

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
Centennial Hall – Hammond Room – 6:15 p.m.

I. Call to Order by PRAC Chair Chris Mertl: 6:15 p.m.

Present: Josh Anderson, Odin Brudie, Frances Dowd, Traci Gilmour, Gerry Landry, Eric Ouderkirk, Tom Rutecki;

Absent: Lindsay Hallvik;

Assembly Liaison, Maria Gladziszewski: Present;

Parks & Recreation Staff: Kirk Duncan, P&R Director, Brent Fischer, P&R FPL Superintendent; Fran Compton, P&R Administrative Assistant, Rorie Watt, CBJ Engineering and Public Works Director; Greg Chaney, CBJ Lands Manager

Guests: Brett Farrell

- II. Agenda Changes:** E. Ouderkirk requests adding Jensen-Olson Arboretum Advisory Board Report. K. Duncan requests Rorie Watt for the Gunakadeit Park and Greg Chaney, Lands Management presentation requesting flexibility in timing.

III. Public Participation of Non-Agenda Items:

Linda Snow, 900 First St. #12, Douglas, (presentation and handout attached): I am not asking for action, just making you aware of it. I am transportation planner for the Douglas Indian Association and a member of the Auke Rec Plan Steering Committee. In conjunction with Sealaska Heritage Institute, the Douglas Indian Association is working to protect the sacred cultural area of Auke Cape and Indian Point. 1969 recognized the importance of Auke Cape area to the culture and history of Juneau and passed 69-3, rezoning that area to public use recreation land, to be used only in its natural state. That protection was inadvertently swept away in the 1984 borough wide rezoning – this land is zoned for residential development. Lots 2-4 are managed by Parks & Recreation, still zoned residential contrary to the 1969 Ordinance. Douglas Indian Association and Sealaska Heritage Institute are advocating that Lots 2-4 on Auke Cape to be rezoned as protected park land, as was the intent of the Ordinance 69-3. Through the Auke Bay Plan we hope to bring this recommendation to the Planning Commission and the Assembly. This idea has also been put forward in the Auke Bay Plan Cultural Resources Section.

Discussion

T. Rutecki: **Motion that PRAC support this effort to rezone the property as non-residential per this recommendation. Second by T. Gilmour. No objection, motion carried.**

Mr. Mertl: Are there any other non-agenda Items?

Stephanie Kruse, 6753 Gray St.: I am the Vice President of the Juneau Roller Girls. Because we are part of the recreation in community, I want to give you an update. We have a difficulty facing us in that the Centennial Hall floor is becoming a surface we can no longer skate on

some sort of protection over the floor. This season we have secured time for rentals, games and skates, but we are facing the challenge of raising \$20K to purchase a snap together floor to put down over the top of the Centennial Hall floor in order to keep skating. We are making efforts to fund raise. We are collecting plans and formulate a large fund raiser event. We have lots of community support. One of our bouts this season would be a silent auction event with goods and services donated from the community to help us raise some money. At this point, our goal is to cultivate a group of skaters and promote athleticism and empowerment for women in our community. We are expanding our goal to include Junior Roller Derby. In the next few weeks we will have informational meetings and teach coed juniors how to skate and then how to play roller derby for 11-17 year age group. We have exciting things in the works. WE are dedicated to making this work and partnering with Centennial Hall to continue to have a place to skate.

Discussion

IV. Minutes of the July 7, 2015: Motion to approve by T. Gilmour, second by J. Anderson, with no objection, motion to accept the July 7, 2015 PRAC Minutes is approved.

V. Director's Report – K. Duncan: I would like for Rorie Watt to present the information about Gunakadeit Park. (

Rorie Watt – CBJ Engineering and Public Works Director: Assembly has asked us to pursue demolition of the Gastineau Apartments, which is 3 connected buildings and surrounds Gunakadeit Park on two sides. (see attached CBJ Memo 9/2/15 from Ritter to Duncan, re: Gunakadeit Park). This decision to move forward using public money to demolish private property is not one the Assembly has taken lightly. They direct us to proceed quickly to bring down the structure and ultimately a private entity will redevelop the property and create housing/commercial space downtown. By City Code, we will award destruction project to low bidders. We are preparing a bid package for demolition of the buildings, there is a number of decisions that we have to make: how much time, the process, street closures, transportation disruption and where can material be disposed, what we want the site to look like when it is done. The general concept for the site is a fenced, grassy, stabilized slope. It becomes obvious the safest, fastest, and least costly way to bring down the buildings is to do it from the Park. Starting from the curb with conventional demolition equipment is a tall task. If we are trying to protect this Park while demolishing the buildings, you are not going to be happy with the way they are able to protect it. To require them to rebuild the Park after the demolition is done will escalate the costs. We realize it makes sense to demolish the Park and make that property part of the future development. Housing is the number one goal for the Assembly. This is not a light decision we are recommending. My staff worked on the development of the Park and have attachment to the improvements there. We spent a lot of money building that Park. You have seen me quoted in the press; it's no secret that this is not a very successful park. I don't think that is related to the Park itself that is related to some behavioral problems we have in the downtown corp. Demolishing the Park does not solve those problems. A lot of effort went into making a Park that would function in our downtown core. We recommended to the Assembly to explore demolition of the Park and reutilization of that property in some future development. Adding that Park property into a redevelopment makes it a lot easier to redevelop that property. The buildings have a series

of foundation walls that step up the hill. There is going to be a staged demolition and slope stabilization effort consisting of partial demolition, backfilling with slope, and material to stabilize a graduated slope and widen the sidewalk. There is a very real possibility that there might not be development on that property for several years. We are advertising for demolition today or tomorrow. We think the bid period will be about three weeks around September 30th with demolition to start in late October and take several months. There will be presentations at the Planning Committee, the Assembly and perhaps the Committee of the Whole

Discussion

Public Testimony:

Evelyn Rouso, on behalf of the Downtown Business Association: Overwhelming what we have heard from our members that we feel the same way, the Park is not working. A lot of money has been put into it and it should be an attractant. I don't think there is a whole lot of controversy on whether or not the Park should be used to help this demolition. The membership is divided as to what happens to it afterwards. There are lots of different options. There are lot of reasons why it has failed, in my opinion. Perhaps it could be successful, perhaps not. I think it needs to be re-thought in terms of how it could be leveraged for a court yard, be available to a developer to build something there. We are going to have this period of time to use it to defray the cost of demolition as well attracting a developer whether CBJ sells the parcel or not, the DBA is fully supportive. There are concerns about what happens to it in the long term for downtown open space. Whether not it can be revived, or leveraged and used for a courtyard – there are a lot of things that could happen – DBA would like to be involved. Another issue DBA is very concerned about what the status those properties will be once the demolition is completed. It will be several years before development can happen, we want to make sure it is safe, secure and attractive. Something tourists can take pictures of. We are happy to work with CBJ to figure out what that could be, a temporary art project? I am glad someone brought up the fact that so many businesses do make a lot of their money in December – it is a touchy issue. We want Gallery Walk to happen. We have closed the street for the past two years and it was quite successful. That is something to think about and take into consideration.

Eric Forst, Vice President of the Downtown Business Association: I am also here as a downtown building and property owner and I work downtown all day. Everyone I have talked to (property owners, business owners, DBA) there is strong support for demolition of that park. There is strong support for not continuing to put art there because no matter what you do in that spot, that is what you are going to get. We have tried 3-4 times to make that a park. You can't force a park where it doesn't work. And a park in that piece of land does not work. I think that Park, if you take it on a per foot basis is a huge drain on Parks & Recreation with their limited resources. The resources would be better spent on our more of our nice, usable parks that are elsewhere in the community. I don't agree that we need that open space there. We are surrounded by open space – everywhere you look is open space – that is the reason people come here is for the open space. That 40x40 piece of land in the middle of downtown business district is not why people are coming here, not why people come downtown. I would like to see the Park demolished. I think it will make redevelopment a lot easier for the Gastineau property, more people interested in it. This is a very attractive piece of property to develop for housing, which is desperately needed downtown and the DBA is very supportive of any housing, as well as commercial businesses, restaurants, art gallery on the ground floor.

You have a lot of support from DBA and business owners to demolish permanently Pocket Park.

Discussion

Bruce Denton, 5100 Montana Creek Road: I am a Glory Hole Board, DBA and the Senate Building property owner. There is a huge value in that piece of property in facilitating the demolition, but I think the value is just as great or greater in reconstruction. It will have a huge impact on demolition and construction on commerce downtown. I think it will be tough to quantify what it will cost to wreck the Park or what you save without considering the impact is going to be on the businesses in downtown. The City should use it to leverage development on the property in a way that would work for everybody. I had been looking into a downtown skating rink, and that strikes me as a place would be great for something like that, like a Rockefeller Square thing – it could even be an element. There is lots of potential do things in conjunction with the development of the property. Keep our options open and go from here.

Christina Eriksen, 145 S Franklin: Owner of Kindred Post and live on Gastineau Ave, so I live, work and play downtown. Like many others, Gunakadeit Park has fought its own struggles. My staff has stepped in poop, our door has been broken, there is trash everywhere – that being said many of those folks know us by our first names. I don't want to disagree with my DBA. If you want to talk about Instagram photos, I definitely been when there are proud moments too – the day the middle school brought kids to play music - huge crowd of tourists and locals Instagramming that, putting that on Facebook. My son was at Gunakadeit Park. I am not disagreeing with the demolition decision economically. I hear the numbers and I see that Gunakadeit Park is a great leverage for the City when it comes to new developers. I am trying to put in our two-cents about what would be really useful: housing, since that is the top of their agenda, and I'm on board with all those things. I simultaneously believe in preserving community spaces and as an activist it is hard to sit and hear comments about our neighbors being used as legitimate points in demolishing the type of opportunities that a place like Gunakadeit Park could offer with the assistance of other creative solutions to other social problems plaguing downtown. The only recommendation that I would leave would be wondering about the potential for bids to also include proposals for reconstructing a public open space. I don't think it is necessary that it comes back looking the same, there is a lot of opportunities and in talking to people that professionally do this – there is a lot of opportunity for creativity that I would welcome and would love to find out more about the economic feasibility of those choices.

Discussion

T. Gilmour: Motion to authorize CBJ to use/demolish Gunakadeit Park for demolition of the Gastineau Apartments, with the understanding that the Park will be retained and PRAC will have future discussions for proposed use of Gunakadeit Park after demolition. J. Anderson second.

E. Ouder Kirk: Offer a friendly amendment: PRAC supports use of Gunakadeit Park for the demolition of Gastineau Apartments and recognizes that will result in the demolition of the Park. PRAC will participate in decisions to guide the future use of the Park. T. Gilmour accepts friendly amendment.

Discussion, Motion passed as amended.

Director's Report continued – Kirk Duncan: Brett Farrell approached me (see memo 8/31/15 Farrell to Duncan attached) regarding Savikko Park after hours. There are a people coming down in the early hours (2 a.m.) and using the picnic shelters. We have a petition from 15 homeowners along St. Anns Street that would like the Park gated. It would not solve all the noise issues, but will be make it less attractive to have to walk to the Shelters rather than drive directly there. This is an information item. P&R Director has the discretion to establish Park hours. Now the Park closes at 12. I am proposing to close it at 11, except on certain days (i.e., 4th of July). I intend to place a sign at the proposed gated area telling them what we intend to do and let public come to PRAC for comments. This parking lot is stripped for trailers and we talked with Docks and Harbors and they have no issues for this parking. If the Park is closed, as we have at Montana Creek and the Skate Park, it is a \$50 fee for someone to come and unlock the gate to get your vehicle/trailer out.

Discussion

Brett Farrell, 504 St. Ann's Ave: referring to my letter [referenced above] top of the steps, between picnic Shelters and parking lot. The bands are rarely the issue and according to P&R the form they fill out [for shelter rental] says "no amplified music". I haven't figured out what that means because a boom box is technically amplified music – in a nutshell, this park is a great park, used by a lot of people. I bought this house in 2003 – such a great place and such a great location, the seller stated "it's a special place". The sounds of kids playing on swing sets and people walking their dogs on the beach; smell of hot dogs and hamburgers – this is a special place. A month later, on a nice evening in May I find out what he meant by "special" – we get the rock concerts or just blasting music, the picnic shelter "howling at the moon"... almost every night in the summer. All of this disturbance, what did you think you were going to get when you live above a park? I get that, what I didn't think I was going to get was being jolted awake at 2 o'clock in the morning by some impromptu tailgate party under my bedroom window, using the beach that draws the fireworks at night, the park draws because it seems a logical place to shoot them off – jolted awake with something exploding in your backyard. Disturbance happens every weekend night during the summer and a lot of week nights. It's a disturbance. I asked Kirk, why would a park need to be open until midnight - what kind of recreation is happening at midnight? I can tell you from a 12-year case study, there's not much "good" recreation. I shouldn't be in your park at midnight. Because this is a noise ordinance issue and it's not Parks & Rec job to enforce noise ordinance, it's JPD to enforce. But the ordinance is not based on a time, it is based on a reasonable person's standard – if a reasonable person finds the noise to be a disturbance then it is a violation of the noise ordinance. The police make that decision and they are very conservative. If I call them at 11:30 at night for the disturbance, I don't get past the dispatcher, because "the park is open until midnight" – you can't have a problem until 12:01 a.m., then you are a reasonable person. I think that is flawed logic. I introduced myself to Kirk by saying "you are my worse neighbor" and I would like to meet with you to discuss. P&R owns the behavior that is happening in P&R Parks. It isn't P&R's job to fix social problems, but it is P&R job to control your property and the behavior that happens on it. There were several of my neighbors (see signed petition) thought – as soon as they heard "gate" it was "whoa". There have been a lot of fences in the national news – this isn't a great time to be talking about gates and fences, but some thought it was extreme to put up a gate to block off Sandy Beach at 11 o'clock at night. Those people all live at the other end of Savikko Park they don't get the impromptu tailgate parties I get, that the gate will fix. There is no way the gate will keep people off Sandy Beach, if you walk your dog. There is no way to keep them off the ballfield. What I explained to my neighbors: this isn't

about keeping responsible people out of the Park after 11 o'clock at night – there is no reason why a person shouldn't be able to walk their dog on the beach at 11 at night. JPD is enforcing nothing – no part of this. [If you] put up a gate and change the hours, they are not going to send out a team out to keep you off the beach at night. We can fix a lot of this with access control and the police role. I solicit your support, even if you don't approve the measures in this petition, to give Mr. Duncan your support as he tries to maintain some control over the Park. Also, I think a recommendation from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee to CBJ saying: this is our properties, P&R is not staffing to provide 24 hours security for our property, we are going to take some measures to control access to Savikko Park, there is a going to be a police component for this. I have talked to Lt. Campbell who was very helpful and understanding – he talked about things like directed patrols (I can predict nights that there could be more police presence down there - about 9 at night, I can tell if it is on its way up or its going to be done by 10 or 11). I think a law enforcement officer could stroll through that Park and pick up that vibe.

Discussion

Director's Report continued – Kirk Duncan:

- The Aquatic Board has begun its work and Treadwell Board starts tomorrow.
- Bridge Park has not been named and I am checking on the process.
- We are starting a pilot program next summer 5 – 6 kids involved in youth employment in Parks, ala Anchorage Park Foundation.
- I cannot justify \$2.1M to fix the Mt. Jumbo Gym that is not used by very many people. You will hear that is coming off the CIP list. There will be public concern. Think about putting a multi-use room off of Treadwell Arena for \$1M.

Discussion

B. Fischer: Skye Stekoll from CBJ Engineering advised me that the bids for Cope Park and the Park by the Bridge are out to bid now and due back by the beginning of October. P&R will update as available.

Discussion

- **M. Gladziszewski, Assembly Liaison Report:** The [Under the Bridge Park] bids package from Monday night Assembly meeting went to the paper the very next day. On a close vote the Assembly said please don't take the bid package away, just have it be 30 days longer for the City to investigate what it would take to put housing there. Their questions are: is [housing] feasible and what would that be? There is an Assembly Committee of the Whole meeting at 8 a.m. on Thursday (9/10). This meeting will sketch out a plan to determine what the steps are to do learn that. There were not enough votes to do more than 30 days. It is housing and #1 priority.

J. Anderson: Motion to move forward with the City's current plans to move with the Seawalk as planned. T. Gilmour second. C. Merti: Friendly amendment: PRAC, as we have said before, continues to stand by the continuation of the bid process for the whale project and Seawalk between Gold Creek and "under bridge" Park due to its consistency with the Waterfront Master Plan and previous planning and approval that

has occurred in the last 10 years by the community and CBJ staff departments.
Discussion. No objections. Motion approved as amended.

VI. New Business

- Land Management Plan, Lands & Resources – G. Chaney: handout of the <http://www.juneau.org/lands/documents/DraftLandManagementPlan.pdf>. Requesting that PRAC review the retention status of designated as Parks & Recreation and comment. He appreciates input on what the PRAC wants to do with P&R parcels.

C. Mertl: looking for committee to review this and report back to Lands by October 6: T. Gilmour, F. Dowd, O. Brudie, J. Anderson, G. Landry and C. Mertl.

VII. Unfinished Business

- Comp Plan Work Group Assignments: O. Brudie, E. Ouder Kirk, G. Landry, L. Hallvik, C. Mertl. Meeting dates to be determined.
- Fees & Charges Work Group Assignments: T. Rutecki, T. Gilmour, J. Anderson, F. Dowd. Meeting dates to be determined.

VIII. Committee, Liaison, and Board Member Reports

- Chair Report - C. Mertl: Nothing to report tonight.
- Jensen-Olsen Arboretum Report – E. Ouder Kirk: The Arboretum had a great summer. There were ideas reviewed to help the Arboretum become financially independent.
- Eaglecrest – O. Brudie: Discovery Days on 9/19 with Grand Opening of the Porcupine Lodge.
- Aquatics Boards – T. Rutecki: Looking at what to do with the \$10K from Delta Airlines.

IX. Having no further business before the Board, Meeting is adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Fran Compton, P&R Administrative Assistant II 9/30/15