



Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 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 12:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Rich Krupa, Brandon Marx, and Steve Black

Absent: Rich Krupa (excused), and Katherine Prussian (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. February 13, 2024

Hughey moved to approve the February 13, 2023, minutes as written. Motion passed 4-0 by voice vote.

V. REPORTS

Chair: None.

Members: None.

City Staff: Kevin Knox, the Parks, and Recreation Coordinator, shared that they launched a new registration and facility management platform and their social media platforms.

He also mentioned their commitment to providing scholarships for those in need.

Connor Dunlap, Supervisor of Buildings, Grounds & Parks, reported on the acquisition of a new discus safety cage and the plan to repair the home play area at Lower field.

Assembly Liaison: None.

Other(s): Ben Hughey of Sitka Trail Works discussed their progress on various trail plans and the idea of water trails.

VI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (For items OFF the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)
None.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Update on Parks and Rec Plan

Knox provided an update on the Parks and Rec plan and mentioned that a public engagement event was planned for April 27th.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

C. Commercial Use Permit Applications

Sitka Sunshine Kayaks

Pat Swanson, operator for Sitka Sunshine Kayaks provided an outline of their rental service, with a focus on use and safety concerns. The service plans to have up to 10 kayaks available at Back Beach, with the frequency of use being daily throughout the summer, particularly in the morning and midday. The Committee raised concerns about the busy nature of the area, including boat traffic and wood cutting activities, and the potential impact on kayakers. The operator responded by outlining safety measures such as mandatory swimming skills, a liability waiver, and the consideration of weather conditions before allowing rentals.

Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Sitka Sunshine Kayaks at Back Beach, Herring Cove, Blue Lake, Swan Lake, and Sitka Harbors 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 4-0 by a voice vote.

Tongass Treks

Alaina Brown, owner of Tongass Treks gave an overview of their operation. She mentioned this was her second year operating and most of her bookings were directly booked from their website, not through cruise ships. After a discussion regarding jurisdiction and landownership, it was decided to remove Beaver Lake and add Thimbleberry and Heart Lake to the list.

Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Tongass Treks at Herring Cove, Gavan Hill, Cross Trail, Indian River, Thimbleberry, and Heart 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 4-0 by a voice vote.

Sitka Bike & Hike

Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Sitka Bike & Hike at Cross Trail, Gavan Hill, Thimbleberry, and Herring Cove 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 4-0 by a voice vote.

D. Discussions on the FY25 Budget

E. Review of Facility rates and fees

Knox emphasized the importance of balancing revenue generation with affordability to ensure the program's accessibility. He mentioned the proposed budget included increased expenses for facility monitoring, instructors, contractors, and supplies due to the program's growth. He also said plans were to utilize equipment and facilities at a local high school, and to provide housing for AmeriCorps staff at a dorm over the summer. However, the budget for Blatchley Pool was marked as pending due to late submission and the need for further information from the school district. The Committee expressed their support for the proposed budget. Discussions on the implementation of a new fee structure for the Facility Management Platform, with a focus on administrative and city code compliance. They proposed a flatter rate structure, the application of sales tax on top, and greater transparency. A cancellation policy with a \$10 service charge for refunds requested at least a week in advance was also discussed. Also addressed the operations of the Swan Lake Senior Center, a building owned by the city but managed by a Catholic organization since 1987. They proposed new fees for the use of the Swan Lake Peninsula and clarified that organizations, not individuals, cover fees for athletic fields and players.

F. Update on the Crescent Harbor Restroom project

Jason Hudson, Project Manager for the Public Works Engineering Department, shared that they are preparing a request for proposals (RFP) for design and build services for the project, with the aim to launch it in April. The project, which was currently underfunded, is expected to occur outside of the crew season. Hudson mentioned potential funding sources from a grant for a nearby park's

playground area, which could influence the restroom project's funding. He concluded by soliciting feedback on the project's plan.

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 April 9, 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