



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING

August 8, 2024

The August 8, 2024 meeting was held in person at the Spenard Community Recreation Center.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The August 8, 2024, regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Brian Looney at **6:04 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present:

- Commissioner Edwin Blair
- Commissioner Brian Looney
- Commissioner Andrew Kastning
- Commissioner Mary Vollendorf (Online)
- Commissioner Scott Wamsganz (Online)

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

Staff present:

- Mike Braniff
- Taylor Keegan
- Nicolette Dent
- Melanie Hess
- Ellen Devine (Online)

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Upon motion duly made by **Commissioner Kastning** and seconded by **Commissioner Blair**, the Agenda for the August 8, 2024, meeting was unanimously approved.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made by **Commissioner Blair** and seconded by **Commissioner Kastning** the Minutes of the May 19, 2024, meeting was unanimously approved.

## DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director's Comments section was provided by Taylor Keegan, Parks Superintendent

1. **Russian Jack Springs Park:** New bridge and additional trail improvements
2. **Fairview Recreation Center Bids open:** Bids opened last week
3. **Wayfinding Signs:** New wayfinding signs have been going in. There are some errors, please contact us with any
4. **Youth Employment in Parks wrap-up completed last week:** The celebration is taking place with Anchorage Parks Foundation next week to celebrate the recipients.
5. **Back to School Fair:** Coming up tomorrow and is a great event to get school materials out to students in need.
6. **Tuesday Night Race:** Starting back up in September
7. **Safety:** Safety Coordinator been on-board and is doing bi-weekly blood borne pathogen trainings for staff.
8. **Significant flooding:** Many tunnels are not passable currently and some erosion has been occurring.
9. **New Administration:** The new administration has been responsive and involved. No new major direction for Anchorage Parks and Recreation at this time.

## ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

Diana Rhoades, Program director of the Anchorage Park Foundation

- Beth Nordland served on the LaFrance transition team. Our L71 union maintenance workers contract needs to be renewed and we need a more livable wage. This change needs to come from the mayor's office.
- Trails Survey: 92% of those surveyed use the trails, 83% believe that parks and trails contribute to their happiness and well-being, and 82% believe that we need to address gaps in our trail system.
- Where to wander Wednesdays: We are highlighting new locations to wander as well as locations that folks might not already know about.
- YEP Program: This is a partnership between APF and Anchorage Parks and Recreation, and there is a desire to expand this to younger age groups that would provide job training and volunteer opportunities.

## NON-AGENDA APPEARANCE REQUESTS

Kathleen Grace – Pickleball Downtown

- Pickleball is increasing in popularity.
- We are seeking permission to take four tennis courts along the Delaney Park strip and stripe them for pickleball similarity to Scenic Park.
- When this was brought up to Parks and Recreation, we were informed that the number of courts in Anchorage is higher than in other cities in similar size to Anchorage.

Commissioner Comments:

- When you say line, do you mean painting? Yes. We would need to paint lines on the court.
- This is an administrative decision, and there would have to be proper public process. You would want to speak to the Downtown Community Council and get buy in from local individuals.

## ACTION ITEMS

**PRC 24-06: PRC 24-06 Peratrovich Park Upgrades**  
**PRC Resolution 2024-06**  
Presented by Nicolette Dent

Nicolette Dent, Anchorage Parks and Recreation Park Planner, presented proposed park improvements for Peratrovich Park in downtown Anchorage. The park includes Historic City Hall, the visitor log cabin, a grassy area, and an amphitheater. It is named after Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich who helped pass the Anti-discrimination Act of 1945. This park currently isn't well suited for year-round use.

Proposed improvements include a wider pathway, plaza space for vendors in the park, upgrading electrical infrastructure and pedestrian lighting. A voter-approved bond included funds for this project. We have been working with a community advisory group and have a 65% site plan. Construction would start in 2026.

### Commissioner Questions/Comments

Is this a Parks and Recreation Building? What is the condition of the building?

It is a Muni building, and there is a desire for it to be activated. There has been discussion about creating a downtown library in the space and the proposed design for updates to the park would facilitate a wide variety of use for the building.

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

**PRC 24-07: PRC 24-07 Name Addition to Anchorage Veterans Memorial  
PRC Resolution 2024-07**

Presented by Melanie Hess and Tim Benintendi

Melanie Hess, Anchorage Parks and Recreation Park Planner, introduced the proposed addition of a name to the Anchorage Veteran’s Memorial on the Delaney Park Strip. We are looking to add our first WWI veteran, John K. “Jack” Henry, to the panels at this memorial.

There are two criteria for Veterans to be named on the memorial.

- They need to be an Alaska resident, and member of a US military unit
- Identified by the US Defense Department as Killed in Action in a combat zone

John K. “Jack” Henry was registered August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1917 in Anchorage, Alaska, there is unanimous support from the Military and Veterans Affairs Commission to add his name to the memorial.

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

**PRC 24-08: PRC 24-08 Renaming Sand Lake Park to Chitose Park  
PRC Resolution 2024-08**

Presented by Stella Falsey, Japanese Immersion Program

Stella Falsey, sixth grader in the Japanese Immersion Program at Sand Lake Elementary, made a presentation to advocate for the renaming of Sand Lake Park to Chitose Park as a symbol of friendship to our sister-city in Japan. Chitose City located in Hokaido has been Anchorage’s sister-city for 55 years, and has a park named Anchorage Park in it. We are proposing Sand Lake Park be renamed because it is located directly behind Sand Lake Elementary which is a Japanese-immersion school in Anchorage.

Testimony and support was offered by several other students.

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Kastning**, seconded by **Commissioner Graham** and unanimously approved by commissioners the resolution was passed.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no information items.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**UPCOMING MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, September 2024, at the Spenard Community Recreation Center.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion made by **Commissioner Vollendorf** seconded by **Commissioner Looney** and unanimously approved, the meeting adjourned at **7:12 p.m.**

MINUTES APPROVED this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Looney, Chair  
Parks & Recreation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Braniff, Director  
Parks & Recreation

