



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 7, 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, Josh Anderson, Susan Crandall, Jennifer Gross, Emma Van Nes, Paulette Schirmer, Ren Scott, 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

1. October 7 Agenda Overview

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer to approve the agenda and ask for unanimous consent. *Seeing no objections, the agenda was approved.*

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Minutes from September 2, 2025

MOTION by Mr. Anderson to approve the minutes from September 2, 2025, and ask for unanimous consent. *No objections were heard, and the minutes were approved.*

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – *None.*

F. AGENDA TOPICS

3. PRAC FY25 Annual Report

Mr. O'Shaughnessy shares that the PRAC annual report has shifted from the calendar year to the fiscal year. The report presented covers FY25 from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

MOTION by Ms. Schirmer for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee to approve the FY25 Annual Report as presented and forward it to the Assembly Human Resources Committee. *No objections were heard, and the motion passed.*

4. FY27 Legislative Capital Priorities

Mr. O'Shaughnessy introduces the topic, explaining that the committee has been asked for their input in the form of recommending up to two projects they would like to see included on the Legislative Capital Priority list. He reminds the PRAC of last year's vote, resulting in

the Jackie Renninger Park and the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path projects as their top priorities. He personally argues that supporting one project is even more impactful, as they won't be diluting their request with more projects.

Motion by Ms. Schirmer to recommend that they put forth the Jackie Renninger Park Project as their priority, citing frequent community outcry for pickleball courts.

Ms. Swanson asks what progress the department has made towards the 35-mile ORV Park. Ms. Verrelli updates the PRAC, sharing that they have just closed out the first grant of \$300,000 and have opened the second \$300,000 Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant. They have completed work on the parking lot and the clearing of the first 3 miles of trail, of which they expect three-quarters of a mile to be graveled by the end of this season. She anticipates they will apply for another round of RTP grant funding, as they have \$1.25 million for the project secured, and the anticipated total project cost is \$6 million.

Ms. Swanson asks if the outcome of the vote will have the power to hinder or further progress on the 35-mile ORV Park in terms of assembly action. Ms. Verrelli answers that Engineering is asking what projects the committee believes should be prioritized. She says the department will continue working to fund the project, but that it's always beneficial for the committee to show support.

Ms. Verrelli shared progress on the Jackie Renninger Park project, noting that a public outreach process in 2024 resulted in a comprehensive master plan design. The community park concept includes space for a wide range of users, including a playground, skate features, pickleball, dog park, disc golf, and community gathering amenities, which address a major recreational gap in the Mendenhall Valley. The project team is currently in 35% design, with an additional public meeting anticipated in spring 2026 as cost estimates are refined. The total project cost is estimated at \$16 million, influenced by inflation and market conditions, up from the earlier \$8–10 million planning estimate. Funding will likely require a general obligation bond for voter consideration in next year's municipal election.

Ms. Verrelli also addressed the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path project, explaining that this has long been envisioned as an important community connection through the Lemon Creek corridor. The project involves some Parks & Recreation land, but has primarily been driven by state transportation agencies. Funding has historically been expected to come from state-level grants rather than bonds. She shares that there are no major updates to the project available currently.

Mr. Anderson shares his thoughts on the options. He addresses Ms. Schirmer's motion, sharing that he has no qualms with the Jackie Renninger project; however, once it is built, the department will need to provide manpower to maintain it, which should be considered. He addresses the 35-mile ORV Park, which has been in the works since around 2010, with construction already underway, and significant progress made. He argues that completing this project would provide meaningful recreational opportunities for youth and support a healthy outlet for their energy.

Ms. Van Nes spoke in support of prioritizing the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path project, noting that both Jackie Renninger Park and the 35-Mile ORV Park are more likely to secure alternative funding, such as a future general obligation bond or existing CIP appropriations. She stated that many residents, including herself and coworkers, live downtown and work in the Valley but do not feel safe biking along current routes. The Lemon Creek corridor lacks an established bike and pedestrian path, and a multimodal connection would benefit thousands of users, including students traveling between downtown schools and the Valley. For these reasons, she expressed strong support for elevating the Lemon Creek Pathway as PRAC's legislative priority.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy clarified that a motion from Ms. Schirmer to prioritize Jackie Renninger Park remained on the floor for discussion. After consideration, Ms. Schirmer withdrew her motion.

MOTION by Ms. Van Nes for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to recommend the addition of the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path to the FY27 Legislative Priorities list.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy asked Mr. Anderson for any additional comments. Mr. Anderson responded that he agreed with many of the points raised in support of the Lemon Creek Pathway and acknowledged that all three projects under discussion would greatly benefit Juneau residents. However, he emphasized his preference to complete projects already in progress, particularly the 35-Mile ORV Park, before committing municipal resources to new capital initiatives. He expressed concern about moving too quickly into additional project commitments and asked that the full committee have an opportunity for further discussion before voting.

Mr. Kaasáank' shared that while he was less familiar with specific funding mechanisms, he viewed Jackie Renninger Park as the project with the greatest potential community benefit, particularly for children and families. He commented on the importance of improving family-oriented recreation opportunities to support population retention and noted that past recreation sites used by youth have been lost due to tourism-related changes. He also supported the continued development of the ORV Park as an important space for young people. He raised safety concerns regarding the Lemon Creek corridor, including wildlife and seasonal conditions, and stated that he would not support shifting the committee's focus to that project at this time.

Ms. Scott stated her support for the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path project, emphasizing that PRAC has not seen significant movement on the project in recent years and that elevating it as the committee's priority would ensure the Assembly is aware it remains an important community need.

Mr. Anderson asked how the committee should proceed when members were divided among multiple project priorities. He asked whether each member should indicate their top choice or whether the committee should continue addressing motions one at a time. Mr. O'Shaughnessy clarified that the current motion is to prioritize the Lemon Creek Multimodal Pathway as the sole legislative capital request. He noted that the committee was asked to

submit up to two projects but expressed his belief that forwarding a single priority would be the most effective approach. He invited amendments to the motion; none were offered, and a roll-call vote was conducted on the motion to recommend the Lemon Creek Multimodal Path project as PRAC's FY27 Legislative Capital Improvement Project priority.

Roll-call vote:

Crandall — Yes

Kaasáank' — No

Scott — Yes

Schirmer — No

Gross — Yes

Van Nes — Yes

Swanson — Yes

Anderson — No

O'Shaughnessy — Yes

Result: Motion passed, 6–3.

G. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Schirmer states that the Lands Housing and Economic Development Committee recently discussed Title 49 zoning revisions, a residential property transaction, housing advocacy from AARP Juneau, and National Flood Insurance Program eligibility. She requested to continue serving as the PRAC liaison to the committee, and without objection, the committee agreed she would remain in that role.

Mr. Anderson shares that the Youth Activities Board (YAB) has made progress toward a streamlined and more accessible online grant application process and the scheduling of an upcoming retreat for new members. Mr. O'Shaughnessy expressed appreciation for the YAB's work and for the many community organizations that benefit from its grant support.

Mr. Steininger provided an update from the Assembly, including advancement of full funding for the Marine Park project, partial funding for the Dzantik'i Heeni playground improvements, and authorization to purchase the Burns Building for a future City Hall location. He also encouraged members and the public to vote before polls closed. Mr. Anderson asked for clarification regarding the Telephone Hill redevelopment project. Mr. Steininger explained that an error in eviction notices required them to be reissued and reviewed the next steps, including environmental testing and demolition planning already underway to support developer engagement. He noted that hazardous materials disposal considerations would depend upon upcoming testing results.

Mr. Kaasáank' shared the Lingít phrase of the Month: ***Naxtoo.aat***, which means "Let's go!", and offered examples of use in cheering on his grandson's baseball team and the Seattle Mariners.

Ms. Verrelli announced that Parks & Recreation had hired Marc Wheeler as the new Director, beginning November 3. Mr. Wheeler addressed the committee, describing his experience in

public service, youth development, and as a small-business owner. He expressed enthusiasm for contributing to Juneau's quality of life through Parks & Recreation services. Committee members welcomed him and thanked Acting Director Verrelli for her leadership during the transition.

H. NEXT MEETING DATE - November 4, 2025

I. ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at 6:13 pm

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll on 10/31/2025, approved at the 11/4/2025 meeting.