



# Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

## Tuesday, April 8, 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, Steve Black, Candace Rutledge , Katherine Prussian, Brandon Marx, Rich Krupa, and James Poulson- *left the meeting at 1:05 p.m.*

Absent: None.

Assembly Liaison: Kevin Mosher

Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Kevin Knox, Parks and Recreation Coordinator, and Kent Smith, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor

Others: None.

### III. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 11, 2025

**Poulson moved to approve the March 11, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.**

### V. REPORTS

Chair: None.

Members: Prussian mentioned that there would be .

City Staff: Kevin Knox, Parks, and Recreation Coordinator spoke about updating the code to allow for online registrations and will direct individuals to the Parks and Recreation Division for field and facility reservations. Additionally, he spoke about adding interested committee members as advocates to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) membership. He mentioned that Parks and Recreation staff will also be responsible for implementing the new fee schedule, including updated field rates, by November 1st.

Kent Smith, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, reported plans to distribute chalk to the

appropriate fields and to install a new scoreboard at Moeller Field following Assembly approval on April 20th. He also noted the scheduled demolition of the Crescent bathrooms and the installation of a new prefabricated building by May 1st. Additionally, he provided an update on the revitalization of the garden beds and the preparation of sports fields.

Assembly Liaison: None.

Other(s): None.

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

None.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

C. Commercial Land Use Permits

**1. Discovery Journeys**

Knox provided an overview of the process for Commercial Land Use Permits. The focus was on the land use permit process and the need for reform. The Assembly adopted a new code revision, but it was not set to take effect until the fall. In the meantime, they were likely to bring forward a land use plan like what had been reviewed in December.

Prussian questioned about breaking up the group sizes, and if they were still be considered?

Alyssa Jostle with Alaska Bound Charters spoke on behalf of Ben Swanson the owner of Discovery Journeys mentioned that Ben was willing to split into smaller groups and that was an option, if he was restricted to the 6 clients, and 1 guide.

Marx stated the need to track the total number of people visiting certain areas to avoid disrupting the local's experience.

**Poulson moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Prussian moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Discovery Journeys (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.**

**2. Custom Alaska Cruises**

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Poulson moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Custom Alaska Cruises (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.

### **3. Bear Paw Charters**

Prussian move to separate the request into two separate permits for Warm Springs and Goddard. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Marx moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Prussian moved to remove Goddard Hot Springs from the Bear Paw Charters permit request. Motion passed 4-3 by the following roll call vote.

Yes- Poulson, Marx, Krupa, Prussian

No- Black, Rutledge, Hughey

Prussian moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Bear Paw Charter (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 6-1 by the following voice vote.

Yes- Marx, Prussian, Krupa, Poulson, Rutledge, Hughey

No- Black

### **4. Baranof Wilderness Lodge**

Marx moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Baranof Wilderness Lodge (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.

### **5. Favorite Bay Lodge**

Kimberly Roberts Gnagy provided a brief overview of her business activities. She also mentioned the lodge's new ownership and the expansion of their season.

Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by

**voice vote.**

**Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Favorite Bay Lodge (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.**

#### **6. Dauntless/Alaska Bound Charters**

Alyssa from Dauntless Alaska presented their operations, which include 8-day tours between Petersburg and Juneau, and occasionally Sitka. They typically stop 7 or 8 times, and they have 2 guides for safety purposes. The committee discussed the need for a second guide for safety and management of clients.

**Marx moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Prussian moved to remove Goddard Hot Springs from the Dauntless/Alaska Bound Charters permit request. Motion passed 4-3 by the following roll call vote.**

**Yes- Poulson, Marx, Krupa, Prussian**

**No- Black, Rutledge, Hughey**

**Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Dauntless/Alaska Bound Charters (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.**

#### **7. Alaska Luxury**

**Jeffrey Gorton provided a brief overview of his business activities.**

**Poulson moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**Black 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.**

#### **8. Sitka Tribal Tours**

**Jackie Ojala provided a brief overview of their business activities.**

**Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as**

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requested by Sitka Tribal 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.

#### **9. Sitka Walking Tours**

Andrew Tinton outlined their operations, including a historic downtown tour and a hike to the Baranoff Street Cross trail entrance.

Black moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Sitka Walking 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.

#### **10. The Boat Company**

Paul Olson, the Boat Company's conservation and permitting director, discussed the company's 40-year operation in southeast Alaska, including their use of Warm Springs for the past 40 years. He mentioned that the company has permits from the city of Sitka and the Forest Service, and that their vessels can accommodate up to 24 passengers. Olson also noted that the company's actual use has been lower than the maximum capacity, and that they prefer to operate during the shoulder season.

Poulson moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock.  
Motion passed by voice vote, 6–0.

Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by The Boat Company (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 by voice vote, 6–0.

#### **11. Alaska Song Charter**

Jonathan Yoors provided a brief overview of his business activities.

Marx moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 6 and 1 guide for Baranof Warm Springs Dock.  
Motion passed by voice vote, 6–0.

Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by Alaska Song Charter (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).

## **12. High Output Tours**

Bethany Lowrance provided a brief overview of her business activities and revised the projected number from 4,000 to 3,500. She discussed the use of city land for their bike and hike tours, which primarily followed the Thimbleberry Heart Lake Trail, and considered the potential impact of the out bridge on their plans, as well as the possible use of a section of the Cross Trail.

**Black moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit the maximum group to 8 and 1 guide for Thimbleberry/Heart Lake. Motion failed by voice vote, 0-6.**

**Prussian moved to propose the following conditions of approval: to limit group sizes to a maximum of 8 participants with 2 guides for the Herring Cove and Indian River areas, and no more than 14 participants with 2 guides for the Thimbleberry/Heart Lake trail. Motion passed by voice vote, 6-0.**

**Marx moved to recommend approval of the commercial recreational land use permit as requested by High Output 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 by voice vote, 6-0.**

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting would be on May 13 , 2025, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall. Hearing no objection, Chair Hughey called the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Attest:  
Jess Earnshaw,  
Deputy Municipal Clerk