



## **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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|---|--|
| • Developing Regulations for Large Events in Parks (11 CBJAC 01.010)                                  | • Planning for Additional Public Use Cabins  |
| • Park Naming Policy (Policy-100-005)   | • Eaglecrest Summer Recreation Planning  |
| • Youth Activities Board Updates  | • Turkey Bowling at Treadwell Arena  |
| • Kaxdigoowu Trail Rehabilitation   | • Treadwell Arena Hosting the 12U State Tournament   |
| • Parks and Recreation Operations Update  | • State Swim/Dive Championships at Dimond Park Aquatic Center  |
| • Hank Harmon Rifle Range Improvements  | • Marine Park Deck Over  |
| • P&R Winter Pass Program   | • Jensen Arboretum Update  |
| • Treadwell Arena Roof and HVAC Replacement   | • Resolution to the Assembly asking the Department of Natural Resources to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund |
| • Marine Park Planning and Design   | • Treadwell Ditch Trail and Bridge Improvements  |
| • Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Update  | • Dog Day at the Pool  |
| • Aquatics Division Update (increased staffing, current programs, and progress on the Augustus Brown) | • Walk Southeast Program   |
| • Adopt-A-Flower Program  | • Movie in the Park Program  |
| • Savikko Park and Playground Improvements  | • Augustus Brown Pool Renovations  |
| • Urban and Community Forestry Program Funding Opportunities  | • Zach Gordon Youth Center   |
| • Sledding at Savikko Park  | • 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 @ 5:30pm 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 Merit <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