



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**



September 10, 2020

I. Roll Call

At 6:00 p.m., roll call was taken by Acting Chair Erin Kirkland. At that time only four commissioners were present and thus there was not a quorum.

Commissioners present:

Commissioner Jon Dyson
Commissioner Andrew Kastning
Commissioner Erin Kirkland
Commissioner Alison Smith

Commissioner, late arrival:

Commissioner Grace Johnston

Commissioners absent:

Commissioner Andrew Kastning
Commissioner Eric Milliken

Staff present:

Josh Durand
Steve Rafuse
Tom Korosei
Taylor Keegan
Diana Cramer

As of 6:15 p.m., there still was no quorum. No Action Items were on the proposed Agenda, so Commissioners in attendance agreed to proceed informally and hear the Information Item to be presented.

II. Information Item

PRC 20-17: West Anchorage Snow Disposal Site Selection

Presented by Tom Korosei, Park Planner; Julie Makela, PM&E; Melina Tsu, PM&E, and Bill Spencer, Project Engineer

The Municipal Project Management and Engineer (PM&E) Department has issued a Draft Site Selection Study to find a site for a new snow storage facility in West Anchorage. The new site will replace the current Northwood site, which is located on State of Alaska property, managed by the Ted Stevens International Airport, and leased annually by the Municipality. The Northwood site is no longer available for long-term use. The Draft Study recommends a new site in the eastern portion of Connors Lake Park, adjacent to Javier de la Vega Park. The preferred site is on municipal property that is a predominantly undeveloped natural, open space. There are no current plans for development of this area and it is not dedicated park land. Presenters provided Commissioners with a copy of the draft study and discussed the site selection process – the criteria used, other sites that were considered, public outreach, and the evaluation that resulted in the preferred alternative at Connors Lake Park. Proposed possible measures to offset the effect on park land and park users that include pavement and lighting for the parking area, enhanced vegetative screening and other amenities, were also discussed.

If this project is approved by the Assembly and other agencies, the Parks and Recreation Department will work with PM&E to identify and implement suitable mitigation measures. Because there is a demonstrated need for adequate snow disposal in West Anchorage, Parks and Recreation supports the use of the proposed area in Connors Lake Park, provided the project addresses environmental impacts and provides mitigation for the benefit of park users.

Director Durand stated that this project will come back to the Commission if there are additional changes to be made to the Connors Lake Park facility and Commissioners will be advised as the process continues and informed of any public comment opportunities.

III. Call to Order

Commissioner Johnston arrived at 6:35 p.m. As her presence constituted a quorum, at conclusion of the Information Item presentation at 6:51 p.m. Acting Chair Kirkland officially called the meeting to order.

IV. Approval of Agenda

Upon motion made by Commissioner Johnston and seconded by Commissioner Dyson, the Agenda was unanimously approved.

V. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dyson and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Minutes of the August 13, 2020 Meeting were unanimously approved.

VI. Director's Comments

Commissioner Smith had two questions for Director Durand.

(1) She asked if there is a map showing the connection of the Fish Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail and, if so, could that be provided to Commissioners. Director Durand replied that there is a map and it will be provided.

(2) She also asked about the status of the new leash law. Director Durand said that the leash law will come before the Assembly but is not yet on the official agenda. The Assembly is aware that this topic will elicit a lot of public comment.

Director Durand then provided his report on Parks and Recreation activities:

Parks and trails are still being heavily used by the community.

Construction update:

- Hamilton Park's new playground is complete and we are awaiting final inspection.
- Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Phase 2 continues. Parking lot concrete, water access and fencing have been completed. Next year the focus will be on volunteer activities – the community gardens and food forest. Steve Rafuse added this month 39 trees will be planted in the food forest.
- Frontierland Park playground and circulation improvements are underway.
- Jewel Lake Park will be receiving the ship for its new playground in the near future.
- Chester Creeks Sports Complex has an active challenge grant at the Bonnie Cusack hockey rinks – new fencing, landscaping, sound system and other improvements. At Anchorage Football Stadium there are LED lighting upgrades, landscaping, ADA improvements, and safety improvements.
- Fairview indoor playground: all of the equipment has been received and staff have been working with a couple of consultants, specifically architects, to come up with new ADA access for the new inclusive facility as well as new ADA bathrooms. The design is complete and we are waiting for the final cost figures.

Bond package: Next month the proposed bond package will be presented to Commissioners for their feedback.

Restroom facilities: Parks and Recreation is looking into providing more restroom facilities in our parks and on our trails, and is interested in permanent, safe, well lit, vandal

proof, and easily maintained facilities. It is anticipated that there will be two pilot projects next year.

Camp abatement: Things are progressing as they did last year, however, things got different recently. As shelters have been at capacity, people displaced by the abatement program have nowhere to go thus abatement has been temporarily halted. The abatement crew still collects trash from these locations but also have been assisting other park maintenance crews with vegetation management and clean-up after spruce bark beetle removal on greenbelts and trail corridors.

VII. Appearance Requests

There were no appearance requests for non-agenda items.

VIII. Anchorage Park Foundation

There was no report from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

IX. Commissioner Comments

There were no additional comments from Commissioners.

X. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on October 8, 2020.

XI. Adjournment

Upon motion made by Commissioner Dyson, seconded by Commissioner Smith, and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2020:

Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Director
Parks & Recreation