



MEETING MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2021 – 5:30 PM
Zoom Webinar

I. Call to Order at 5:32 p.m. – C. Mertl, Chair

Present: Alex Beebe-Giudice, Edric Carrillo, Ron Crenshaw, Kirk Duncan, Emily Haynes, Chris Mertl, Will Muldoon

Absent: Josh Anderson, Makayla Chappell

Staff Present: George Schaaf, Director; Michele Elfers, Deputy Director; Lauren Verrelli, Recreation & Public Services Manager; Dan Bleidorn, Lands Manager; Kristi West, EVC Manager

II. Agenda Changes – None

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes –

- A.** From May 4, 2021 – W. Muldoon moves to approve minutes; no objection. ***Minutes adopted.***

IV. Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items – None

V. New Business –

A. Chair & Liaison Elections

W. Muldoon moves to elect Chris Mertl as Chair of the PRAC. *Passes unanimously.*

C. Mertl moves to elect Will Muldoon as Co-Chair of the PRAC. *Passes unanimously.*

C. Mertl moves to elect Josh Anderson as 2nd Chair of the PRAC. *Passes unanimously.*

Liaisons: A. Beebe-Giudice, Eaglecrest; W. Muldoon, Aquatics; J. Anderson, YAB; E. Carrillo, JOAAB; C. Mertl, Lands & Park Foundation; K. Duncan, TAAB; R. Crenshaw, Trail Mix

B. Cope Park Easement Application

M. Elfers: In the fall of 2019, there was a landslide that initiated on private property and ended up in Cope Park near the sledding hill. The property owner has been working with our Risk Dept. on how to move forward with stabilizing that slope. There is an easement request the property owner worked on with staff that would allow them to do stabilization work on their property and some CBJ property as needed. Parks & Recreation created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the work, which has been reviewed by Law and the property owner. This MOU includes site access during construction, consideration for public safety and specific conditions of the park once work is complete. Staff sees the benefit to the public and the department because it will stabilize the slope and prevent future slides into the park.

W. Muldoon: Would CBJ and the property owner split the cost for this work?

M. Elfers: No, the cost is the responsibility of the property.

E. Hayes: It sounds like Parks & Rec is intending to do subsequent authorizations, are you going to be issuing future MOU's? I would recommend adding something about future coordination with CBJ regarding work into the existing MOU.

M. Elfers: This easement allows for additional work later. The MOU was specifically

written for work that is going to happen this summer if approved. If in two years the owners comes back and needs maintenance work, we would work with them.

Helen Clough (Property Owner): We appreciate your approval. The slope is at great risk right now, if we do not move forward with this project. Thank you for your time.

E. Hayes: I move the PRAC recommend that the Assembly approve the request by Helen & Albert Clough to acquire an easement within Cope Park.

Motion passes unanimously.

C. Auke Bay Beach Access Easement Application

G. Schaaf: Peak Construction has submitted an application for a permanent easement to construct a driveway on a Beach Access parcel in Auke Bay. We did receive some additional information from the applicant today a couple minutes before close of business. This was emailed out to you all. The information we received from the applicant today states a new purpose and need for the project, which is different from what their original application contained. From staffs perspective, this doesn't change our recommendation that this is not in the best interest for the public and is not consistent with the Parks & Rec Master Plan.

W. Muldoon: I am concerned about the public beach access piece of this request.

M. Schaaf: The information we received from the applicant did not really address public access to the shoreline, which is the chief concern of ours. This parcel was dedicated by the Assembly 30 years ago to maintain public access to the shoreline. The impact of granting a permanent easement that covers the entire road frontage of this parcel is not explored in their proposal. As our community develops in the future, these type of beach access points for the public will be more important and we will be seeing these access points developed more fully in the future.

R. Crenshaw: I wouldn't mind this request being delayed until the property owners can show that the public parking and access would not be diminished from what it is now.

A. Beebe-Giudice: Mr. Schaaf you mentioned that in the future this area might be improved to enhance the existing informal access that this parcel provides to the beach. Could you give more details on improvements, what that would look like and when would these happen?

G. Schaaf: The Department does not have a definitive timeline on when improvements to this particular parcel would happen. I do know that this is not currently in our Capital Improvement Plan, which has a five-year horizon.

A. Beebe-Giudice: At what point does public comment come into play here since this would drastically change the area.

G. Schaaf: This is an opportunity for public comment here at the PRAC. This easement proposal will go to the Lands Committee and then to the Assembly. The Department could go out to seek public comment as well.

W. Muldoon: Can there be an explanation about a land disposal versus a permanent easement? A driveway seems like a permanent fixture in my mind.

Dan Bleidorn: Easements are covered under the disposal code. The difference between a sale and an easement would be a full on sale would go to the Assembly by ordinance and an easement would be passed through by a resolution at the Assembly level.

C. Mertl: Maintaining beach access is a high priority and we should avoid disposal because they are a high value to the community. I do not support this because we are

taking away a public parking area that provides access. Is there a way to work with the applicant to create some sort of parking pad on the waterside of the driveway and a set of stairs that actually gives public access to the water?

Dan Bleidorn: The board could put in conditions on this easement stating that they would be in favor with certain conditions such as providing parking and making access more accessible.

Jim Parise (Applicant): Thank you for letting me speak. I wanted to clarify that the parking pad in the pictures provided is actually private property and the CBJ land is currently blocked by a retaining wall. There really is not any access except steep dangerous terrain. In addition, within 300 yards in either direction there is other public access or parking. This is our dream home because we are moving onto the water and the reason we picked this spot is the revitalization plan for Auke Bay. Our improvements would create beach access for this area since there currently really is not any access.

W. Muldoon: Do you think it is feasible or unfeasible to look more towards leasing versus an easement?

Jim Parise: An easement is better because then we do not have to worry every five years whether or not we're going to get our lease renewed.

E. Hayes: You had noted this easement, if constructed, would actually provide more access to the waterfront property but that is not clear in your drawings.

Jim Parise: What we would be doing is improving the land to get to my land so that anybody can walk across it. Would not be enough room to have public parking though.

A. Beebe-Giudice: Can we get clarification on the existing garage? The easement request is for a driveway, is this the only solution for the parking problem on your property is this easement? What about demoing the current garage and creating something that works for you there not on parkland?

Jim Parise: This is what we have come up with so far since our desire is to drive up to the house and not have to access it by stairs, especially as we age.

C. Mertl: I would like to see if the Department can find common ground and see if this is something the Department wants to pursue.

G. Schaaf: Staff had very little time to work on this and have already absorbed a significant amount of staff time reviewing the limited information we had.

K. Duncan: We should not rush into anything. The applicant needs to address all the concerns they heard tonight, present it to staff, refine the proposal, and then bring it back to PRAC.

R. Crenshaw: I support what Mr. Duncan suggested. We take no action on this tonight and refer to the applicant and staff to bring back a more definitive proposal.

D. Memorial Bench Policy

M. Elfers: This policy has been more-or-less in effect for many, many years since we get a lot of request for memorial benches. We see this policy as having a public benefit for people who would like to learn how to recognize and remember a person, which also provides a very nice public value in areas where we might not have resources to install a bench. The individual is required to pay all the costs of purchasing, shipping and installing the bench.

W. Muldoon: I move the PRAC recommend that the Department adopt Policy No. 700-

001 Memorial Benches.

Motion passes unanimously.

E. Juneau Capitol Fund Grant

M. Elfers: The Department has been working towards a Capital School Park reconstruction project for many years. Work includes major repairs to the retaining wall, old play equipment, drainage issues, accessibility issues and more. We have been building funding through sales tax and temporary sales tax and most recently, voters passed bond funding last fall. The park is situated within the capital complex where the Juneau Park Foundation (JPF) recognized that Capital School Park is an important facility within the capitol and serves legislative staff. The JPF approached the Juneau Community Foundation (JCF) about their Juneau Capitol Fund to request a consideration of funding towards the park and some improvements including lighting, turf area, etc. that would not have been able to afford under the sales tax and bond funding. The Juneau Capitol Fund committee has approved up to \$550,000 donation, which is based on engineer's estimates for the project. The next step is for the PRAC to recommend the appropriation of these funds.

W. Muldoon: I'm wondering why we're prioritizing safety lighting for this park when we didn't prioritize it in other parks?

M. Elfers: This additional funding is available for Capital School Park since it is linked to the Capitol Fund. Originally, we had not prioritized lighting with the funding we had but with this opportunity for additional funding through the grant we can get lighting which will help with any bad/criminal behavior in the area.

R. Crenshaw: I would like to endorse this plan it is fabulous. Do you have any plans for the cottonwood tree?

M. Elfers: Yes, we know this is a loved tree but it will be removed as part of the project since it has grown up against the retaining wall that has to be replaced.

C. Mertl: Is there an expectation for an increase in construction costs due to COVID? I'm hoping the \$500K from the JCF doesn't have to be used for the high construction costs now but actually goes towards the improvement discussed tonight.

M. Elfers: Escalating construction costs are a concern and we will have to see what the bids are. Engineering's estimates are not intended to be the minimum, they're intended to be a little high so we're not surprised when higher bids come in.

W. Muldoon: I move the PRAC recommend that the Assembly accept up to \$550,000 from the Juneau Capitol Fund, a fund of the Juneau Community Foundation, and appropriate these funds to the Capital School Park Capital Improvement Project.

Motion passes unanimously.

VI. Unfinished Business – None

VII. Information Items –

A. EVC and Amalga Meadows Update

K. West: From the beginning, ABAK reached out to offer tours out of Kayak Beach and then JIRP reached out to use the lower level of the facility as their headquarters in town. Then most recently, SAIL reached out to open back up the challenge course, which is happening this summer. Trail Mix has been a great partnership, building and updating

our trails, which include the Horse Tram trail, the new trail to the Amalga Cabin and improvements to challenge course trail. It has been so heartwarming for me to see the support of the community, their respect and care that everyone has done to continue celebrating different events, and still abide by the COVID mandates. We had 92 rentals in FY21, which is amazing.

VIII. Committee, Liaison, and Board Member Reports

A. Chair Report—None

B. Liaison to the Assembly Report— Finished the budget; AGB is receiving full funding for renovation. Passed a fireworks ordinance. Working on clarifying liaison rules.

C. Liaison Reports—

Aquatics – W. Muldoon: AGB got full funding for renovations to move forward starting in 2022.

YAB – J. Anderson: None.

Eaglecrest – None.

Jensen-Olson Arboretum— E. Carrillo: Working on devils club mitigation.

Lands – C. Mertl: Talked about Montana Creek Master Plan and ORV working group.

Park Foundation— C. Mertl: None.

Treadwell Arena Board – K. Duncan: Presented annual report to HRC.

Trail Mix— R. Crenshaw: None.

1% for Art— J. Anderson: None.

Other Member Business – None.

Adjournment – 7:40 p.m. *Having no other business before the board.*

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Verrelli, Recreation & Public Services Manager, 9/28/21