



Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

Tuesday, July 11, 2023, 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

Members: Chair – James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Brandon Marx
Rich Krupa, Kevin Knox, Katherine Prussian
Assembly Liaison: Crystal Duncan

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair James Poulson called the meeting to order at approximately 12:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Brandon Marx, and Kevin Knox

Absent: Rich Krupa, and Katherine Prussian

Assembly Liaison: Crystal Duncan

Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk

Others: None.

III. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 11, 2023

Knox moved to approve May 11, 2023, minutes as written. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

V. REPORTS

Chair: None.

Members: None.

City Staff: Barb Morse, the Temporary Parks and Recreation Coordinator, this year's summer programs saw an impressive enrollment of over 500 participants.

Assembly Liaison: None.

Other(s): Ben Hughey, Sitka Trail Works mentioned that the cross trail grand opening was a success.

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

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

B. Discussions on Field and Facility Use Fees review of analysis

The Committee engaged in discussions regarding the reservation of fields and facilities, as well as the forthcoming program scheduled for Parks and Recreation. Brock Vowell and Randy Hitchcock addressed the fee structure and the inclusion of "priority" user language in the existing field use policy. They also emphasized the importance of finding more equitable ways to allocate Upper Moller for all users.

Barb Morse, the Temporary Parks, and Recreation Coordinator, shared that she received this information from Ketchikan, which included the cost analysis.

C. Commercial Use Permit Applications

Maple Leaf Adventures

Hughey moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activities on city and borough lands for Maple Leaf Adventures at Baranof Warm Springs and Baranof Lake, 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 unanimously by a voice vote.

Miche Wood, the spokesperson of Maple Leaf Adventures, provided insights into their business operations. She highlighted their expertise in small ship eco tours, focused on personalized experiences with a maximum of twelve guests per trip. When asked about their tour frequency and partnerships with other operators, Wood explained that they usually arrange five to seven trips annually. Each tour lasts around ten days, starting from one port and ending at another. Additionally, she specified that these trips include a single visit to the beautiful Baranof Warm Springs.

Sitka Wild Coast Kayaks

Knox moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activities on city and borough lands for Sitka Wild Coast Kayaks at Gagarin and Crow Islands, Middle Island Sites Crescent

Harbor Loading Dock, Big and Little Gavanski Islands, Herring Cove, Bear Cove, and Silver Bay 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 unanimously by a voice vote.

Michael Graney, owner of Sitka Wild Coast Kayaks furnished information about his business, and mentioned no changes were made to his business from last year.

Sitka Sunshine Kayaks

Hughey moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activities on city and borough lands for Sitka Sunshine Kayaks at Stargavin, Back Beach, Herring Cove, Blue Lake and Swan Lake 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.

The Committee had discussions regarding the Stargavin location potential possible impacts.

Knox moved to amend the approval of the request to include a recommendation to the administrator to not allow use of the Starrigavan boat launch area for commercial kayak launching. The amendment passed unanimously by voice vote.

The main motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

D. Update on the Parks and Recreation Plan

Poulson stated meetings were still be held.

E. Discussions on Trail Crowding and Unpermitted Commercial Use

Discussions by the Committee on the increased concerns regarding trail overcrowding in our community. Members shared their observations and concerns about the rising number of visitors to the trails, resulting in congestion, and potential safety hazards. The board then discussed the growing problem of unpermitted commercial use of the trails by certain businesses and organizations. These activities not only contribute to overcrowding but also disregard established guidelines, permits, and fees, leading to an unfair advantage over legitimate, permitted enterprises.

XI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (For items on or off the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting would be on August 8, 2023, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Hearing no objection, Chair Poulson called the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Attest:
Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk