not for the cost of childcare.

In March of 2024 I am interviewing three candidates so far for the two positions.

A big project I have been working on this winter is the design and cost planning for a new accessible path across the entry lawn at JOA. Cheri Fluck's family donated \$5,000 to FJOA in the summer of 2023. I suggested we use it for a path in honor of Cheri and Caroline who gardened into old age. Over the winter I worked with FJOA to craft a grant application to AARP for additional funds to make the path a reality. The award notice will happen in early May 2024. The path will be 48" wide to meet Alaska ADA standards. It will be constructed of pre-cast large concrete pavers, similar to those leading from the accessible parking to the structures onsite. The path will lead from the gardeners shed to the bench by the rhododendrons and Grand Ol' Apple tree. This is an easy route since it is level and leads to a lovely vantage point. I have also planned three generous wide steps to mitigate the slippery slope in front of the apple tree down to the veggie garden fence. A draft sketch is included with this packet. The total cost is estimated at about \$25,000. FJOA will hire a contractor to do the work, I will manage the design, timeline, and safety onsite.

It was mentioned before that JOA started many new varieties of Primula seed for the grounds. Not only are these for the gardens, but they will be to display in 2025. Next year in May the American Primrose Society, APS, will hold their National Show in Juneau. This is a big event for JOA, FJOA, and the local APS chapter who requested the show be held here. Caroline Jensen was a member of APS, and the previous manager, Merrill Jensen acquired collection status for the JOA primroses in 2012. The show will require rental of conference space in town for one weekend, as well as purchasing of local supplies, catering, and other services. I will focus heavily on tasks in 2024 that will make the show in 2025 a success. APS held a show here in 2018, we are glad to see them return and hope it brings some new faces to JOA.

Thank you for your time reviewing these documents. I appreciate the commitment community members give to CBJ's various advisory committees. I hope everyone on PRAC has been to the arboretum. Otherwise, this is your formal invitation to visit the grounds and see what all the admiration is about. And remember, there is no entry fee!

