



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 2, 2025, at 5:30 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/94184441385> Or 1-669-444-9171 | Webinar ID: 941 8444 1385

A. CALL TO ORDER

PRAC Chair Ryan O'Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Susan Crandall, Jennifer Gross, Emma Van Nes, Paulette Schirmer, & Ren Scott

Absent: Josh Anderson, Danika Swanson, & Kaasáank' Andrew Williams

Staff Present: Lauren Verrelli, Parks & Recreation Acting Director; Neil Steininger, Assembly Liaison; & Annie Carroll, Parks & Recreation Staff Liaison

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer to approve the agenda. *No objections were heard, and the agenda was approved.*

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Schirmer noted that there was a misspelling of Linne Clark's name and a capitalization error in Mr. Anderson's name to be corrected.

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer to approve the minutes as corrected. *No objections were heard, and the Minutes were approved.*

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Charlie Herrington, a Douglas resident, began by sharing that he lives on Foster Avenue near Fairbanks Street. He mentions that he knows the Downtown Douglas/West Juneau Area Plan was completed recently and highlighted the need for more parks in the area. He mentions that Franklin Street nearby is closed for 6 months of the year and is hardly used by cars when it's open, as there are no driveways along it. He suggests the idea of transforming the space into a terraced park with gardens and play structures for the families in the nearby neighborhoods without a park within walking distance. He asks for their guidance on how to propose this officially to the city.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks Ms. Verrelli where Mr. Herrington should begin with his proposal to reclassify a parcel of CBJ land as parkland. Ms. Verrelli says she supports offering more playground space in the area, and recommends he start with the CBJ Community Development Department to see what can be done about getting the suggestion included in their plans.

F. AGENDA TOPICS

3. Floyd Dryden Pickleball Courts Update – Presented by L. Verrelli

Ms. Verrelli shared a short memo and presentation covering plans for the pickleball courts at Adair Kennedy Park near Floyd Dryden School. She gives an overview of the pickleball offering currently available through the department, including outdoor courts at Cope Park and Floyd Dryden, as well as indoor play within Treadwell Arena, May-June, and winter drop-in play at the Floyd Dryden Gym, with the potential to expand to Marie Drake Gym, dependent on staffing. She acknowledges the community's desire for evening drop-in hours but explains that the Floyd Dryden Gym schedule is busy with Adult Volleyball and Youth Sports most days of the week. She stresses that the lack of staff is the main reason why they can't expand programming to Marie Drake Gym in the evenings, as they have not had any applicants for the open Recreation Aide positions yet, despite advertising attempts.

Ms. Verrelli shares the timeline of the project up to this point, noting it was initially brought to PRAC in March 2024 and underwent several redesigns before being finalized in November 2024, with the plan to implement it in spring 2025. The final plan includes 4 dedicated pickleball courts, 1 shared tennis court with 2 pickleball courts overlaid, and 1 shared basketball & tennis court. In Spring 2025, staffing challenges prevented the plan from coming to fruition. Staff have been working to acquire materials and have a contractor in place so construction can begin as soon as the weather allows in spring/summer 2026.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks Ms. Verrelli if she is confident they will get a contractor in place to meet the set schedule, to which Ms. Verrelli answered that she is confident, and resurfacing materials will need to arrive close to the time they begin work, as they are the most effective for a short period of time. She shares that the department is working on hiring a Project Manager within CBJ Engineering who would be dedicated to managing Parks & Recreation projects, and she is excited to have someone to help see this project through to the end.

Ms. Van Nes calls attention to the plans for Jackie Renninger Park, which include more dedicated space for pickleball. Ms. Verrelli confirms that the design for Jackie Renninger is set up with approximately 1/3 of the park's space dedicated to pickleball courts, and they hope to have a bond initiative for it on the ballot next year.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks for an overview of the Recreation Aide position that would staff and monitor the gyms for pickleball programs. Ms. Verrelli answers that it is a part-time limited position with an estimated 5-10 hours per week, with a flexible schedule. The Rec Aides are responsible for opening the gym, putting up nets, collecting payment from visitors, and closing and locking up at the end of their shift. She shared that a Rec Aide could play with the participants as long as they remain attentive and ready to check people in as new players arrive. Currently, 10 vacant positions need to be filled so that the department can make the most of gym space for preschool and senior open gym, pickleball, and private rentals.

Linne Clarke, a valley resident, starts by sharing that she is an avid pickleball player. She extends her thanks to Ms. Verrelli and Mr. O'Shaughnessy for listening to their community's input and working towards progress on this project. She explains that one big issue she has is that the community is unaware of the project timeline, and she wishes there were a way to be apprised of the project as it moves forward. She shares that she contacted the department periodically and was unable to receive an update on the progress on the courts.

She then asks if the plans at their current stage are unchangeable since they will leave only 4 feet between courts. She shares that they will take what they can get, but the spacing is a concern for safety and for certain play techniques. She asks if they will need a full month with consistent, clear weather to complete the resurfacing work. She closes with a suggestion for the department to hire someone to do teaching sessions to encourage more players to join in and take Rec Aide positions, as many people are interested but may be intimidated by learning amongst seasoned players.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks if this project is listed on the Parks & Recreation project page, to which Ms. Verrelli answers that it isn't, as it is a small project, but she is willing to get it added. She continues by apologizing for the delay this project has seen, and by clarifying that they will not need a whole month of sun to complete the resurfacing, but certain parts of the process would require the environment to be dry.

Ms. Schirmer asks Ms. Clark if her suggestion is for Parks & Rec to take on offering pickleball classes during this period of being short-staffed. Ms. Clark answers that the players in town don't have a dedicated place to play, and that, as the facilities are owned by Parks & Rec, players don't have control over those areas. She doesn't imagine it would be something you would have to pay for, and suggests that, given the opportunity, there could be someone from the community who could step forward, willing to teach.

Kueni Maake, a valley resident, begins by thanking the committee for listening to their concerns. She shares that she agrees with what Ms. Clark has shared, as she has been the one to ask the questions many of them have had in mind. She stresses the importance of extending the court dimensions and mentions that the layout sharing space with a tennis court is not ideal. She asks exactly what materials needed for the project are causing the hold-up, since they have been waiting 3 years. She notes that she is glad for the planned courts at Jackie Renninger Park, but insists that they need more indoor space rather than outdoor space. She concludes by expressing that pickleball is a family game for the whole community since players can be any age, it's beneficial to your health, and is affordable for people to play.

Ms. Schirmer asks if she understands correctly that the players in attendance insist Parks & Rec go back to the drawing board with the design plans and change the court dimensions, as well as remove the shared tennis court. Ms. Maake answers that, if possible, yes, but she understands there are constraints for this project. She says that they are happy to share and play together, but it does lead to tennis players' frustration with how loud pickleball is, and prevents all the pickleball players from being able to play together as 16 or more players wait on the sidelines. She does agree that the dimensions need to be reconsidered. Mr. O'Shaughnessy notes that the design has already been contracted, and public testimony has already been taken on it, so change at this point may be difficult. Ms. Scott asks for clarification on the issue of the dimensions, asking if the courts need to change or just the amount of space between them, to which Ms. Maake answers that it is only the space between courts that needs to be extended. Ms. Verrelli shares that they must work within the existing footprint of the courts and cannot expand, meaning their only other option may be to eliminate 2 of the dedicated pickleball courts. She also answers Ms. Maake's question about materials, confirming that resurfacing paint is the bulk of the material needed for this

project. Ms. Maake thanks her and says that she will apply for a Rec Aide position in the hopes that they can expand programming to Friday evenings.

Josiah Lehauli, a valley resident, shares that he attended in support of his pickleball family. He shares that he is a contractor and asks for permission to help resurface the courts as the community waits for the project to take place in spring 2026. Mr. O'Shaughnessy thanks him for his question and notes that, unfortunately, they cannot allow players to resurface the courts as that needs to be done through the department's process and procedures outlined by the city charter and code, but he appreciated his good intent and willingness to contribute to the community.

Shawn Carey, a valley resident, shares that he is an avid pickleball player at both indoor and outdoor courts in town. He joins the other players in attendance by noting that the spacing around the proposed courts is too small. He says that if they are going to go through the hassle of creating permanent courts with dedicated nets, 4 feet between courts won't be enough space. He also notes that nets between courts could help prevent balls from flying into other games. He suggests cheating the courts closer to the glacier so that things can be spaced better on the existing concrete slab.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy acknowledges that the court spacing has been brought up by a number of people, but reminds them that the current design has been through 2 separate rounds of public comment. He asks Ms. Verrelli if there are elements of the plan Parks & Rec can revisit or revise, given where they are in the procurement process, and what that would mean for the timeline. Ms. Verrelli answers that the contract with Corvus Design is currently closed, but they have not entered into a contract with a contractor. She says adding a net between courts is something that may feasibly be added to the scope of the project; however, shifting the courts is something they will need to investigate. She asks if changing the layout to include only 2 pickleball courts with more space around them would be better, to which most of the attendees in the room spoke out in opposition.

Ms. Gross asked if spacing would allow fencing to be installed between the courts, to which Mr. Carey answered that it would prevent balls from going into other courts. Ms. Van Nes asks if a tennis net would work as the barrier between courts, to which Mr. Carey answers that they do help, and that's what they're doing now, but a higher net would be better.

Ms. Schirmer asks Ms. Verrelli what size boundaries they have for the tennis court on the glacier side, and why it is at its current distance from the pickleball courts. Ms. Verrelli answers that they designed the court that way to meet tennis requirements with boundaries and spacing. She also shares that replacing the fencing is not a part of this project. Ms. Schirmer asks Ms. Verrelli if pickleball requirements were taken into consideration in this plan, to which she answers yes. Part of the scope when they contracted the design out was that all courts meet their respective requirements. She elaborates that she is aware that the space between courts is tight, so she is hesitant to add more netting between them.

Melehoko Pauu Ma'ake, a valley resident, begins by thanking Ms. Verrelli for the progress towards more indoor programming and says that the pickleball community will step up and volunteer to monitor the gyms. She expresses disappointment that the players were not

more involved in drawing out this plan for the courts, and says she hopes moving forward, there can be more community involvement in this project and the one planned for Jackie Renninger. She shares how pickleball is good for the community, helping people out of depression and involving whole families in positive outdoor activity. She agrees with Ms. Clarke's request for more transparency in the planning and progress of this park and asks for more regular updates.

Ms. Verrelli thanks her for bringing up the Jackie Renninger project, as that will be a more permanent, dedicated outdoor pickleball space, while the courts at Adair Kennedy need to share space with tennis. She notes that no one from the tennis community is present tonight, so it's important not to forget their stake in the area in their absence, as we must provide for both groups.

Ms. Gross asks what the pickleball players do while waiting for the court to be available, to which Ms. Ma'ake answered that currently the wait can be 10-15 minutes on a nice day, and they spend the time learning from each other, watching the other games, and socializing.

Ms. Schirmer notes that the current court design was brought to PRAC in November 2024, for public discussion, and asks in what way she feels the community was not involved. Ms. Ma'ake replies that when they showed up for the PRAC meetings, there was only one representative from the tennis community, and the current plan is more in line with what the tennis players wanted than what the pickleball players asked for. Ms. Schirmer clarified that the tennis community claimed they were not notified of the meeting, and sent over 20 emails after the first meeting concluded.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks Ms. Verrelli what their options are moving forward with this project. Ms. Verrelli answers that she will look at the budget and consider if changes can be made; however, she suspects the only solution would be to remove 2 dedicated pickleball courts to create more space. Any changes to the designs will cause greater delays in the project, so it depends on what the people want. Ms. Gross asks if a community fundraiser could help raise money to support expanding the court area, to which Ms. Verrelli answers that expanding the concrete pad will greatly increase the construction cost and delay the project further.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy concludes by thanking Ms. Verrelli and the pickleball players for being involved in this public process and acknowledges that the layout is not ideal, but resurfacing and restriping the courts will be a benefit to the community. He is hopeful that Jackie Renninger Park will be remodeled sooner rather than later, and encourages the pickleball community to support that project in any way they can moving forward. He notes that several members of the public have their hands raised for further comment, and he opens the meeting up for further testimony.

David Job, a downtown resident, shares that he plays regularly at Cope Park and at Floyd Dryden, and thanks the committee for their time and efforts. He feels that if the tennis court could be shifted slightly to allow for 2 pickleball courts to be moved a bit further, that would improve the situation. He also stresses that resurfacing is a priority. He suggests rolling tennis nets between the courts to help prevent balls from interfering with other games.

Sue Warner, a downtown resident, starts by thanking Ms. Verrelli and mentions that she has previously contacted the department as a representative of the Juneau Commission on Aging because pickleball is such a great sport for seniors. She stresses that the space between courts is a matter of safety, and the minimum safe distance is 10 feet. She mentions that youth sports programming takes up the bulk of the indoor gym time in the evenings, and she would like to see some of it dedicated to senior programs since the number of seniors in the community is growing.

Linne Clarke returns to say that she does not want the committee to think they are looking a gift horse in the mouth. She expresses that they are excited to have dedicated pickleball courts, but they need to be safe. She addresses Ms. Schirmer, saying that the only plan she was aware of was the original proposal with 6 courts, and that it's not easy to discover things on the website, which is why she called the department for updates. She insists that there is no way the players would see the 4-foot court boundary and think it was safe. She says she cannot speak for every player or make a call on whether they would rather have 4 crowded courts or 2 with more space, if those are the only choices, so she encourages the department to consider shifting the design.

Shawn Carey returns to speak and thanks the committee for hearing the pickleball community's testimony, and apologizes for not engaging in the earlier meetings. He reiterates that he feels there is still time and space to make better use of the current concrete slab, and that the benefits will outweigh the cost in the end.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asks Ms. Verrelli to investigate the different options for the court arrangement and come back to PRAC with a report on what can be done and the impact of those changes, to which Ms. Verrelli says that she can bring that to PRAC in November.

H. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Schirmer states that the Lands Housing and Economic Development Committee has not met since the last PRAC meeting.

Mr. Steininger shares that the Assembly has been busy with Emergency flood response activities recently. They have also held discussions about policies relating to unhoused individuals, particularly in the area around Teal Street. He also shares that they will be holding a Finance committee meeting on September 3rd and will discuss financing either the relocation or renovation of the Community Assistance Response and Emergency Services Sobering Center.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy closes by thanking Ms. Verrelli for the work she has done holding two jobs, for her leadership of the department, and for our community.

I. NEXT MEETING DATE - October 7, 2025, held virtually due to municipal election.

J. ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at 7:05 pm

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll on 10/3/2025, approved at the 10/7/25 PRAC Meeting.