



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING**



January 8, 2015

**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Carl Propes at 6:10 p.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Jon Dyson  
Commissioner Peter Murphy  
Commissioner Richard Mystrom  
Commissioner Carl Propes  
Commissioner Harlow Robinson  
Commissioner James Winchester

Commissioners absent/excused:

Commissioner Jim Balamaci  
Commissioner Joey Caterinichio  
Commissioner Levi Robinson

A quorum was present.

Staff present:

Holly Spoth-Torres  
Maeve Nevins  
Steve Rafuse  
Diana Cramer

### **III. Consent Agenda**

#### **A. Agenda:**

Upon motion duly made and seconded by, the Agenda for the January 8, 2015 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was unanimously approved.

#### **B. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes of the October 9, 2014 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission were unanimously approved.

### **IV. Director's Comments**

Holly Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent, provided an update on items of interest and concern to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Park Maintenance: The weather has made winter park maintenance a challenge. No ski trail grooming has been possible this winter; however, the ice rinks at Westchester Lagoon, Cheney Lake, and Delaney Park Strip are in excellent condition.

Kincaid: They are finally making snow at Kincaid with the new snow-making equipment.

Capital Budget: The Department is in the process of finalizing capital budget requests for the legislature. Parks & Recreation requests will focus on trails and infrastructure, while Anchorage Park Foundation's requests continue to focus on neighborhood park improvements.

Recreation: There was a substantial revenue increase in Recreation due to permitting for weddings, picnic shelter rentals, special events, and park rentals generally. The Recreation Division has been focused on improving the permitting system and increasing the professionalism of staff.

Social Media: For several years Parks and Recreation has successfully utilized social media to communicate with the public. Parks and Recreation will continue to use these tools.

Bonds: The Department is working on its bond package for the April election. The bond will include funds for new trail bridges, Chester Creek Sports Complex, and rehabilitation of trails and greenbelts. Full details should be presented to the Commission in February.

## **V. Appearance Requests: Non-Agenda Items**

There was one appearance request on a non-agenda item.

Lester Shepherd spoke to the Commission regarding his interest in building an indoor tennis facility on a parcel of land that is actually part of Tikishla Park and is located on the north side Northern Lights Boulevard near the overhead walking bridge. He has building plans for his project, but needs a place to build. He believes this parcel would be an ideal location for a tennis facility; however, he needs to take 5 or 6 soil samples to determine if the site is acceptable. John Rodda, Parks and Recreation Director, asked him to come before the Commission to give an overview of his project, and to get some feedback from the Commission prior to his issuing a permit to Mr. Shepherd to take soil samples. After hearing his plans and discussing those plans with him, the Commission agreed that Mr. Shepherd should be allowed to take the soil samples. Commissioner Propes explained to Mr. Shepherd that the project would have to go through the municipal process with approvals at several levels before final approval by the Assembly. Mr. Shepherd will continue to work with Parks and Recreation staff.

## **VI. Action Item**

### **A. PRC 15-01 Valley of the Moon Master Plan**

#### **1. Presentation and Discussion**

Presented by Steve Rafuse, Park Planner

Mr. Rafuse presented the Valley of the Moon Park Master Plan. This community-use park is located in the South Addition neighborhood of Anchorage and is part of the Chester Creek Greenbelt. It is one of the most popular parks in Anchorage. The park was upgraded in 2010 with new playground equipment, improved ADA accessibility, and a new picnic shelter. The purpose of the master plan is to provide a 5-10 year vision for development of the park; address concerns over safety and parking; provide a formal direction for the off-leash dog area; determine appropriate and compatible uses; provide a park that encourages active community use and discourages negative activities; and develop the park in a manner that preserves the character of the park. Mr. Rafuse discussed the public outreach involved, and the key issues, concerns and desired improvements identified by the advisory group and Parks and Recreation. Four alternative plans were developed, and Mr. Rafuse provided details of the preferred alternative which identifies the following improvements:

- A new adult fitness station located directly west of the existing playground.
- The restroom screen will be relocated next to the parking lot to provide access for servicing and improve the visual aesthetic.
- The parking lot will be expanded to the east by 27 spaces to minimize on-street parking and improve safety.

- A new formalized off-leash dog park will assume the footprint of the ball field.
- Fencing will be extended along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to improve safety.
- The community gardens will be expanded by approximately 50%.

The master plan was developed in coordinate with an advisory group and includes extensive stakeholder and community involvement. The plan has been approved by North Star and South Addition community councils. The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the master plan and requests that the Commission pass the proposed resolution in support thereof.

## **2. Public Appearances**

Three people addressed the Commission regarding the Valley of the Moon Master Plan:

- Anna Bryant, South Addition Community Council board member and small dog owner, spoke in support of the plan. She specifically supports the off-leash dog park.
- Ed Miner, local resident, supports the plan in general and the off-leash dog park in particular. He provided some suggestions regarding the size of the dog park and how to expand it.
- Mark Butler, local resident and condo association president, supports the plan and stressed the importance of leaving the existing vegetative buffers between the park and C Street and other roadways in place.

## **3. Motion and Resolution**

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Winchester, PRC Resolution No. 2015-01, Valley of the Moon Park Master Plan, was unanimously approved as follows:

### **PRC Resolution No. 2015-01 Valley of the Moon Park Master Plan**

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, Valley of the Moon Park master plan provides a 5-10 year vision that will guide future development at the park; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department partnered with local Community Councils, stakeholders and park users to establish an advisory group to assist the Department in identifying and prioritizing desired improvements for Valley of the Moon Park; and

WHEREAS, the improvements proposed in the master site plan are based on community and stakeholder input and have been vetted by the advisory group through deliberation and consensus; and

WHEREAS, the improvements proposed in the master site plan have received support and approval from the both the South Addition Community Council and the North Star Community Council;

WHEREAS, the new off-leash dog park space proposed by the advisory group and identified in the master site plan has been recommended by the Animal Control Advisory Board, as required under Title 17.10.090;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the master plan submitted by the Department and the advisory group for Valley of the Moon Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 8th day of January, 2015.

## **VII. Information Items**

### **A. PRC 15-02 Alaska Highway Memorial Project**

Presented by Maeve Nevins, Park Planner

Maeve Nevins introduced members of the Alaska Highway Project Committee and asked them to present their plan to the Commission. The Committee proposes to sponsor and develop a memorial to commemorate the African-American engineers involved in construction of the Alaska portion of the Alaska Highway. The proposed location for the memorial is in Centennial Park.

Information was present by Alaska Highway Project Committee members Andrew Knoll, Jean Pollard and Bishop Thomas. Jim Dault and Shala Dobson provided their conceptual plan for the design of the memorial.

Parks and Recreation supports the proposed memorial in concept but prior to approval of the project, the following additional information and steps are needed:

- The Alaska Highway Project Committee shall provide a site plan showing the project to scale in relationship to existing Centennial Park facilities and public access, and elevations showing how the project will appear to park visitors.
- The Project Committee shall present the additional project information to the community council(s) and obtain a resolution of support and any additional comments based on the plan.
- The Project Committee shall work with Parks staff to assure that the project scale and design are appropriate for the site, existing and future park features, pedestrian circulation, and parking,
- The Project Committee shall enter into a cooperative use agreement outlining the responsibilities of the sponsors and the Municipality, including long-term maintenance.

Parks and Recreation staff believes the memorial would be an amenity to the Anchorage park system by increasing awareness of significant local, state and national history. As the project progresses, more information will be provided to the Commission, and ultimately presented for its approval and resolution.

#### **B. PRC 15-03 Lanie Fleisher Chester Creek Project Update**

Presented by Maeve Nevins, Park Planner

The 2015 Chester Creek Trail improvement project is part of a multi-year trail repair program to address safety and security concerned on our trails. Maeve Nevins provided details regarding the funding of the trails and progress on Chester Creek trail improvements to date, and discussed the comprehensive public involvement and planning that has been completed. In 2014 the most used portion of trail corridor from milepost 0.0 at Westchester to milepost 1.0 at Arctic Boulevard Tunnel and ½ mile of spur trails in that area were completed.

2015 improvements will include the main trail from milepost 1.0 at Arctic Boulevard Tunnel to approximately milepost 4 at the ARC of Anchorage, and will focus on one segment of the trail at a time. Spurs will be repaired based on priority and budget available, although at this time it appears that the spurs can be completed as well. The construction documents and permitting are being finalized now and the project will be bid at the end of February 2015. Contractor selection must receive final approval by the Assembly. In Spring 2015 the final project schedule will be determined and a detour plan to accommodate all major summer trail events will be in place. Public outreach will

be ongoing and accomplished by providing regular updates on construction progress on the project website.

### **VIII. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Propes brought up the subject of commissioner terms. He and commissioners Caterinichio and Dyson all have terms that expire in October. It was his suggestion that they consider electing a new chair and vice-chair, someone whose term does not expire this year, prior to October. His suggestion was taken under advisement.

### **IX. Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on February 12, 2015, at Spenard Recreation Center.

### **X. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair  
Parks & Recreation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Parks & Recreation