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# Parks and Recreation Committee Agenda

Tuesday, August 13, 2024 12:00 PM  
Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive

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

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. AGENDA CHANGES**
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - A. June 18, 2024, and July 9, 2024
- V. REPORTS**

Chair:  
Members:  
City Staff:  
Assembly Liaison:  
Other(s): Sitka Trail Works
- VI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (For items OFF the agenda - not to exceed 3 minutes)
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS**
  - B. Discussions on Land Use Permit Changes
  - C. Discussions on redesignating the Baranof Warm Springs Board Walk
- IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (For items ON or OFF the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes)
- X. ADJOURNMENT**



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# Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 12:00 PM  
Harrigan Centennial Hall

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Members: Chair – James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Brandon Marx  
Rich Krupa, Steve Black, Katherine Prussian, Candace Rutledge  
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: Ben Hughey, Brandon Marx, Candace Rutledge and Steve Black

Absent: James Poulson (excused), 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. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (For items OFF the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)

None.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### D. Commercial Use Permit Applications

#### Alaska Sea Adventures

**Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Alaska Sea Adventures at Baranof Warm Springs 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 roll call vote.**

The Committee discussed potential concerns from residents about increased use and its impact on the area, including inadequate facilities and littering.

**Yes- Hughey, Rutledge, Marx, Black**  
**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, and Prussian**

Celerius Management Partnership

**Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Celerius Management Partnership Warm Springs 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 5-1 by a roll call vote.**

The Committee expressed concerns about insufficient information and the need for reform of the permit process.

**Yes- Rutledge, Marx, Black, Hughey**  
**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, and Prussian**

Custom Alaska Cruises

**Rutledge moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Custom Alaska Cruises at Baranof Warm Springs 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 failed 0-4 by a roll call vote.**

Concerns were raised by the Committee about the impact on local resources and the need for further discussions with the applicants to understand their plans and protocols.

**No-Marx, Rutledge, Black, Hughey**  
**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, and Prussian**

Louie The Lab Walking Tours

**Black moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Louie The Lab Walking Tours at Downtown Sitka 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 roll call vote.**

Adam Horton explained his business proposal for a commercial use permit for walking tours in downtown Sitka, aiming to promote tourism and raise awareness for a friend's battle with breast cancer.

**Yes- Black, Marx, Rutledge, Hughey**  
**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, Prussian**

Maple Leaf Adventures

**Rutledge moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Maple Leaf Adventures at Baranof Warm Springs 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 roll call vote.**

Robyn Hutchings a Maple Leaf representative explained the business activity of the Canadian company that operates a small vessel, Swell, to visit Warm Springs Bay in Southeast Alaska, addressed concerns about the company's environmental and crowd management practices. She mentioned the vessel can accommodate up to 12 passengers and five crew members, and the company follows a policy of "leave no trace", ensuring all waste is packed out. The company also splits its groups into two phases to minimize the impact on the environment and the local community. The Committee requested that the company maintain informal limits on group sizes to minimize the impact on the area, as the locals have requested group sizes to be limited to five with a guide.

**Yes- Rutledge, Marx, Black, Hughey**

**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, and Prussian**

Mogambo Holdings Ltd.

**Marx moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for Mogambo Holdings Ltd at Baranof Warm Springs 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 roll call vote.**

Hughey had concerns from residents about group sizes and previous community agreements limiting them to under 10 guests.

**Yes- Black, Marx, Rutledge, Hughey**

**Absent- Poulson, Krupa, Prussian**

**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 July 9, 2024, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Hearing no objection, Vice Chair Poulson called the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk



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# Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 2024, 12:00 p.m.  
Harrigan Centennial Hall

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Members: Chair – James Poulson, Ben Hughey, Brandon Marx  
Rich Krupa, Steve Black, Katherine Prussian, Candace Rutledge  
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 (arrived at 12:10 pm), Rich Krupa, Brandon Marx (arrived at 12:11 pm), Katherine Prussian and Steve Black

Absent: Rich Krupa (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. May 14, 2024

**Black moved to approve the May 14, 2024 minutes as written. Motion passed 6-0 by voice vote.**

## V. REPORTS

Chair: None.

Members: Katherine Prussian.

City Staff: Kevin Knox, Parks, and Recreation Coordinator reported on the operational control of the Blatchley Pool, which has been handed over to city staff as of July 1st. He mentioned a job position for an aquatic supervisor and head lifeguard had been advertised, with one application received so far. The pool remains closed to the public due to the absence of staff, but it's open to certain rental groups who provide their own lifeguarding staff.

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**  
None.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**B. Commercial Use Permit Applications**

M/Y Lady L

***Krupa moved to recommend approval to the administrator for a permit for commercial recreational activity on city and borough lands for M/Y Lady L at Baranof Warm Springs 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 6-0 by a roll call vote.***

Angel Holbrooks from Yacht Services of Alaska a representative from the Lady L, a privately owned vessel primarily used for occasional recreational purposes by the family. She emphasized that the vessel would accommodate a maximum of six guests and assured that it would not disrupt local traffic or utilize community facilities such as restrooms.

***Yes- Poulsen, Rutledge, Marx, Krupa, Black, Prussian  
Absent- Krupa***

**C. Blatchley Pool Fee Schedule**

The Committee discussed the revised fee schedule for Blatchley pool, specifically addressing adjustments for the Barracudas, the pool's largest user group. Dean Orbison explained that the slight increase in their hourly rate was necessary due to higher lifeguard service costs, which had remained stable since Covid restrictions were put in place. The Committee felt the new rates were considered fair and in line with what the Barracudas had expected to pay.

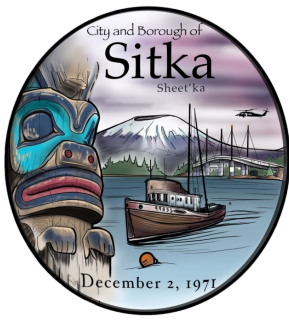
**XI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (For items on or off the agenda - Not to Exceed 3 Minutes)  
Assembly member Carlson reported on recent recommendations from the Tourism Task Force, highlighting potential collaborations with the Tourism Commission on visitor activities and the use of recreational facilities in Sitka. Topics included considering non-smoking zones in public spaces like playgrounds and sports facilities, and the proposal to designate priority recreational areas for residents. Ben Hughey gave an update on the ongoing reconstruction of the first footbridge along the Indian River trail, which was damaged during a storm.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting would be on August 13 , 2024, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.  
Hearing no objection, Chair Poulson called the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Attest:  
Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk





# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

## PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Parks and Recreation Committee Members

**From:** Kevin Knox, Parks and Recreation Coordinator  
Amy Ainslie, Planning & Community Development Director

**Date:** August 8, 2024

**Subject:** Proposed Changes to Commercial Land Use Permit Process

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#### **Background**

With the recent growth in Sitka's visitor industry, the Parks & Recreation Committee has experienced an influx of permit requests under SGC 14.10, "Commercial Recreational Use of Municipal Lands and Facilities". As evidenced in this current permit year, there are shortcomings of the provisions of the current code, particularly with regards to our ability to address commercial use of certain trail systems and other recreational assets within the City and Borough of Sitka.

The current provisions of SGC 14.10 affect how applicants interpret the need to apply for a permit and lack guidance for the Committee (or Administrator) to set asset capacity or require conditions of use for commercial operations. Current determinations are based on little, if any, objective data or process for review; this has made attempts to limit or deny permit requests vulnerable to the perception that they are arbitrary or subjective. However, the Committee continues to hear from the community that certain assets may be over-utilized. In short, our current permitting provisions and processes do not appear to fit our current recreation management needs.

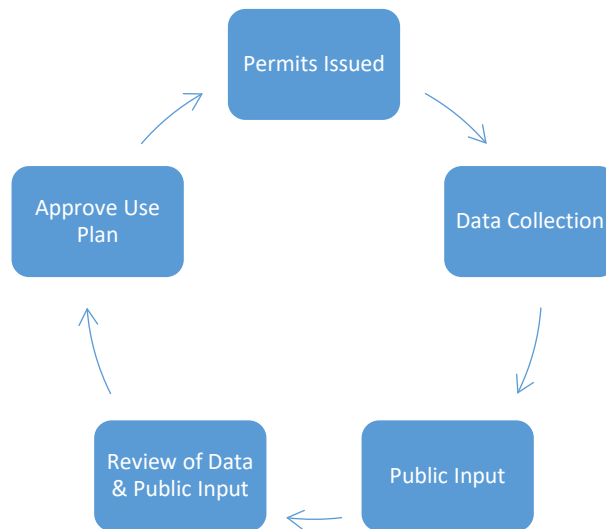
Staff had the opportunity to meet with the U.S. Forest Service and State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources to examine some of the common goals, unique characteristics, strengths and shortfalls of each agency's recreational permitting systems. Staff have also had an opportunity to learn from other agency permitting processes including the National Park Service and City and Borough of Juneau. From these discussions, we have come up with a beginning framework that will help us proceed with a process to enhance the CBS permit process. This discussion will take place over several months/meetings and open the opportunity for public input on how we should manage commercial use of recreational assets.

## **Proposed Changes**

The goals of an improved permit process (and corresponding code revision) include:

- Expand definitions to better guide the public and staff.
- Create objective measures for permit issuance based on the carrying capacity of our recreational assets and public input on priority-use sites.
- Regularly collect and review data including asset use, commercial operator demand, number of permits, and maintenance needs.
- Establish regular, robust public engagement to inform the permitting process.
- With clear guidelines in place, empower staff to review, amend, and issue permits.
- Provide commercial users and the public with a clear administrative and/or public appeal process for permits approved or denied.

As currently envisioned, the new permitting process would include a commercial recreational use plan (formal name TBD, “Use Plan” for current reference) that identifies all CBS recreational assets, which assets will allow commercial recreational use, and the carrying capacity and/or conditions of commercial use for each of those assets. Every year, the Committee would review the Use Plan along with data and public input collected, and approve the Use Plan for the following year (either as-is or with amendments). Staff would then administratively issue permits in accordance with the Use Plan.



Staff would like to note that while one of the end products of this initiative is a code revision, our approach will be to define how the process/permit provisions should ideally work with input from the Committee, public, and commercial operators. From there, a code revision will be drafted to reflect the determined process and provisions.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Committee review and provide feedback on the goals outlined and conceptual, proposed process. With the Committee’s approval of both, staff will proceed with defining the next steps and schedule for this initiative.