



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



APRIL 14, 2022

The April 14, 2022 meeting was a hybrid meeting, held in person at Spenard Recreation Center but also using Microsoft Teams.

CALL TO ORDER

The April 14, 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 Bruce Graham
Commissioner Grace Johnston
Commissioner Brian Looney
Commissioner Eric Milliken (online)
Commissioner Stacey Lange (online)

A quorum was achieved with six members present.

Staff present:

Josh Durand (online)
Steve Rafuse
Tom Korosei
Tanya Hickok
Taylor Keegan
Ellen Devine

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Graham and seconded by Commissioner Looney, the Minutes of the January 13, 2022 meeting was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Josh Durand provided the following report:

1. Spring has arrived, and maintenance has begun clearing major greenbelts. Expect to see equipment out on trails in the coming weeks.
2. Projects that have been before the commission in the past will be constructed this year including the Chugach Foothills Connector Trail in Far North Bicentennial Park, a new playground at William B. Lyons, and master plan implementation at Elderberry Park.
3. We recently passed another parks bond package. Anticipate that future bond packages will focus more on our recreation centers.
4. Homeless camp abates continue with near-term efforts focused on Davis Park area in Mountain View. There has also been a lot of focus on loose trash in areas surrounding Sullivan Arena, midtown, downtown, and Spenard.
5. The MOA is allocating round two of American Rescue Plan funding and we anticipate it going towards needs including beetle kill removal and fire mitigation, broadband infrastructure for rec centers and chalets, and sewer and water infrastructure for aging assets.

APPEARANCE REQUESTS

There were no appearance request.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

There was no report from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

Steve Rafuse reports that Anchorage Parks and Rec is working with the Park Foundation to award \$200,000 in Community Challenge Grants. There were 40 applications submitted, totaling \$750,000 in requested funds. Parks and Recreation worked to review projects to see how they fit with community needs. A total of 16 projects will be awarded, and the official award announcement will be on May 13. Commissioners are welcome to attend the celebration.

ACTION ITEM

PRC 22-02: Chugach Electric Association Easement in Far North Bicentennial Park

Resolution No. 2022-02

Presented by Tom Korosei, Land Manager

Tom Korosei, Land Manager, requested a resolution from commissioners approving the Chugach Electric Association easement in Far North Bicentennial Park to accommodate the existing overhead powerline. He explained that the easement is to convert the existing license, but the actual impact to the park, park users, and the character of the park will not experience a significant visual impact. He explained that the conveyance recommendations are standard, but they added a condition to hopefully improve the visual character of the equipment over time if there is a need to replace or upgrade.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Chugach Electric Association Easement in Far North Bicentennial Park, and requests that the Commission pass proposed resolution PRC 2022-02.

Discussion

During the discussion, Commissioner Looney clarified that the easement is going to replace the license and not impact the park or park users. Commissioners also asked about whether the easement is located entirely within park property and if there was any public input or concerns. Mr. Korosei explained that the entirety of the easement is on park property, and that at this point there have been no public concerns.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Johnston and seconded by Commissioner Blair, PRC Resolution No. 2022-02 Chugach Electric Association Easement in Far North Bicentennial Park was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-02:

In favor: Commissioners Blair, Graham, Johnston, Lange, Looney, and Milliken

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners Kastning and Rinner

PRC 22-03: Fairview Park Renaming

Resolution No. 2022-03

Presented by Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect

Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect, requested a resolution from commissioners approving the Fairview Park Renaming. She explained that planning originally was initiated for Fairview Park in 2018. During the site plan process, Fairview Park was identified as a place that lacked identity and needed an iconic element. A raven climber was installed in the playground as well as a mural on the multi-use court.

The current park name is “Fairview Park,” and the proposed new name is “Fairview Delgga Park.” Delgga is an Upper Cook Inlet Athabaskan word for “raven” that is based on the sound ravens make. The name was selected to acknowledge the Dena’ina for their stewardship of the land.

Ms. Keegan continued by saying that in August of 2021 the Anchorage Assembly passed a resolution appointing a citizen naming panel that consisted of four members. There was a public meeting on Feb. 28, 2022 that allowed community members to share ideas and input. After the public meeting, they went to the Fairview Community Council in March who provided a letter of support.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Fairview Park Renaming, and requests that the Commission pass proposed resolution PRC 2022-03.

Discussion

During the discussion, Commissioner Looney clarified that the renaming meets the eight different necessary criteria and asked if there was a good indication of what the name might be when the committee was formed. Ms. Keegan informed the group that a member of the committee who is very fond of ravens helped inform this decision.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Looney and seconded by Commissioner Graham, PRC Resolution No. 2022-03 Fairview Park Renaming was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-03:

In favor: Commissioners Blair, Graham, Johnston, Lange, Looney, and Milliken
Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Absent: Commissioners Kastning and Rinner

PRC 22-04: Ure Park Site Plan and Circulation Improvements

Resolution No. 2022-04

Presented by Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect

Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect, requested a resolution from commissioners approving the Ure Park Site Plan and Circulation Improvements. She explained that this is a two-part proposal including both the site plan and the circulation improvements. Ms. Keegan gave background on the location of Ure Park. It is located in the Spenard neighborhood and can be accessed on the Fish Creek Trail. The word “access” is used loosely as you can only go a few feet before reaching the creek. She continues by saying that Ure park first belonged to Barbara Ure before being purchased by the city. The Lions Club then operated out of the former Ure residence until the structure was removed due to safety concerns in 2017.

In recent years, there has been a lot of public outreach concerning Ure Park. This includes meeting with the Spenard Community Council in December 2018 and again in September 2019, a digital survey, and a draft plan that was provided to the Community Advisory Group for comment in December 2021.

Overall, the community feedback included trail development and connection, some programming, and there is a desire to maintain the natural character of the park while working to increase safety and visibility. The plan includes constructing a connection to Fish Creek Trail, managing vegetation, and providing standard amenities. There is also a desire to someday create a community garden.

The public indicated they wanted the park to use natural materials and have a discreet bridge. The proposed trail will be soft surface and includes a 51 ft bridge that would span over the stream and floodplain; connecting the park with the Fish Creek Trail. The proposed bridge will use corded or weathered steel and allow for vegetation to grow underneath.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Ure Park Site Plan and Circulation Improvements, and requests that the Commission pass proposed resolution PRC 2022-04.

Discussion

During the discussion, Commissioner Graham asked about the bridge surface and whether vehicles would be able to cross. Ms. Keegan informed them that the bridge

surfacing is ecological a good choice because it allows plants to grow underneath and will help support habitat and prevent erosion. She also let commissioners know that the bridge will support small vehicles such as groomers and ATVs and would not be ideal for large dump trucks. Commissioner Graham also asked if the bridge would require concrete footers. Commissioner Looney said that it is more like a retaining wall on both sides and gave some insight from his work in other parks.

Commissioner Blair asked if there is any concern about camping. Ms. Keegan let them know that luckily the park has some excellent stewards who help watch over and maintain this park and that at this time there has been no camping concerns.

Commissioner Looney asked about public concern or input. Ms. Keegan let them know that there has been no resistance to the proposed connector. Since the process took a long time and we worked closely with community councils to build a lot of trust.

Commissioner Graham and Blair both asked about park boundaries, fencing, and trail design. Ms. Keegan let them know that it does have existing fencing and likely belongs to private property owners, and that the proposed connector trail would meet design criteria.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Graham and seconded by Commissioner Blair, PRC Resolution No. 2022-04 Ure Park Site Plan and Circulation Improvements was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-04:

In favor: Commissioners Blair, Graham, Johnston, Lange, Looney, and Milliken

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners Kastning and Rinner

PRC 22-05: Russian Jack Springs Park Trail and Bridge Upgrade

Resolution No. 2022-05

Presented by Tanya Hickok, Senior Park Planner

Tanya Hickok, Senior Park Planner, requested a resolution from commissioners approving Russian Jack Springs Park Trail and Bridge Upgrade. She explained that the area they are focusing on is 2100 lineal feet and a bridge that requires upgrades in Russian Jack Springs Park. The trail and bridge improvements are part of the Russian Jack Master Plan that went before the PRC and was approved in January, 2022.

The proposed improvements have been presented to the Russian Jack Community Council and the Northeast Community Council in March, 2022, as well as the Northeast

Community Council's Parks and Trails Committee. In addition to public involvement, we've also done permitting with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The trail and bridge have quite a bit of damage from roots of cottonwood trees because of the closeness of the trail to the forest. The current bridge is narrow and shallow to the water and does not meet FEMA requirements. The proposed bridge will be a 65-foot steel fabricated bridge that can support a loaded dump truck.

The proposed bridge and trail improvements is estimated to cost \$720,000 including engineering fees, surveys, and contingency. Ms. Hickok noted that there was some community feedback and is happy to address any concerns at this time.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of Russian Jack Springs Park Trail and Bridge Upgrade, and requests that the Commission pass proposed resolution PRC 2022-05.

Discussion

During the discussion, commissioners discussed community feedback that was submitted by Mr. Grober. Commissioners agreed that it sounded like the concern was mostly around feeling like his input was not being taken into consideration, and that there had not been adequate communication with the public. Ms. Hickok let commissioners know that she met with both the Russian Jack Community Council and the Northeast Community Council as well as the Northeast Community Council Parks and Trails Committee. She also let them know that she took several suggestions into consideration and is adding them into the final design.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Looney and seconded by Commissioner Milliken, PRC Resolution No. 2022-05 Russian Jack Springs Park Trail and Bridge Upgrade was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-05:

In favor: Commissioners Graham, Johnston, Lange, Looney, and Milliken

Opposed: Commissioner Blair

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners Kastning and Rinner

PRC 22-06: Campbell Creek Trail Streambank Restoration Project

Resolution No. 2022-06

Presented by Tanya Hickok, Senior Park Planner

Tanya Hickok, Senior Park Planner, requested a resolution from commissioners approving Campbell Creek Trail Streambank Restoration Project. She explained that the streambank restoration will be a root wad project. She explains that the Campbell Creek Trail has been a long-standing park bond since 2016 and has accumulated four million in bond funding. The proposed root wad project is estimated at \$150,000 and is a 70-foot length bank stabilization effort.

Parks and Recreation met with the Taku Campbell Community Council in March as well as reached out to partners at Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The root wads that will be used are spruce roots with a six-foot span to create a bio-engineered solution for bank restoration. With that said, to complete the work there is need for a temporary construction easement with neighboring Lithia Hyundai. Construction will likely be completed by our term contractor and Youth Employment in Parks.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of Campbell Creek Trail Streambank Restoration Project, and requests that the Commission pass proposed resolution PRC 2022-06.

Discussion

During the discussion, commissioners discussed the total budget as well as if the Anchorage Waterways Council was involved in discussions. Ms. Hickok let folks know that since the Waterways Council is mostly an advocacy group they were not involved.

Resolution

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Looney and seconded by Commissioner Milliken, PRC Resolution No. 2022-06 Campbell Creek Trail Streambank Restoration Project was approved.

Voting record for PRC Resolution 2022-06:

In favor: Commissioners Blair, Graham, Johnston, Lange, Looney, and Milliken

Opposed:

Abstained: None

Absent: Commissioners Kastning and Rinner

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items presented.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, May 12, 2022 at the Spenard Recreation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Blair, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2022:

Grace Johnston, Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Josh Durand, Director
Parks & Recreation

