

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE **DRAFT** MINUTES

June 04, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar



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A. CALL TO ORDER

PRAC Chair Chris Mertl called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Makayla Pfaff

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. June 4th Director's Report

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Minutes from April 2, 2024

MOTION by Mr. Westmoreland to approve the minutes. No objections were heard, and the minutes were approved.

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

G. NEW BUSINESS

3. PRAC Valley Facility & Park Tour Scheduling

Mr. Schaaf explained that the department wants to organize a 4-hour tour of the Mendenhall Valley Parks & Recreation facilities and parks for PRAC members. He presents them with a selection of Saturdays from June-July and asks the board to select the most suitable date to meet from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Mertl asks the PRAC to take a poll of how many members are available for each of the proposed dates.

- **June 15:** Three members available
- **June 22:** Five members available
- **June 29:** Three members available
- **July 13:** Two members available
- **July 20:** Four members available
- **July 27:** Six members available

June 27th received the highest number of available committee members, and is the decided date. Mr. Schaaf says that the department will come up with a proposed itinerary which will likely begin at the newly renovated Augustus Brown Swimming Pool.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I. STAFF REPORTS

4. Park Project Updates – *Presented by G. Schaaf*

Mr. Schaaf shares with the PRAC that the department has been working on construction of Adair Kennedy Turf baseball and softball field with contractor Dawson Construction. He explains that the color of the artificial turf in the infield has been changed from brown to green to better accommodate girls' softball games at the request of the Juneau School District. They will also be replacing the field lights with new LED lights; however, the scoreboard is still in good shape and won't be replaced.

Mr. Westmorland asks how well the artificial turf will accommodate players sliding. Mr. Schaaf answers that the turf is designed to respond like natural turf and the fibers lay flat. He further explains that the ratio of sand and rubber infill will determine how it responds to balls bouncing, and players sliding. Mr. Westmoreland asks if this type of turf helps facilitate snow melting. Mr. Schaaf answers that it does and explains that the dirt field holds snow much longer into the springtime due to the frozen soil causing ice to form. He explains that the artificial turf upgrade will allow the spring baseball season to be extended since the snow will be clear earlier.

Mr. Schaaf continues by sharing that Homestead Park in Douglas is a very popular location for tourists in the summertime who visit to get photos with their cruise ship from across the water. He explains that the boardwalks at the park were built with marine passenger fee funds close to 30 years ago and that the department will be replacing them. He shares that the bottom viewing platform will be slightly expanded, and it will be resurfaced with less slippery fiberglass decking. They plan to do the bulk of the construction work in the winter to avoid closure during the tourism season.

Mr. Schaaf then explains that the department has held two public meetings to discuss the design of Homestead Park and collect recommendations to develop a plan for the 5-acre parcel. Mr. Mertl shared that they also are working with Newline Skate parks out of California to design the park.

Mr. Schaaf informs the PRAC that the Kaxdigoowu Héen Dei bridge replacement is being executed by the State of Alaska Department of Transportation as they received a grant, and the Parks & Recreation department is working closely with them.

Finally, Mr. Schaaf shares that 3 playground replacement projects are happening now at Sigoowu Ye (Fun Place Park), Si't Tuwan (Beside the Glacier), and Steelhead Park. The design for Sigoowu Ye is mostly complete, and the department is waiting on a \$125,000 grant from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources through the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the project, but it won't be available until October. Si't Tuwan park's conceptual plan has been made and he is hopeful to have a final design ready this summer. Finally, there will be a public meeting at Steelhead Park on July 13th to receive feedback from the community on potential features and upgrades.

Ms. Swanson asks where the trails that start at Steelhead Park lead. Mr. Schaaf explains that there is a trail that connects to brotherhood park and one that leads to a city property under a conservation easement.

Mr. Schaaf updates the PRAC on the master plan for the department's renovation of Marine Park. He shares that the current planning drawings are still at 65% complete. The public has expressed a desire for more performance space, so the department is looking into adding performance structure. Additionally they are exploring the addition of covered seating, and permanent places for food vendors.

Mr. Mertl asks when construction will begin, to which Mr. Schaaf answers that it will hopefully begin at the end of the cruise ship season or early next year.

Mr. Westmoreland asks what happens to old playground equipment when parks are rebuilt. Mr. Schaaf answers that it's turned over to the contractors, and in the past they have been good at offering salvageable equipment to other communities.

J. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Hale shares that the assembly passed their budget. She adds that Celebration will be beginning in Downtown Juneau on June 5th. She shares that the assembly has been discussing enforcement ordinances regarding homeless camping. She adds that there is a supreme court ruling that is imminent which will decide if communities can ban camping in certain areas. The Assembly is waiting on the ruling to take their next steps.

Ms. Swanson shares that Trail Mix is working on putting in new bridges on Treadwell. Work is also being done on bike trails near Thunder Mountain and Perseverance Trail, and finally a crew is working on the trail to the Eagle Glacier Cabin. She shares that they have 10 employees this year and are clocking 300 volunteer hours.

Mr. Mertl shares that the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee met on June 3rd to discuss manufactured homes and possible funding sources. He shares that they also had a fair bit of discussion about the area plan for Downtown Juneau.

Mr. Mertl updates the PRAC on the fact that there is a vacancy in the committee as Christina Mounce has resigned because she took a job with federal highways and did not wish to have a conflict of interest.

K. NEXT MEETING DATE – July 2, 2024

L. ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss the committee meeting adjourned at 6:13pm.