



# Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

## Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

### Harrigan Centennial Hall

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Members: Chair –Ben Hughey, Candace Rutledge  
James Poulson, Brandon Marx, Rich Krupa,  
Steve Black, Katherine Prussian  
Assembly Liaison: Kevin Mosher

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Hughey called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m.

#### **II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Ben Hughey, James Poulson, Candace Rutledge , Katherine Prussian, Brandon Marx, and Rich Krupa

Absent: Steve Black

Assembly Liaison: Kevin Mosher

Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Kevin Knox, Parks and Recreation Coordinator, and Connor Dunlap, Facilities Division Supervisor

Others: None.

#### **III. AGENDA CHANGES**

None.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. January 14, 2025

**Poulsen moved to approve the January 14, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.**

#### **V. REPORTS**

Chair: None.

Members: None.

City Staff: Kevin Knox, Parks, and Recreation Coordinator reported on after-school programs and the temporary suspension of activities at Swan Lake Senior Center due to water damage. Connor Dunlap reported on the replanting of garden beds in front of Harrigan in April, highlighted the coordinated updates and improvements to the Cross Trail section between Indian River and Yaw Drive, and noted that community members had been working hard to get a new scoreboard donated for Moeller Park. He also introduced Kent Smith as the new Buildings, Grounds, and Parks Supervisor.

Assembly Liaison: Mosher noted that the Assembly and staff were in the midst of budget

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season and were planning for a status quo budget, if possible.

Other(s): Ben Hughey, Sitka Trails reported that their next volunteer would be on February 20<sup>th</sup> and would involve removing overgrown brush on the Sawmill Creek pathway.

**VI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (For items OFF the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)

None.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**B. Commercial Use Land Use Permits Applications**

Hughey noted a new process for this interim year. Knox explained that, based on past feedback, they streamlined applications by revising the format in December, making key details more accessible and adding a checklist for required documents.

To improve efficiency, Knox and Ainslie proposed starting with a motion outlining permit conditions, followed by a motion for approval or denial based on environmental impact, public health, and public use. If criteria wasn't met, a denial recommendation would include factual findings.

Knox emphasized this aligns with existing code and was necessary due to the rise in applications from 2022–2024. The committee would refine the process over time.

**Alpenglow Adventures**

Laura Tirman, the owner, gave a briefing on her business activities.

Prussian questioned the City's liability for clients using the Medvejie Trail, which lacks a bridge over the river. Knox clarified that the trail was considered part of the City's recreational corridor.

The committee discussed trail hours to reduce conflicts with locals, suggesting commercial users focus on weekdays when local use is lower. This was a recommendation, not a requirement. They also recognized potential weekend conflicts and emphasized the need to better understand local trail usage patterns.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: the removal of Medvejie Lake Trail from the application. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Alpenglow Adventures (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Bumble Expeditions**

Sara Hadad-Dembs, the owner, gave a briefing on her business activities. She requested that Whale Park be added to her application. The committee also expressed concerns about overcrowding on trails, particularly on Thimbleberry, and suggested limiting the number of participants on Herring Cove and Indian River trails.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum users to 8 for Indian River and Herring Cove, and to include Whale Park. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Bumble Expeditions (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Sound Sailing**

Prussian noted that, based on public comments and considerations, they preferred not to see Goddard included or approved in this permit and emphasized the importance of completing the public process before setting a precedent.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to remove Goddard Hot Springs from the application.**

**Yes- Prussian**

**No- Rutledge, Poulsen, Hughey, Marx, Krupa,**

**Motion Failed: 5-1**

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Sound Sailing (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Tongass Treks**

Alaina Brown, the owner, gave an overview of her business activities.

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Tongass Treks (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Alaska Luxury Tours**

Travis Holt, the owner, discussed his company's operations and sensitivity towards the local area. He mentioned that they specialize in small groups, typically up to 12

people, and usually split larger groups into two.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 for Baranof Warm Springs Dock.**

**Yes- Prussian, Rutledge, Poulsen, Marx**

**No- Hughey, Krupa,**

**Motion Passed: 4-2**

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Alaska Luxury Tours (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Equinox**

Cameo Padilla, the owner, gave a briefing on her business activities.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Marx mentioned the committee's decision was based on the negative impacts of commercial use on the area, such as human excrement and overcrowding. He also recognized the need for standardized conditions for all commercial operators, set to be implemented in November.

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Equinox (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **Sitka Tundra Tours**

The committee discussed the application, focusing on the weekly and annual number of customers. They considered the rate rather than the total number of customers and discussed the potential impact on local use.

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum users to 8 for Thimbleberry to Heart Lake Trail. Motion failed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Sitka Tundra Tours (subject to the proposed conditions of approval) and hereby make the required determinations regarding this use as**

**listed in SGC 14.10.030(B)(1-3). Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting would be on March 11, 2025, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.  
Hearing no objection, Chair Hughey called the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Attest:  
Jess Earnshaw,  
Deputy Municipal Clerk