



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 5, 2026 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 5:38 p.m.
- B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!
- C. ROLL CALL**
- Present:** Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Josh Anderson, Jennifer Gross, Kaasáank' Andrew Williams, Paulette Schirmer, Susan Crandall
- Absent:** Danika Swanson, Emma Van Nes, Ren Scott
- Staff Present:** Marc Wheeler, Parks & Recreation Director, Lauren Verrelli, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director; Christine Woll, Assembly Liaison; & Annie Carroll, Parks & Recreation Staff Liaison
- D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- MOTION** by Ms. Schirmer to approve the agenda and ask for unanimous consent. *Seeing no objections, the agenda was approved.*
- 1. Director's Report**
- E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- 2. Minutes from April 7, 2026**
- MOTION** by Ms. Schirmer to approve the minutes from April 7, 2026, and ask for unanimous consent. *No objections were heard, and the minutes were approved.*
- F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - NONE**
- G. AGENDA TOPICS**
- 3. Jackie Renninger Park Redevelopment – 35% Design – Presented by Chris Mertl, Corvus Design, and Tyler Bradshaw, PND Engineering**

Chris Mertl of Corvus Design and Tyler Bradshaw of PND Engineering presented the 35% design update for Jackie Renninger Park. Mr. Mertl provided background on the project, noting that the Lower Mendenhall Valley is underserved by Parks & Recreation facilities, and that the approximately 5-acre park is currently home to the Pipeline Community Skate Park, a restroom facility, an RV dump

station, and forested land. The project began as a master planning effort in 2023 with extensive public engagement, including meetings with the public, youth, and the skating community, and participatory design activities at Zach Gordon Youth Center and local schools.

Based on public input, the most requested amenities were a playground, pickleball courts, community event space, an improved skate park, rock climbing, cultural and arts features, adult fitness equipment, trails, a dog area, and additional restrooms. Three master plan alternatives were developed and presented to the community. The community selected Concept 3, with modifications: demolishing the Pipeline building, replacing covered pickleball with an uncovered configuration, adding a covered playground, and including a dog park. For the skate park, the community preferred Concept A, emphasizing features under shelter and improved flow between covered and uncovered elements.

The refined preferred master plan includes eight regulation pickleball courts utilizing the existing concrete pad from the Pipeline with noise-attenuation fencing on sides facing residential properties, a new style skate park designed by New Line Skateparks in collaboration with the local skating community, three playground areas, a climbing boulder for all ages, a fenced dog park, a multi-use artificial turf court, a six-hole disc golf course through the wooded perimeter, a loop trail of approximately one quarter mile with six exercise stations, a community gathering plaza, day-use picnic shelters, and a new restroom with security camera and lighting infrastructure.

Mr. Mertl noted that a key design goal was improving visibility and safety, as the current park suffers from single-use isolation and limited sightlines. Bringing multiple user groups together is intended to create natural self-policing of the space. A community design event is planned for Saturday, June 6th, from noon to 5:00 p.m. at the park, featuring a design open house, community barbecue, skate clinic, skate jam, and a competition with participation from Kanten Russell, a former professional skater and New Line team member. Borderline skate shop has also partnered with the event.

Mr. Bradshaw presented the cost estimates and phasing plan. The total construction cost estimate at 35% design is approximately \$14.5 million. Understanding the current budget climate, the team developed a phased approach:

Phase 1: High Priority Infrastructure

- *Scope:* Pickleball courts, covered skate park, and restroom facilities.
- *Construction Estimate:* \$9.2 million.
- *Projected Total Cost (2028 Build):* \$11.8 million (includes escalation, design completion, construction administration, and CBJ internal costs).
- *Add Alternates:* \$1.6 million (for dog park, expanded courtyard, and parking improvements).

Phase 2: Playgrounds

- *Scope:* Tot lot and playground structures.
- *Construction Estimate:* \$3.5 million.
- *Projected Total Cost:* \$4.6 million.

Phase 3: Periphery Amenities

- *Scope:* Disc golf course, multi-use court, loop trail, and covered picnic shelters.
- *Construction Estimate:* \$2.6 million.
- *Projected Total Cost:* \$3.3 million.

If all phases were constructed simultaneously in 2028, the estimated total construction cost would be approximately \$14.5 million, compared to approximately \$21 million if built incrementally over multiple years, due to escalation and repeated contractor mobilization.

Mr. Wheeler noted that the plan is to hold at the 35% design level while assessing future funding opportunities, including a potential park bond and the 1% temporary sales tax renewal coming before voters in 2027. Approximately \$600,000 remains in the current CIP for this project; the department intends to preserve those funds for advancing to 100% design when the time is right.

Ms. Gross asked about the hockey community's interest in an ice facility. Mr. Wheeler noted that infrastructure for ice hockey is not currently within the budget scope. Mr. Mertl noted that the multi-use court could potentially support a temporary ice rink with a portable chiller and roll-out mats, and that JDIA (Juneau Douglas Ice Association) and JAHA (Juneau Adult Hockey Association) have expressed interest in exploring partnership opportunities.

Ms. Schirmer asked whether the skate park footprint is larger than the existing Pipeline structure. Mr. Mertl confirmed it is significantly larger, and clarified that the design works within the existing property boundaries, preserving perimeter trees and buffer vegetation.

Mr. Kaasáank' asked about baseball and softball use of the multi-use court. Mr. Mertl noted the rectangular field is not suited for baseball or softball gameplay, though some throwing and pitching drills could occur there.

Ms. Crandall asked why the playground, a top community-requested amenity, was placed in Phase 2 rather than Phase 1. Mr. Mertl explained that the department made a commitment to the skating community that the Pipeline would remain operational until a replacement is built. Phase 1 must therefore include the new skate park before Pipeline can be decommissioned. Additionally, while a playground is a high need, other playgrounds exist in the broader area, whereas the skate park and pickleball facilities will be community-wide resources serving users from across the borough.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy expressed a preference for building the park in full rather than in phases, noting the significant cost savings of a single construction mobilization. Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Mertl concurred on the cost efficiency of a single build while acknowledging that the multi-season construction timeline and phasing flexibility are still being refined. Mr. Wheeler suggested a combination of a bond measure and the 1% sales tax could potentially fund the project in one effort, and invited the PRAC to serve as community champions for the project.

Ms. Woll confirmed that the current budget environment makes a near-term bond measure difficult to pursue, given competing priorities including school deferred maintenance, water and wastewater infrastructure, and flood mitigation bonding. She agreed that park bonds tend to be popular and expressed optimism for future timing.

Mr. Anderson expressed support for the project while cautioning that new capital investments should not come at the expense of maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities and referenced recent discussions about potential pool closures.

Ms. Gross asked what specific actions could be taken to pursue partnerships. Mr. Mertl suggested approaching Rotary (covered shelters), the Juneau Soccer Club (multi-court), nonprofit organizations

such as the Juneau Community Foundation, and tribal organizations. He encouraged exploring a parks foundation model and noted that JDIA and JAHA could potentially fund a portable ice chilling unit. He also cautioned against waiting too long at 35% design, as grant funders typically seek projects at a more advanced stage of design and with more refined cost estimates.

Mr. Kaasáank' noted his connections to tribal organizations and the Juneau Community Council and suggested that incorporating Indigenous cultural elements into the park design could strengthen community and tribal support for the project and for associated funding efforts.

4. Waterfront Development – Elizabeth Peratrovich Plaza – Presented by Carl Uchytel, Port Director, Docks and Harbors

Carl Uchytel, Port Director, Docks and Harbors, presented planned improvements to the Elizabeth Peratrovich Plaza waterfront area, with a focus on the proposed new public restroom facility along the Seawalk.

The project originates from the Marine Park to Taku Dock Urban Design Plan developed in 2018, completed following construction of the new cruise ship berths (16B). A Downtown Waterfront Improvement Project Phase 1; a \$12.5 million timber deck-over project and bus staging area was completed in 2021. Phase 2 was paused at the direction of the city manager to allow time to evaluate whether the Juneau–Douglas City Museum could be relocated to the waterfront. That relocation has since been determined infeasible. The adjacent Archipelago property has been sold to a private developer planning a 4D flight-and-dive simulator attraction, which will be approximately 55 feet tall. With those circumstances resolved, Docks and Harbors has requested \$3.5 million through the Marine Passenger Fee process for the restroom project.

The proposed facility would be centrally located along the Seawalk as envisioned in the 2018 Urban Design Plan. The building design, led by architect James Bibb of Northwind Architects, draws inspiration from Juneau's industrial heritage, including the old cold storage building, the Taku smokeries, and the Treadwell Mine office, featuring exposed trusses and simple industrial exterior materials. The project is at approximately 35% design. The design team includes Docks and Harbors, PND Engineering, Corvus Design, and Northwind Architects.

The facility would include a covered, enclosed waiting room of approximately 1,400 square feet capable of accommodating approximately 180 people, to be climate-controlled and open during the cruise season as a gathering space for tour groups and visitors; 17 toilet fixtures; and charging and water refilling stations. The design intent is to keep the space as open and accessible as possible during the season, while exploring year-round use options in the off-season.

A Lone Sailor statue proposed by the Pioneers of Alaska for this location was removed from consideration following opposition from the Alaska Native Sisterhood. The Pioneers of Alaska will identify an alternative site along the seawalk.

Ms. Gross asked about the dimensions of the enclosed space and why it would be enclosed. Mr. Uchytel explained that shoulder-season and rainy conditions make a climate-controlled enclosure preferable to a simple covered structure, and that the goal is to provide a comfortable place for

visitors and locals alike.

Ms. Schirmer noted support for additional restrooms but expressed reservations about year-round operation, citing vandalism and security issues that have caused park restrooms in the valley to be locked. Other committee members echoed concerns about the challenges of maintaining public restrooms.

Mr. Kaasáank' noted his experience living aboard at Aurora Harbor and the challenges of keeping restrooms secure without a consistent on-site presence. He suggested the waiting room space could potentially generate revenue through rental arrangements, which might also help fund maintenance and security. He also suggested that integrating Indigenous cultural programming or artwork, such as presentations by local storytellers, could enhance the space and strengthen community support. He noted the strong connection between Indigenous community members and military service as a potential way to find common ground on the Lone Sailor statue discussion.

Ms. Crandall asked whether tour operators had been consulted. Mr. Mertl, who attended the public open house on April 7th, noted that tour operators were present and expressed enthusiasm about having a central gathering space for walking tour groups and smaller van-based operators who use the adjacent B-zone parking.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy expressed support for expanded waterfront restroom access, noting he frequently walks the docks in winter and off-season. He also asked that sight lines to the Elizabeth Peratrovich mural be carefully considered in the building's placement and height.

Mr. Uchytel confirmed that the Assembly will act on the Marine Passenger Fee request the following day, and that if funding is appropriated, Docks and Harbors intends to move quickly toward a design and construction timeline targeting completion before the 2027 cruise season. He noted that the restroom is the immediate priority, and that broader redevelopment of Peratrovich Plaza can be revisited once the restroom project is further along.

5. Naming Amalga Meadows Public Use Cabin #2

Mr. Wheeler presented a request for the PRAC to formally name the new public use cabin being constructed at Amalga Meadows (Cabin No. 2). He noted that the department has been working with Sealaska Heritage Institute to incorporate Tlingit names into parks and trails, and collaborated with Will Geiger to identify an appropriate name for the cabin and the surrounding area.

The recommended name is the Tlingit word **Eeyák'w**, meaning "Little Rapids," referring to the location where saltwater flows into the Amalga Harbor area. Mr. Kaasáank' provided the Tlingit pronunciation.

Mr. Wheeler noted that naming of parks and recreation facilities is among the duties of the PRAC as specified in the municipal code, and that the committee has the authority to make this determination without Assembly approval.

Mr. Wheeler noted the cabin is being constructed this summer in partnership with Trail Mix,

using a workforce development grant, with lumber from Icy Strait Lumber and Hoonah. Completion is targeted for the end of summer 2026, with reservations available in fall 2026. He noted strong anticipated demand, consistent with high utilization rates at the existing Amalga Meadows cabin.

MOTION by Mr. Kaasáank' for The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee to recommend that the Department proceed with naming the cabin the "Eeyák'w Cabin" and ask for unanimous consent. *No objections were heard, and the motion passed.*

H. STAFF REPORTS

I. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Schirmer reported from the Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee. Topics discussed included: a new Coast Guard vessel class arriving in Juneau and related Coast Guard housing; renewal of the CARES lease; and ongoing deliberation regarding short-term rental legislation, including fee schedules and definitions, which has been in committee for several consecutive meetings.

Ms. Woll provided a budget update. She noted the Assembly is in the midst of difficult budget deliberations stemming from a significant deficit following the December election. The City Manager's proposed budget, which addressed departmental reductions and increased user fees, still carried an approximately \$7 million deficit being covered by savings. The Assembly asked members to identify \$2 million in potential cuts. Proposals included potential closures or reductions at recreational facilities, including pools, the Fieldhouse, Treadwell Arena, and Eaglecrest, as well as non-Parks items. She noted a strong community response in support of Parks & Recreation and library services. Next steps include refining the list of potential cuts through the end of May, with a final public hearing in June ahead of the budget adoption deadline. She acknowledged the difficulty of the situation and thanked community members for their engagement.

Mr. Kaasáank' shared a Tlingit word from his ongoing language series: *hintaaq wakdáanaa*, meaning "swimming goggles." He noted the animation featuring his grandson as voiceover narrator was delayed due to illness but would be completed soon.

Mr. Anderson reported on the Youth Activities Board (YAB). Approximately two weeks prior, the YAB met with all grant applicants to review scores and allocations. The board subsequently awarded approximately \$300,000+ to youth activities across the community, with the sports committee awarding approximately \$211,000. A small number of contingency grants for travel and qualifying events may be awarded over the summer, but the YAB will otherwise be quiet until the fall cycle.

J. NEXT MEETING DATE - JUNE 2, 2026

K. ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Annie Carroll on 05/29/2026 approved at the 07/07/2026 meeting.