



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



May 12, 2022

The May 12, 2022, meeting was a hybrid meeting, held in person at Spenard Recreation Center but also using Microsoft Teams.

CALL TO ORDER

The May 12, 2022, regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Grace Johnston at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Edwin Blair
Commissioner Andrew Kastning
Commissioner Grace Johnston
Commissioner Brian Looney
Commissioner Stacey Lange

A quorum was achieved with five members present.

Staff present:

Josh Durand (online)
Steve Rafuse
Brad Muir
Annie DuBois
Ellen Devine

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Looney and seconded by Commissioner Blair, the Agenda for the May 12, 2022 meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Blair and seconded by Commissioner Looney, The Minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Josh Durand provided the following report:

1. Summer is here. Fire danger is high because of the hot, dry temperatures. If you see a fire, please call 911 and report the situation.
2. Seasonal hiring is in process. We have numerous positions within maintenance, horticulture, healthy spaces, and aquatics that are fulfilling positions. Like many divisions, Parks and Recreation is experiencing difficulties filling seasonal positions.
3. Healthy spaces division and the abatement of homeless camps have been busy lately with a focus on Davis Park, Valley of the Moon Park, Russian Jack Springs Park, and the snow dump behind AIH.
4. Staff shortages are affecting the aquatics division, resulting in a revised schedule for lakes. Both Goose and Jewel Lake will only have supervised during weekends. With that said, East High pool will be reopening this summer.
5. We received \$3.5 million in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding for beetle kill removal. We have multiple crews in Anchorage and Eagle River removing beetle kill and mitigating fire danger. There is a focus on removing beetle kill in areas near highly populated residential areas, high-use recreation areas, and working with camp abatement in areas of illegal camping.
6. The MOA is developing a list for the second round of ARPA funding. Parks and Rec had several projects that made the final list through the Mayor's Office
 - a. \$450K to do sewer improvements at Chester Creek Sports Complex, Fairview Recreation Center, and Beech Lake.
 - b. \$6M for pool improvements including new filtration systems and a saltwater pool.
 - c. \$350K for a new roof on the horticulture compound in Russian Jack Springs Park

APPEARANCE REQUESTS

There were no appearance request.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

APF Executive Director, Beth Nordland provided the following report:

1. Join us to celebrate the 2022 Challenge Grant awardees! There are a wide variety of projects happening this year, and we are bringing in a photographer and videographer to record the stories of the folks awarded the grants.
2. APF is very involved with Youth Employment in Parks and works to attract funding. We are excited about the upcoming YEP season
3. We support inclusive playgrounds and hope to celebrate five playgrounds this year.
4. APF supports creating signage along trails and in parks that promotes indigenous place names.
5. We are currently fundraising for the Hilltop Bike Park which will be the farthest north, lift-assisted bike park.
6. APF is working on funding for a National Heritage Area designation for Anchorage which will allow us to tell stories of national significance as well as bring back a lot of money to the community.
7. We have two items in the capital budget. One is for wayfinding on the Moose Loop and the other is the connection trail between Palmer and Anchorage as part of the Alaska Long Trail effort.

ACTION ITEM

PRC 22-07: Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) 2022 Projects

Resolution No. 2022-07

Presented by Brad Muir, Natural Resource Manager, and Annie DuBois, Natural Resource Specialists

Brad Muir, Natural Resource Manager, and Annie Dubois, Natural Resource Specialist, presented about the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program as well as requested a resolution from commissioners for approval of the 2022 project list.

The YEP program has officially hired 25 teens between the ages of 16-19 and these individuals were recruited via presentations in high schools as well as posters in schools. The YEP program is managed by several organizations, including Anchorage Park Foundation, Anchorage Parks and Rec, BLM, ADF&G, and DNR, and has been running for 16 years.

This ten-week summer program will include the following projects:

1. Forsythe Park – Creating two ADA ramps and a short trail to a creek as part of a Challenge Grant project to an outdoor classroom area.
2. University Lake Dog Park Trail Improvements – As part of a bond approved by Anchorage voters, the team will work on drainage issues and improving trails.
3. Spruce Beetle Revegetation – Plan to plant over 500 trees to replace dead spruce beetle-killed trees.
4. Campbell Creek Streambank Restoration – There is an area failing near Arctic Roadrunner on Campbell Creek Trail. YEP will work on revegetating the area after other stabilization efforts from contractors.
5. Westchester Lagoon Bank Restoration – YEP will help restore the bank at a waterfowl area in Westchester Lagoon as well as plant native plants and construct an access trail to a viewing platform.
6. Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Improvements – The group will perform trail maintenance improving sightlines, drainage, and safety.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) 2022 Projects and requests that the Commission pass the proposed resolution PRC 2022-07.

Discussion

During the discussion, Commissioner Blair asked if there is a collaboration between the Challenge Grants and Youth Employment in Parks. Mr. Muir explained that the Challenge Grants are for any park improvement in Anchorage and the application asks if they can utilize YEP. Commissioner Looney asked if that qualifies as an in-kind contribution. Ms. Nordland clarified that there is a change in funding from Rasmuson Foundation. They used to give funding to operate Youth Employment in Parks and now they do more to fund construction projects. So, we consider city contribution to Challenge Grants as a match for the cash that Rasmuson provides. Mr. Muir also mentioned that all the Challenge Grants also involve other volunteer events/hours.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Looney and seconded by Commissioner Lange, PRC Resolution No. 2022-07 Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) 2022 Projects was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-07:

In favor: Commissioners Blair, Kastning, Johnston, Lange, and Looney

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners Graham, Rinner, Milliken

INFORMATION ITEMS

PRC 22-08: 2022 Planning and Construction Projects Update

Presented by Stephen Rafuse, Superintendent of Parks

Stephen Rafuse, Superintendent of Parks, this summer is looking to be a busy and wanted to give an overview of upcoming projects.

1. Northeast Connector Trail – AMATS project from Tudor/Muldoon curve to Campbell Airstrip Rd. in FBNP.
2. Ure Park Trail and Bridge – Presented at the May PRC meeting.
3. Campbell Creek Trail Bank Stabilization - Presented at the May PRC meeting.
4. Russian Jack Springs Park Trail and Bridge – Presented at the May PRC meeting.
5. William B. Lyons Park – Building a new playground. This one is out to bid and should be constructed this year.
6. Elderberry Park – Building a new playground, plaza, and improving access.
7. Scenic Park – Challenge Grant project to restripe the court to add pickleball lines.
8. Chester Creek Singletrack – Addition of wayfinding kiosks.
9. Moen Park – Adding fitness equipment.
10. Chanshtnu Muldoon Park – Opened the new community garden and the pump track will be finished this summer.
11. Dave Rose – Expanding the parking lot.
12. Folker Park – Adding music equipment and interpretive signs.
13. Nunaka Valley South – Installing play equipment that was formerly at Frontierland.

14. Fish Creek Trail – Installing art signs along the trail.
15. Pine St. Landscaping – Adding trees along Pine St. at Polar Bear Park.
16. Goose Lake and Westchester Lagoon – Removal of invasive bird cherry.
17. Frontierland – Planting about forty trees to beautify the area.
18. AMATS projects to be aware of include the connection of the Coastal Trail to Ship Creek and connecting the Northern Lights overpass connecting Fish Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, June 9, 2022, at the Spenard Recreation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Commissioner Blair, seconded by Commissioner Kastning, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2022:

Grace Johnston, Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Josh Durand, Director
Parks & Recreation

