

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, September 2, 2014
CBJ Assembly Chambers, 6 p.m.

Call to Order: 6:05 p.m. by Chairman Wilson.

Present: Chairman Jeff Wilson, Josh Anderson, Eric Morrison, Chris Mertl, Tom Rutecki; Kate Walters;

Absent: Odin Brudie, Traci Gilmour, Gerry Landry,

P&R Staff Attending: Brent Fischer, P&R Director; Chris Day, Recording Secretary;

CBJ Assembly Liaison: Randy Wanamaker.

Agenda Changes – None, Agenda approved as presented.

Public Participation – None

Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2014 – Motion by Mr. Anderson to accept the minutes as presented, no opposition. Motion approved.

Director's Report, Mr. Fischer:

- **CBJ Review Task Force**

The Mayor has created a seven member task force that shall study the feasibility of an empowered board for the management of the Treadwell Ice Arena. Josh Anderson will be representing the PRAC. Other members include Assemblyman Loren Jones, City Manager Kim Kiefer, Mike Stanley Eaglecrest Board, Matt Boline Hockey Group, Pan Leary Skating Group and Kathy Harris general member of the public.

As you recall the Assembly was moving towards amending the Charter to include Treadwell Ice Arena under the Eaglecrest Empowered Board, but after hearing testimony and discussion with the Eaglecrest Board, the Assembly opted to not put this on the October 7th ballot.

The task force will bring back to the Assembly a report on the following:

- o Feasibility of an empowered board to reduce costs and provide services through management by the Eaglecrest Ski Area Board.
- o Feasibility of an empowered board to reduce costs and provide services through an alternate to the management by the Eaglecrest Ski Area Board.
- o Alternate management structures for managing the Treadwell Ice Arena.
- o The first meeting is planned for this Friday at noon in Room 224.

- **Facilities Survey**

I haven't had the time to finish the remaining surveys, but I wanted to pass out the facilities survey after making some changes to it. Please review sometime

this week and let me know if you would like to make any further changes. If not, I will launch this survey on our website and at all facilities.

- Day of Play

As a follow up from our last meeting, we were able to raise the funds for sponsorship of our facilities for the Day Of Play. I have included a flyer and invite you and your families to take part in this community event.

Thanks to our sponsors; Rueben Willis State Farm, Grumpy's Deli, Valley Lumber & Building Supply, Westmark Baranof, Starbucks at the Baranof, Valley Paint Center, NorthStar Trekking and Tingey Orthodontics.

- September 11th Memorial Service

You are all welcome to attend the September 11th Memorial Service to be held at Riverside Rotary Park in the valley. Services will begin promptly at 9:40am.

Question and Answer with PRAC members.

Unfinished Business – None

New Business:

- **Augustus Brown Swimming Pool and Mt. Jumbo Gym Building Assessment- Rorie Watt- Engineering Director**

Mr. Watt: I did not bring the Mt. Jumbo Survey and have not looked at it for a while, but I can speak to it. We had a meeting preceding this with Aquatic Facilities Advisory Board and talked in depth. The reports are condition surveys, they are not perfect. They gave us costs to expect to incur if we are going to keep those facilities operating, benchmark numbers. There are a number of questions – what do we have to do, what if we do the minimum, and how do we find the minimum necessary to keep the facilities going. For the Pool, the less capital money you spend, the more maintenance money you spend and the less user comfort and satisfaction you are going to have. The less facility stability you are going to have. If you don't take care of things getting older and breaking, you are going to have shut downs. If the Pool is going to stay open, we should be spending \$800,000 in the next couple of years and about \$5 Million before too long. It is an aged facility and pools are used hard. There are a number of components that are worn out. The one thing that I recommend we replace would be the building controls, they are old hand-equated systems, and they don't make spare parts for any more. When it fails it will shut down the pool for a while, or we are going to have freezing cold locker rooms or boiling hot locker rooms or whatnot – we aren't going to have a very good facility. There were a number of questions about process and prospects for funding. I think for process the next things that will happen will be the City Manager proposing a budget to the Assembly and the Assembly's consideration of that budget. The components of the City Manager's budget proposal will be operational - is it proposed to be open for the next fiscal year? And will there be a proposal for any capital monies for some of these upgrades. For the larger dollar amounts the most

likely source would come from a future sales tax extension, which would not come up for renewal for several years – possibly 2017. That is the short view of the pool, it is an old facility and it doesn't have any immediate failures, but we can expect maintenance failures to increase. Mr. Rutecki brought up some comments (at the AFAB meeting) about pursuing outside funding and I think there are possibilities there, notably grants from the State Dept. of Commerce or possibly contribution from Dept. of Education if there was a strong link to the pools as an educational facility. It is a long report; I don't expect everyone to read it. The cost estimates are reasonable numbers and I caution anyone lopping off where they think costs are high, if you want to find the places that are high then you also have to fill in the places that are low. On average the numbers are fair and responsible.

Mt. Jumbo Gym is a similar issue but a lesser dollar amount. The one item that needs addressing in the short run would be the roof. If we are keeping the gym portion open to the public the roof needs work. The amount is about \$600,000 for roof, structure, furnace and ventilation. The rest of the facility is used as a shop and will stay in use.

Discussion

Mr. Fischer: There would be savings; this survey did not look at that. Anytime you change out your heating control systems or your heating systems, you will have savings. The forced air furnace in the Gym is antiquated, it works, and it is serviced, and does the best it can do for its age. The boiler at Augustus is very old, but it is very well maintained. It is a stout old boiler. Anytime you look at air handling, they are antiquated. The controls are pneumatic controls which are antiquated so anytime any new systems with new controls you will have some savings, but the study didn't look at that.

Mr. Merti: It would be an easy pill to swallow if we could say we were saving some amount, say \$150,000. I know that is another level of study, but you may be able to present some conceptual ideas of what it might do. We keep spending, you can counter-balance with savings.

Mr. Wilson: The movement on Augustus Brown and Mt. Jumbo is with the City Manager and the Assembly to work together to look at a budget, for maintenance and operations. This is a sizeable budget in the next one to two years. Mr. Wanamaker what are your thoughts on that?

Mr. Wanamaker: The Assembly doesn't have any definite pocket identified yet. This information is new to the Assembly. They are looking at a wide variety of funding sources, and for the tax exemption task force to make recommendations. There is talk of looking at projects that can be deferred that were approved in the Sales Tax. The Assembly doesn't have any pockets of money that it looks at when funding these projects. Those are some of the tough decisions they are going to have to make – probably next Feb. or March when the staff has had a chance to put some recommendations together. The public has been talking to us individually when they see us, there are a lot of folks who want us to be fiscally prudent and basically, leave my tax exemption alone. No one wants their property taxes raised or their sales tax.

Mr. Wilson: Any other questions from PRAC? Thank you Mr. Watt.

- **Downtown Ice Rink at the Marine Park Plaza, with Mr. Bruce Denton and Evelyn Russo from the Downtown Improvement Group.**

Mr. Denton: We are with the Downtown Improvement Group and looking at various things to improve Downtown. One of the things that came up was to create some ice downtown for winter skating. We have pursued that with Bill Spear. The closest place was the wooden area next to Marine Park Garage. We are doing a proof of concept. We will do something small, even if it is just for young kids, to see if it works and gets used. We aren't looking for financial support from the City; we just want your blessing to give it a shot. Our worst case scenario would let nature make the ice; our best case would be raising enough money to buy a compressor and coils to create ice. We probably hand the operation over to some of the Skating community of Twin Lakes and perhaps the Downtown Business Association.

Ms. Russo: With a proof of concept we hope to get something up and running this winter and probably only weekends. We have raised some interest from people who will help maintain it. It would be a temporary structure, can be taken up and down easily and moved around. If we don't find the right place this year there could be other opportunities in the future where it could go.

Mr. Wilson: How much square footage you need to make it functional and meet your needs?

Mr. Denton: One of the first places we looked at was trying to do it in Pocket Park. The idea is for something that would be available for little kids. There might be an opportunity for the Gastineau Apartments to be redone, and whoever ends up rebuilding that would be coming back to the City to use [Pocket Park] as a staging area. I think our minimum is 20x30 square feet. Depends on what we can come up with for money and whether we are creating ice or flooding an area and letting it freeze.

Mr. Wanamaker: The idea of a seasonal ice skating in the Dock area isn't new; it was part of the public motivation for improving the Deckover project back in 2002. The Assembly and staff, and cruise industry talked over how to do the Deckover project and why it would be good for the community over-all. One of the items that was discussed and told to the public that we would do was using the area where the buses park during the summer and put a portable ice rink there during the winter, taking it down when the season ended. The cost was expected to be \$30,000 for the portable rink. A way for people downtown and families to skate safely, it was very popular. People still ask me when we are going to do that. If you look at the records from 2002, the Deckover project and the ice rink and part of the community reason for approving the project. Since then the City decided they would allow parking there. I have voted consistently against parking there that was never the point of building that area. It was supposed to be available for the citizens in the winter. I was one vote out of nine – I don't forget these things. That and the Cultural Gateway for the Dock area, very important and they were things that were promised to the community.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Fischer is this an informational item, or does the PRAC move on this? I support this and would like move this forward to have this opportunity for the public this winter. How do we move this forward?

Mr. Fischer: This whole Downtown movement is really good for the city. As we move forward and they have more information and they look at funding, they will own it, operate it, maintain it – it is another opportunity for folks to recreate. I think we ask for more information and move this forward. They have met with Hal Hart at CDD and Docks and Harbors is next. Coming back we'll look at whether this is a good use there.

Discussion

Mr. Wilson: I remember the Fire Department said they would bring their engines and flood everything and help us out at Cope Park. We have a lot of support there. Any more questions on the Downtown Ice Project? Thank you both for coming tonight and please keep us posted. Thank you for all you do for Downtown.

Committee, Liaison and Chair Report.

Mr. Wilson: I want to thank Mr. Wanamaker for being our Assembly liaison. Mr. Wanamaker is retiring for now.

Mr. Wanamaker: My term expires on the 14th, the day the election is certified. Any meeting between I will try to make. I am not really retiring; my Assembly schedule hasn't allowed me to do some things I want to do. I have a project in mind for some time. I worked on the Climate Change project in the '70s. Some of the things we are learning now like 7,000 years ago the climate was warmer and drier, then there was a change and became cold. People were living here. People were doing things here and other places in Alaska and they were doing it at higher elevations. I want to work on Climate Research Project and find out what they did to adapt from warm to cold. What is the scientific evidence that tells us what they did? It's big and no one is doing it yet. People are trying to study how we are going to adapt now. I think there is value in learning how we adapt to moving away from what we have lived with for thousands of years. So that is what I'll be working on.

Mr. Wilson: I am sure we will be reading about it in the newspaper.

Chair Report – Mr. Wilson: I need to appoint a back-up for the Treadwell Ice Arena Task Force. I asked Gerry [Landry] and if I don't hear from him I am asking Mr. Mertl to be the second. I will send something to the Mayor regarding Josh's replacement if he can't make it.

Assembly Liaison Report - Mr. Wanamaker: The best part of the Assembly report was given by Mr. Fischer and Mr. Watt. You asked the pertinent questions about possible funding sources which was what I was going to talk about, so we've done the report.

Lands Committee Report – Mr. Wilson: Peterson Hill subdivision was started by Dow Engineering looking at access and subdivision. We had some land sales on Lena.

Youth Activity Board – Mr. Rutecki: We have a meeting on the 9th to evaluate some contingency requests.

Aquatic Facilities Advisory Board – Ms. Walters: We met prior to this meeting and we had the same report about Augustus Brown. Our next meeting we will be after the election to see if the empowered board initiative passes and what the Assembly does. We haven't discussed the report as a group.

Mr. Mertl: With the Empowerment Board elections coming up, what information can you give the public to be informed?

Ms. Walters: The advice of the Clerk's office to the Aquatics Board is hands off. The Clerk's office is very clear about lobbying or offering information. They made an information packet on Ballot Measures. When the Assembly took public testimony, I think it was Karen Crane mentioned that a handful of the Assembly said they were in support of putting the measure on the ballot and if it passed they would look in to the benefits or ramifications.

Other Member Business

Mr. Rutecki: A Downtown Improvement Issue (I emailed Brent about this) - why we can't hire more than two people to work on the cleanups downtown, using the head-tax money. I was doing a project with a high school Science Bowl and we followed cruise ship passengers, based upon a representative of the industry saying they don't contribute to any of the trash in the landfill in Juneau. We watched them come off the boats and throw their water bottle on the ground or trash can, cigarettes – all that. Why can't we get more than two people, why can't we get ten to do the work we get volunteers for?

Mr. Fischer: That is a great point. Some of our \$2 million budget is through our Visitor Services for the crossing guard program. I would like to see the crossing guards be more of an ambassador program - put them out there as visitor services, picking up and cleaning litter, talking to tourists and providing information. The cruise ship tax money is through the City Manager's office. It has to have a nexus for visitor services. The Glory Hole cleans up cigarette butts one day a week all along the corridor. I know there are other groups that go out and clean up.

Mr. Anderson: I would to talk about the ATV issue and Aant'ieik Park. There was some organization who gave that property and some stipulation of what that property could be used for in the future. I am looking into that information to see if that Park is a viable avenue for ATVs. Mr. Denton used "proof of concept" phrase that would be great for even the rock pit behind Costco or Aant'ieik Park. We want to just try something that wouldn't cost the City any money and do something before any money is spent.

Mr. Fischer: I will report on that next month. George and I did look for anything from DOT and have not found anything on it. We have a better chance with Aant'ieik Park than we ever will out at Costco.

Mr. Mertl: Josh, we've been tasked by the Assembly for fifteen years to do an OHV Park and we finally get some money and it seems frustrating that there was money that was targeted to OHV, an Assembly priority. We went out of our way, we had public meetings, and we spent money on consultants. We have a viable low cost solution and some money and now it's been turned over to be a Parks & Rec management review and it is a slap to the face to the OHV people. Our only chance was with money we had. One that is now gone -- making the whole implementation and one of our key priorities that much more difficult. I loved that this was engaging the public and building partnership and getting people to work more with less, but I am fearful that we are saying "hey we don't need the money because we can engage everyone to do our work for us". We are setting ourselves up to make us less relevant because the community will do it for us. There is a bigger picture - \$90,000 doing a management review of CBJ staff will be beneficial when we do a Comp Plan, where we are actually looking at facilities, looking at management of facilities. We are missing the bigger picture -- we need a review of our facilities. That money needs to stay with the OHV and the Aant'yeik. We know what the community priorities are, so we can respond to the priorities of the community and CBJ and find that balance, rather than assessing staff. It seems like we are missing the big picture here. For some reason someone has decided to do a management review of our staff, when we really need to do a review of our facilities because our Comp Plan is 20 years old. The staff supports the facilities.

Mr. Wanamaker: It's always a balance of things. There are a number of issues before the Assembly, the Assembly has a sense of priorities and gives that to the City Manager and Staff. The OHV Park is still an important Assembly goal, but in my opinion it is not a priority of the City Manager office. We had to start somewhere and that is the method they chose to do it with.

Discussion on Parks & Rec accreditation.

Mr. Walters: I am wondering where we are on a staff retreat to work on the Comp Plan?

Mr. Fischer: We have a tentative schedule for a review. Part of that process will be to look at Comp Plan with a retreat. We have done our 1-3-5 years' long range goals, we have done our essential services, and we have done our prioritization of services. We are ready to go out for Public Comment through the PRAC with what we want to provide and will ask the public: Is this something you want? Is there something we shouldn't? And the PRAC's job will be to help us with that information and process. When I know for sure the consultant and the schedule, I will update you.

Mr. Wilson: We will need to change the next PRAC Meeting date -- will be announced.

Meeting Adjourned by Chair Wilson at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Fran Compton, CBJ Administrative Assistant II, October 30, 2014