



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING**

September 14, 2023

The September 14 meeting was held in person at Spenard Community Recreation Center.

CALL TO ORDER

The September 14, 2023, regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Brian Looney at **6:02 p.m.**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present:

- Commissioner Edwin Blair
- Commissioner Stacey Lange (online)
- Commissioner Brian Looney
- Commissioner Mary Vollendorf
- Commissioner Scott Wamsganz

A quorum was achieved with **five** members present.

Staff present:

- Steve Rafuse
- Mike Braniff
- Tom Korosei
- Nicolette Dent
- Ellen Devine

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion duly made by **Commissioner Vollendorf** and seconded by **Commissioner Blair**, the Agenda for the September 14, 2023, meeting was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by **Commissioner Vollendorf** and seconded by **Commissioner Wamsganz**, the Minutes of the July 13, 2023, meeting was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Mike Braniff--Parks and Recreation Director

1. **Staffing:** Staffing continues to be a struggle. This meant that we were reprioritizing what we had our limited resources focus on. No matter what, we are proud of the crew and what they have accomplished.
2. **Construction Update** (Presented by Steve Rafuse): We have about one more month of construction happening. Lots of projects in motion and many are on the brink of completion.
 - a. **Northeast Connector Trail:** Worked on this for about five years and is a huge success for our community.
 - b. **Russian Jack Springs Park Trail:** Just finished repaving a section of the trail that was quite rooted. We are adding a bridge that will go in next summer.
 - c. **Chanshtnu:** A new bridge went in that connects Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this park project, and a second bridge should be completed by the end of the summer.
 - d. **Tour of Anchorage Trail:** Put in three new bridges on the Tour Trail, and it will reopen in the next week. The original bridges were originally subject to erosion and flooding.
 - e. **Gas Line Trail:** Still a way out but will add a new bridge on this trail
 - f. **Elderberry Park:** Just finishing the landscaping of the park, and plan on celebrating the opening in the Summer of 2024
 - g. **Taku Lake Skate Park:** This is the biggest skate park in the city, and we are further along than anticipated.
 - h. **FIG Garden:** The McPhee community garden
 - i. **Singletrack projects:** The first third of the Service/Hillside singletrack is finished and will be finished in entirety next summer. Now the Russian Jack Spring Park singletrack is in motion.
 - j. **Windstorm:** Tree crew and contractors are working on removing hazard trees.
 - k. **Tuesday Night Races:** Races started last week, and it is a great way to get out in the community.

DISCUSSION

Fish Creek Trail: Can you tell us how planning went ahead without consideration of certain property owners? – Let's start with what we have done

so far. It was brought to the commission as an information item that was explaining the route options. There was also a large public meeting concerning the routes. Also, our team has met with the McCarrey's several time. Main route option considerations include overall cost, input of the community, and keeping the route out of the estuary. The railroad has been working with us to stay within their right-of-way and not using any other property. However, one property owner has recently made the news because he put in a request to lease a parcel from the railroad that would impact the connection to the Coastal Trail. While we are still determining the route, one route has the most pros—minimal impacts to the environment and refraining from putting it into the backyards of property owners. This route would not go through any private property and would remain in the railroad right-of-way.

NON-AGENDA APPEARANCE REQUESTS

There were no non-agenda appearance requests.

ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

There was no representative from the Anchorage Park Foundation.

ACTION ITEM

PRC 23-15: Lyn Ary Park Naming of Facilities PRC Resolution 2023-10 Presented by Tom Korosei

Tom Korosei, Anchorage Parks and Recreation land manager presented the request to rename four facilities at Lyn Ary Park. The naming request came from the Turnagain Community Council to name two baseball fields, one after Bob Durst and one after John Opinsky, a garden after Michelle Byrum, and the tennis courts for the Hendrickson family, as provided by the code and it did go through a public naming panel. The naming panel held a public hearing/testimony to hear naming options. This was to create a forum where folks could appropriately recommend names.

As a result of the naming panel reviewing naming criteria under code, unanimously recommends all four name changes. The Parks Department believes that the Hendrickson's donation and contribution to the courts does not meet the criteria for naming and instead recommends that a plaque acknowledging their contribution be placed at the courts instead.

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Blair**, seconded by **Commissioner Lange** and unanimously approved, the resolution was passed.

PRC 23-16: Williwaw Park Community Garden
PRC Resolution 2023-11
Presented by Nicolette Dent

Nicolette Dent, Anchorage Parks and Recreation Park planner, presented on the Williwaw Park Community Garden. Our department currently manages five community gardens. These gardens are located in more densely populated areas and provide a space to grow food and flowers regardless of access to a yard. This came about because the Russian Jack Community Council applied for and received a \$150K legislative grant that will fund the new garden. A site selection survey showed that Williwaw Park would be an appropriate location based on parking and community. The east section of the park could fit the garden wonderfully and be tucked between the playground and the basketball courts. The goal is to create 30-40 new plots that are easily maintained and provides a good experience for gardeners. Water would be provided by well which is similar to other parts of this area. Another option that we would like to bring is accessible garden beds that could meet different mobility needs.

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Vollendorf**, seconded by **Commissioner Wamsganz** and unanimously approved, the resolution was passed.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no commissioner comments.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, October 12, 2023, at the Spenard Community Recreation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Vollendorf**, seconded by **Commissioner Wamsganz** and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at **7:15 p.m.**

MINUTES APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2023:

Brian Looney, Chair
Parks & Recreation Commission

Mike Braniff, Director
Parks & Recreation