



Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Present: James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Rich Krupa, Katherine Prussian, and Steve Black

Absent: Brandon Marx (excused)

Assembly Liaison: Kevin Mosher

Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk, Kevin Knox, Parks and Recreation Coordinator, and Connor Dunlap Buildings, Grounds & Parks Supervisor

Others: None.

III. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 14, 2023

Hughey moved to approve the November 14, 2023, minutes as written. Motion passed 5-0 by a roll call vote.

V. REPORTS

Chair: None.

Members: None.

City Staff: Kevin Knox, the Parks and Recreation Coordinator, announced the arrival of Elle Campbell as the new Recreation Activities Specialist for the Parks and Recreation Department. He highlighted their ongoing efforts in crafting Spring break programs and discussed recent mid-year appropriations, notably including funding for trail counters. These counters will enhance our ability to track trail usage and visitor origins effectively. Furthermore, Knox mentioned the high utilization of the Blatchley facility, nearly reaching full booking capacity.

Connor Dunlap, Supervisor of Buildings, Grounds & Parks, updated on recent efforts, stating that their team has been diligently clearing trails after recent windstorms. He highlighted a resource proposal in the budget aimed at essential repairs and maintenance for the Whale Park boardwalk, emphasizing its critical need. Additionally, Dunlap mentioned awaiting parts for lighting installations along the boardwalk and sea walk. He also addressed a lighting warranty replacement underway at Moeller Field.

Assembly Liaison: None.

Other(s): Ben Hughey of Sitka Trail Works provided an update, confirming that the memorandum of understanding for the trail plan has been officially signed by all involved agencies.

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

Barb Morse expressed gratitude to the Parks and Recreation Committee for their hard work over the years.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Update on Parks and Rec Plan

Dunlap noted that the project was progressing. Public Works had partnered with a firm from Anchorage which would soon have a consultant to Sitka within the next couple of weeks to gather additional information concerning the identified assets.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

C. Recognition-Barb Morse

Chair Poulson, presented Barb Morse with a Citation, extending the Parks and Recreation Committee's gratitude for her efforts in reestablishing the recreation program for Sitka.

D. Commercial Use Permit Applications

Sitka Tundra Tours

Anna-Marie Parker provided an outline of their operations that would include short stops on their van tours. She stated they have over 28 years of experience out in the wilderness and amongst bears. Hughey inquired about the anticipated number of tour participants and the projected start date for operations.

Hughey moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Sitka Tundra Tours at Whale Park, Thimbleberry, Heart Lake, and Cross Trail as it has been determined that the use as proposed: 1. Will not pollute or degrade the environment, resources, facilities, or atmosphere of the area; and 2. Will not endanger the public health, safety, and welfare; and 3. Will not significantly interfere with the use and enjoyment of the area by other members of the public. Motion passed 5-0 by a roll call vote.

Sitka Sunshine Kayaks

The Committee raised concerns about the jurisdiction of Starrigavin, questioning whether this property falls under the State of Alaska's authority. They sought clarification regarding the city's jurisdiction over the ramp and its surrounding area.

Prussian moved to postpone this item to the next Parks and Recreation regular meeting on March 12, 2024. Motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.

Alpenglow Adventures Sitka, LLC

Laura Tierman, owner, and guide provided an outline of her business. She explained the proposed locations, number of participants, transportation, time of desired usage, and training requirements. Hughey spoke about the concerns of non-permit users.

Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Alpenglow Adventures Sitka, LLC at Herring Cove to Beaver Lake, Gavan Hill to Sitka Cross Trail, Indian River, Heart Lake/Thimbleberry Trails, Sitka Cross Trails, and Medvejie as it has been determined that the use as proposed: 1. Will not pollute or degrade the environment, resources, facilities, or atmosphere of the area; and 2. Will not endanger the public health, safety, and welfare; and 3. Will not significantly interfere with the use and enjoyment of the area by other members of the public. Motion passed 5-0 by a roll call vote.

Bumble Expeditions

The representative of Bumble Expeditions, Sara Hadad-Dembs, summarized the business activity. She outlined their business proposal, detailing the trails to be utilized, the expected number of clients per day, necessary training, and a breakdown of fees. Additionally, she mentioned that the business would use three hybrid minivans capable of accommodating up to seven individuals each.

Hughey moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Bumble Expeditions LLC at Thimbleberry/ Heart Lake, Herring Cove, and Indian River Trail as it has been determined that the use as proposed: 1. Will not pollute or degrade the environment, resources, facilities, or atmosphere of the area; and 2. Will not endanger the public health, safety, and welfare; and 3. Will not significantly interfere with the use and enjoyment of the area by other members of the public. Motion passed 5-0 by a roll call vote.

Sitka Walking Tours

Andrew Hinton, the operator of Sitka Walking Tours, reviewed their business operations and outlined their intended offerings. He elaborated on the starting location for their tours, provided estimates for participant numbers and group sizes, and specified the desired usage times.

Krupa moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Sitka Walking Tours at Baranof Cross Trail and 1 Block of the Sea walk as it has been determined that the use as proposed: 1. Will not pollute or degrade the environment, resources, facilities, or atmosphere of the area; and 2. Will not endanger the public health, safety, and welfare; and 3. Will not significantly interfere with the use and enjoyment of the area by other members of the public. Motion passed 5-0 by a roll call vote.

E. Nominations for Chair / Vice Chair

Krupa moved to nominate James Poulsen as Chair and Ben Hughey as Vice Chair for the Parks and Recreation Committee. Motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

- XI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (For items on or off the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)
None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting would be on March 12, 2024, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall. Hearing no objection, Chair Poulson called the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Attest:
Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk