

Deborah Craig <deborahlc11@gmail.com>

Fri, Dec 13, 2024, 10:52 AM

to Lauren, Linda, Jennifer, Rhonda, John, Phil, Maureen, bcc: Carol, bcc: Jennifer, bcc: Ann, bcc: Kimberly

Dear Ms. Verrelli,

Thanks for taking the time on December 6 to chat about the Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) and our mission to assist all aging adults in Juneau. (Please see attached brochure.) The JCOA is working to ensure that as everyone in our community ages, we remain as healthy as possible to minimize the need for expensive health and medical services. Additionally, socialization is becoming a national issue not just for the elderly but for all and we want to be part of the solution for Juneau. As you requested, I am emailing you regarding our request for use of the Marie Drake Complex for recreational and social activity use - a **CBJ Community Center**.

Background: The JCOA began its pursuit for use of the Marie Drake Complex as a **CBJ Community Center** last May when we submitted an application to the CBJ. It recently came to light that the MD Complex has more asbestos issues than originally recognized and while use is in flux, the MD Gym and adjoining classrooms are to be used for P&R programs regardless of other changes. As the JCOA is a CBJ entity, our recommended programs will fit well into P&R oversight and we are a willing partner in facilitating activities.

Partners: When organizing to submit the application to the CBJ for MD usage, the JCOA partnered with an array of organizations that we called the "Alphabet Group": *AARP, CCS (Catholic Community Services), JAHC (Juneau Arts & Humanities Council), the Planetarium, AEYC (Assoc for Education of Youth and Children) and we later added SEARHC and BRH (Bartlett Regional Hospital)*. We concurred that a multigenerational **CBJ Community Center** at the MD Complex with an emphasis on aging adults would be a benefit to the community, particularly if housed in the downtown corridor to serve North Douglas, Douglas, Lemon Creek and downtown. There are several facilities currently in use and easily accessible in the valley (Field House, Pool, Library and Floyd Dryden coming on board to serve the Pickleball Community). If the MD Complex became the **CBJ Community Center**, it would serve seniors and families closer to the downtown corridor, as well as house activities currently at the Mt. Jumbo Gym.

GYM Staffing: During our call, you commented that staffing was a major issue for CBJ recreational activities. This issue has been mitigated for some P&R activities by having a regularly attending member become a Monitor: Mt Jumbo Pickup Basketball and some pool activities use this method. In conversations with Pickleball groups in Douglas, I am told that there is similar interest in having a pickleball member be the gym monitor to ensure access on a regularly scheduled basis. Currently, pickleball is held at the JAHC, who generously allocate space when other activities are not using the space. The goal would be to have regularly scheduled activities that would be held with Gym Monitor's who are supporters of that particular activity. If there are insufficient PCN's, either more PCN's could be created, "shared" or allow Volunteer Monitors.

Activities: Following is a table of potential activities that members of the "Alphabet" Group quickly generated. We have identified even more activities that would be useful to the community – of all ages – but these would be our first areas of emphasis. Phil Huebschen, Executive Director of the JAHC has generously offered to help with community outreach/marketing and each member of our group has access to their own mailing lists to ensure broad participation of community members. We did not include elements such as target audience, refreshments, numbers of participants expected, cleanup, etc until we are sure that we are congruent with P&R's concepts of space usage. The Alphabet Group will provide more in-depth information on usage but that will take more time/research. We wanted to get this list to you expeditiously per your request. Attached is the table of potential activities. FYI, we are already reaching out to the Pickleball Community to determine usage needs and desires.

Funding: Lastly, the Alphabet Group is more than willing to seek funding via grants to fund equipment and other needs. Linda Kruger, AARP and JCOA member, recently emailed you regarding a funding opportunity with AARP and asked who might be appropriate to work with in your Department to ensure we are compliant with CBJ parameters within our request. Linda wrote: *AARP Community Challenge Grant applications will open in early January. We support applying for funding for a walking track to be installed around the court area at the Marie Drake gym so that seniors and others will have access to an indoor walking space like the upper track at the Fieldhouse. We also discussed including equipment for pickleball courts or other activities in the gym in the proposal. We can help write the proposal. Please identify someone at Parks and Rec who could work with us. Proposals will be due in early March. Check the web links below for additional information. We would like to get started on the proposal in early January.*

<https://communitychallenge.aarp.org/2025/organizations/aarp/home>

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2024/2024-grantees.html>

<https://bit.ly/ak-challengegrants> - Info about Alaska Community Challenge Grants.

Please call or email me at your convenience to discuss our proposal for the CBJ Community Center or if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Deborah Craig, Chair

Juneau Commission on Aging

<https://juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees/jcoa>

Ageing! So cool, everyone is doing it!

PROJECT PLANNER		
ACTIVITY	PLAN START	DURATION
Walk for Health - Daily Indoor Track Walking	2/1/2025	daily
Pickleball (regularly scheduled day and evening sessions)	Immed	3X Weekly
Better Bones and Balance Classes	2/1/2025	weekly
Gentle Yoga for Aging Gracefully at Every Age!	4/1/2025	Weekly or 2X Wk
Bingocize SEARHC	5/1/2025	Weekly
Jnu Intl Folk Dancers sponsored lessons and dance	TBD	Weekly
Jumbo Gym Pickup Basketball Group	TBD	weekly
BRH Patient and Family Advisory Council Meetings 1 hour	Mar-25	bi-monthly
Mendenhall Flying Lions Club	3/1/2025	monthly
AARP CAT Meetings - one hour meeting	1/1/2025	monthly
JCOA Monthly Meetings - one hour meeting	3/1/2025	monthly
Joint Sight Lions Club	4/1/2025	quarterly
Southeast Regional Elder Care Group	4/1/2025	quarterly
Dietician Outreach SEARHC	5/1/2025	quarterly

BRH AHA Stroke Awareness Educational Sessions	1-Apr	semi annual
Patient Benefits Presentation SEARHC	4/1/2025	semi annual
Mobile Kitchen (nutrition instruction) SEARHC	6/1/2025	semi annual
National Family Caregiver Month	November	Annual
Brain Health Series - How a Healthy Brain Impacts Your Health!	2/1/2025	6 weeks
CCS/SESS National Family Caregiver Speaker Education Series	11/1/2025	4 weeks
Community Disaster Preparedness with Emphasis on Seniors	TBD	TBD
Computer and Smartphone Literacy	TBD	TBD
Navigating the Senior Health System - Medicare, Medicaid and Beyond	TBD	TBD
Tai Chi	TBD	TBD
Senior Picnics and Special Events	TBD	TBD

Deborah Craig <deborahlc11@gmail.com>

Thu, Dec 19, 2024, 11:49 AM

to Lauren

Ms. Verrelli,

The Pickleball Community has become aware that the JCOA is working with Parks and Rec regarding use of the MD Gym - the JAHC has notified the pickleball community that it will not be available for use as a pickleball space for some time. I am in contact with over 20 Pickleballers who have written compelling letters regarding the value of Pickleball to their health and wellbeing. I'm doing a quick survey to see what days and times work best for everyone and will provide that info to you as soon as possible.

It would be great if we could open the MD Gym via Parks and Rec for Pickleball, even if only a few days a week. Some of the folks communicating with me have already indicated that they would be willing to be gym monitors.

I will update you as soon as I have more info.

Deb

Deborah Craig, Chair

Juneau Commission on Aging

<https://juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees/jcoa>

Aging! So cool, everyone is doing it!

Deborah Craig <deborahlc11@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 30, 2024, 1:51 PM (4 days ago)

to Maureen, Linda, Jennifer, John, Rhonda, Lauren, bcc: me

Ms.Verrelli,

As promised on Dec 19th, I did a quick survey of some of the folks I've talked to regarding Pickleball and their concerns that the JAHC is no longer offering a downtown space for this sport until next fall. They are very enthusiastic!

Following is the outcome of my quick survey and I anticipate more responses after the holidays. I will be following up with a call to determine if there is an opportunity to open the Marie Drake Gym for Pickleball at a minimum, while working towards a full array of programming. This info could provide a mechanism for choosing times of day and days of week to start out.

I've also talked to people who play Pick-Up Basketball at the Mt. Jumbo Gym who are concerned about the loss of that space, as well. Perhaps a Pick-Up Basketball time could be included in the evening at Marie Drake Gym.

Again, in both cases, I have heard that people would be willing to be Gym Monitors as needed.

Thanks so much,

Deborah Craig, Chair

Juneau Commission on Aging

<https://juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees/jcoa>

Aging! So cool, everyone is doing it!

Informal Pickleball Survey To Date

Average age: 67

Female 62% Male 38%

Preferred Location (option - Downtown or Valley): *Downtown*

Preferred Day of Week (options - preferential rating every day of the week): *1) Tues 2) Any Day of Week*

Preferred Time of Day (option - morning, lunch, afternoon evening): *1) Morning 2) Afternoon*

Grouping of Days: *1) MWF 2) TTH*

A Few Comments from Pickleball Enthusiasts:

I am enthusiastically in favor of dedicated gym space for pickleball and would like to participate in your survey.

To whom it may concern, I am a pickleball player here in Juneau. I am a senior, 71 years old. I am supporting the option of have a designated place to play pickleball for seniors. Two days ago 18 of us seniors showed up at the JAHC which was already scheduled for play. The courts were filled with tables and chairs for another event. We were left with no alternative. Having a designated court somewhere for seniors is necessary and important for Juneau's aging population.

Hi, I am 73 years old and I've lived in Juneau since 1978. I started playing pickleball about five years ago. But when the space is available, I'll play now two or three times a week. It's the first time in my life. I've played a sport. I think it really helps my physical coordination and my mental coordination.

I would estimate, roughly, about half of the people I play with at the Jack and Park are seniors. But at least half are not seniors. We have middle age people, we have high school students. And it's a great great venue for intergenerational activity. But in the winter, especially, and when it's rainy, there is hardly any place to play except the Raquet Club. The racquet club is expensive, it requires a drive to the Valley and also the level of play is very competitive and fast paced, more than I can enjoy. The only CBJ facility to play at is the Jack and if you look at their schedule for fall 2024, they did their best, but there was not much playing time, given other activities that are scheduled there. A lot of seniors manage to play even though there's not a regular dedicated space. I think significantly more would play if there were more playing times available regularly and dedicated beginner classes, where people could come and learn the rules. After many years of talking, I hope that something can happen to increase regular Pickleball availability for seniors and others in Juneau.

Please add me to your email list for a survey. I sent an email letter a few days ago. There's no pickleball at the JACC until Oct 2025. Please help!

I totally support the need for more pickleball courts in Juneau. I am 76 years old and addicted to pickleball. A friend convinced me to try it probably 6 years ago when Barney and Keith gave instruction through Community Schools. At that time we were mostly playing in the summer and fall in outdoor school play areas at DZ and Riverbend. A group of us continued to play in those areas all during Covid and that helped my mental being tremendously. At times it was slippery

and rather dangerous. We'd bring towels for the moisture, brooms, and trash bags to clean up the surfaces. We also taped the courts and provided our own nets. The only support from the City and Borough has been limited to occasional court times first in Centennial Hall and now in the JACC. Those times are very limited and canceled without notice. They let us play at Treadwell Ice Rink for one month this summer and tried using the gym at Mt Jumbo a few years ago, but the court was too small. Those who can afford the Alaska Club can play at certain times every day, but the skill level is much higher and unskilled newcomers are not particularly welcomed. I've heard that maybe the City's reticence about supporting pickleball is possibly due to competing with a private business. There is a tremendous need for the #1 growing sport in America here in Juneau. Our elderly population is growing and needs physical exercise for healthy well being. But it's not just a sport for the elderly. Playing with the younger players improves our play, and it's one of the only sports that men and women play together. I encourage you to listen to the maybe 400 or more people interested in either learning to play pickleball or wanting more opportunities to play.