



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021 – 5:30 PM  
Zoom Webinar

**I. Call to Order at 5:30 p.m. – C. Mertl, Chair**

**Present:** Josh Anderson, Alex Beebe-Giudice, Edric Carrillo, Ron Crenshaw, Kirk Duncan, Chris Mertl, Will Muldoon

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** George Schaaf, Director; Michele Elfers, Deputy Director; Lauren Verrelli, Staff Liaison

**II. Agenda Changes – None**

**III. Approval of Meeting Minutes –**

- A.** From December 1, 2020 – J. Anderson moves to approve minutes; no objection.

***Minutes adopted.***

- B.** From January 5, 2021 – J. Anderson moves to approve minutes; no objection. ***Minutes adopted.***

- C.** From February 2, 2021 – J. Anderson moves to approve minutes; no objection. ***Minutes adopted.***

**IV. Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items – None**

**V. New Business –**

**A. 2020 Annual Report**

C. Mertl: Included in your packet is our 2020 Annual Report

*No changes; 2020 Annual Report forwarded to HRC.*

**B. Fish Creek Park Habitat Improvements**

John Hudson: I am a restoration biologist with the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC). We cultivate partnership to help communities steward their watersheds through participator projects, research and learning. Here to discuss a collaboration on habitat and recreational improvements at Fish Creek Park located in North Douglas. Over the years, historic dredging has affected the estuary with consequences for fish, wildlife and recreation opportunities. Current existing conditions for the northeast pond include low habitat complexity due to steep shoreline and very little vegetate littoral zone. Most importantly, there is an eroding dike issues so we do not expect the northeast pond to be around very long. Existing conditions in Fish Creek, is constrained and held in place by the dikes. It is a decent habitat for fish but could be a lot better. The southeast pond was breached in the 80s after a storm and is now connected to the ocean and floods on a daily basis. DIPAC uses it as a king salmon terminal fishery though the pond is poor in habitat value. These impacts offer many opportunities to not only restore fish and wildlife habitat but to do so in a way to improve recreational values and opportunities in the park. We can create accessible and productive coho rearing habitat, restore estuary habitat, preserve existing toad breeding and rearing habitat, enhance

instream habitat and enhance existing and create new recreation opportunities/infrastructure. So the next steps are engaging the public and getting their thoughts/ideas and gather funding.

E. Carrillo: What is the timeline and how do you plan to secure funding?

John Hudson: We have received generous funding from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and will get additional funds soon, including other grant opportunities. For the timing, planning to be completed this year and taking the next step next year.

J. Anderson: What is going to happen with the pond where everyone fishes?

John Hudson: We do not have intentions in modifying the SE pond where the terminal fishery is located.

J. Anderson: I move the PRAC recommend that the Department cooperate on a master planning process and future design development planning with the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition to improve fish and wildlife habitat at Fish Creek Park.

***Motion passes unanimously.***

**C. Glacier Valley Rotary Club Proposal for Riverside Rotary Park**

M. Elfers: Glacier Valley Rotary Club has proposed constructing a new picnic shelter at Riverside Rotary Park, relocating the existing shelter and improving the 9/11 memorial. They are proposing relocating the existing shelter to the other side of the playground and then purchasing and installing a new Icy Strait shelter that is 20 by 40 feet. They also would like to build the wall around the 9/11 memorial. The estimated project budget is \$90K and they are requesting the city support this project with \$35K. Staff supports the request for funding and which will come from our Parks & Playground CIP.

E. Carrillo: I would like to volunteer with the build.

R. Crenshaw: I move the PRAC recommends that the department partner with the Glacier Valley Rotary Club to improve the park shelters and 9/11 memorial and fund \$35,000 of the required work.

***Motion passes unanimously.***

Traci Gilmour (River Ct. Way): Will there be increased parking? This is a beautiful thing you'll be adding.

M. Elfers: The master plan does call for parking but parking will not be part of this phase. We do have funding in our 6-Year CIP for it down the line.

**VI. Unfinished Business – None**

**VII. Information Items –**

**A. ORV Working Group Update**

M. Elfers: I want to give an update on the Off-Road Vehicle Working Group, which the staff has been working on with user groups. There is a lack of riding areas for ORVs in Juneau and for the last 20 years, there have been various efforts to identify and evaluate lands for riding. Most recently, there have been conflicts at Montana Creek area between motorized and non-motorized users. With the groups, we created the goal to identify ORV riding sites, create sustainable management structure, support safe riding and build durable infrastructure that protects the natural and built features of the facilities. The working group is not performing comprehensive evaluations of many sites since this has been done before. The user groups involved are Juneau Douglas

Motocross Association, Southeast Jeep Club and Juneau Off-Road Association and the land agencies include CBJ and Goldbelt. The user groups are educating the working group and community on needs, outreaching to members and the riding community and leading the effort on site investigation and planning. The land agencies are facilitating partnerships, discussions and guiding the process. Some of the sites that have been discussed are the 35-mile parcel for trail riding (CBJ land but not parkland), Montana Creek area for trail riding (SOA land), S&S Pond Lemon Creek (private land), the sand and gravel pit behind Home Depot (CBJ land but not parkland) and other privately owned lands. There are different types of facilities user groups are interested including backcountry trail riding, riding park with track and features for motocross and a riding park for 4-wheeler use with features and play area.

Ursula Jones (Goldbelt): I am the land manager for Goldbelt Inc. We own over 1000 acres out at Echo Cove that extends to Cascade Point. In recent years, there has been many interactions with ORV and we want to be part of this process to help relocate these folks so they have a good place to ride. AF&G will be adding two tributaries for fish at Davies Creek, which is used as an ATV crossing and will need to stop.

R. Crenshaw: Is Goldbelt willing or able to contribute money to this riding area?

Ursula Jones: We do not have a grant program but I can see if we could get some kind of funding from our board.

J. Anderson: What are the next steps for the ORV working group?

M. Elfers: We will continue to meet and talk about the considerations mentioned. Parks & Recs role is to facilitate the desire of the user groups.

#### **B. Montana Creek Recreation Area Master Plan**

M. Elfers: We are looking at working on a master plan for recreation in the Montana Creek Area. We do not have adequate infrastructure in the Montana Creek area to support all the uses that we have out there. The land ownership and management is complicated; City land is a gateway from Montana Creek Road into State and Federal land. We need a master plan to look at management and infrastructure of the area. We have been talking to Trail Mix, Forest Service and will be talking to the state to get the landowners involved. There has been a lot of enthusiasm. The process would look like community engagement throughout the summer into fall to understand existing usage and then move into conceptual design planning. Talking to the Forest Service, they do not think funding would be a problem for a lot of these improvements.

R. Crenshaw: Will Parks & Rec take the lead on the planning process?

M. Elfers: It is not decided yet; but we are thinking that Trail Mix would be great.

R. Crenshaw: It seems to me that an agency should take the lead. It concerns me that Trail Mix does not have the staff.

Fred Hiltner (N. Douglas): As a board member, JNSC had introduced a good steward agreement but talks have broken down. Safety standards for all users have not been reached. Recently, the Hank Harmon parking lot suddenly cannot be used for parking which is an issue in the area. I would like to propose to share that parking space.

M. Elfers: We are currently in talks with the JNSC and Hank Harmon Public Range.

#### **C. Operations Update**

G. Schaaf: *Can be found in the [director's report](#).*

## VIII. Committee, Liaison, and Board Member Reports

- A. **Chair Report**— Thank you to Tom Rutecki and Emily Palmer for their service on the board.
- B. **Liaison to the Assembly Report**— Bond packages have been passed and will be sold locally. There will be a boards training March 18 & 20.

### C. Liaison Reports—

Aquatics – W. Muldoon: Pools are going really well; starting to work on commercial activities again.

YAB – J. Anderson: Public attend meeting to learn about changes to YAB grant application.

Eaglecrest – VACANT

Jensen-Olson Arboretum— E. Carrillo: Welcomed Ginger Hudson, new arboretum manager; improvements to manager residence and continued discussion on commercial use.

Lands – C. Mertl: None.

Park Foundation— C. Mertl: Discussed ways JPF can be involved in Capital School Park redesign; working on challenge grants with neighborhoods.

Treadwell Arena Board – K. Duncan: None.

Trail Mix— R. Crenshaw: Currently hiring for summer season, over 75 applicants so far; season starts May 3 through end of August.

1% for Art— J. Anderson: None.

### Other Member Business –

W. Muldoon: Thanks to Michele for taking care of the lighting issue at Lemon Creek.

**Adjournment – 7:07 p.m. *Having no other business before the board.***

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Verrelli, Recreation & Public Services Manager, 3/8/2021