



## Minutes

### Auke Lake Management Neighborhood Open House

Thursday, November 8, 2012 / University of Alaska Southeast

- **Welcome & Introductions**

**Staff Present:** George Schaaf, Parks and Landscape Superintendent; Brent Fischer, Recreation Director; Myiia Whistler, Recreation Superintendent; Amanda Wilkins, Administrative Assistant I

Mr. Schaaf said the two open houses are an opportunity for Parks and Recreation to listen to the community. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) will take up staff suggestions of what will happen with the lake. The next open meeting is November 15 at 7pm at Centennial Hall. There will be two PRAC hosted meetings: November 28 at 6pm in the Assembly Chambers, and December 6 at 6pm in the Assembly Chambers.

- **Overview of Auke Lake**

- Natural Characteristics  
The lake is 160 acres, .87 miles long by .4 miles wide and 103 feet deep. The lake holds Coho, sockeye, pink and chum salmon, and is home to eagles, raptors, deer and beavers
- Recent Developments  
There has been construction on the Auke Lake trail and completion of the trail that connects the University of Alaska Southeast to the lake.
- Planned Developments  
CBJ is working with the State of Alaska for formalize the use of the boat ramp that was installed. The future improvements of the area include: picnic shelter, fire ring, parking with storm water catchment basins, floating dock, and permanent bathrooms.

- **Existing Regulations / 2007 Public Process**

- Ordinance 2007-31  
This ordinance established hours of operation, restricted entry and

- speed limit, set a buoy line, prohibited refueling, prohibited vessels over 16 feet LOA, and provided for fines of up \$250
- Ordinance 2008-26(c)  
Expanded the no-wake zone 650' south, expanded the buffer zone
- CBJ Code 67.01.095

- **Public Comment**

- Five minutes per person
  - Signup sheet
- Laurie Sewell said the trail is wonderful.

Fred Thorsteinson said the trail is really great, but the parking that is associated with the trail is really bad. It is a continuous problem; it creates a lot of problems because of people entering traffic without looking, the traffic causes problems with people who live out there. The police have been unwilling to enforce any of the laws. He asked if there will be any enforcement. Mr. Schaaf said that the goal is to make the wayside the main parking for the trail. Mr. Schaaf said CBJ is working with DOT to make it achievable.

Dave Hanna asked what is not working on the lake. Mr. Schaaf said that people have said that the buoys are not working. There are a lot of social issues, like the float pieces being used as swimming docks and boat docks. Mr. Hanna asked how many fines summer 2012. Mr. Schaaf said Parks and Recreation is not authorized to issue citations.

Dick Dau said he has been on the lake for 35 years; he watched the lake go from canoe and rowboat to what it is today. Mr. Dau said the lake is too small for 40-50mph speed crafts that are using it. He has seen 15 or more boats and jet skis on the lake at a time. He said the lake is too small for what people are trying to do with it.

George Reifenstein said he built a house in 1980 on the lake. He canoes, kayaks and swims there regularly. Mr. Reifenstein said he has talked with Mr. Schaaf about the inability to cite anyone for the violations. He believes that in the absence of clear regulations, there needs to be a ban jet skis on the lake. Mr. Reifenstein said he is a first responder; from a risk management, CBJ has allowed too much liability for the lake. Mr. Reifenstein said Alaska is one of 6 states that do not require boating education or has adopted special wake jumping, kill switch technology. He said Alaska has triple the rate of fatalities in comparison with the states that use education. Mr. Reifenstein said there are carrying capacity issues; there should be 20 – 40 acres per boat.

Deb Reifenstein said safety is her main issue. Ms. Reifenstein said pretend you are in a huge parking lot full of people with no licenses and no education driving at high rates of speed. She said on sunny days, the lake becomes that parking lot.

Mary Lou Kirby said the lake is too small for the multiple uses. The key thing from the summer watching the Auke Man triathlon was that swimmers are not visible. She said there were lots of paddle boarders this year; she witnessed a paddle boarder go overboard because of a jet ski creating wakes. The jet skis are fun, but should not be on Auke Lake.

Charles Gerbi said all watercraft are not created equal. She said large crafts and small crafts are not compatible; the smaller water crafts appear to be in jeopardy by the faster water craft. Ms. Kirby said the capacity at the lake is pretty limited; and increasing it every year is not the answer.

Fred Thornsteinson said to Mr. Schaaf that the city is trying to put too many uses on too small of an area. The proposed uses of the lake will increase users, creating a problem.

Dave Sandberg said he agrees with the previous speaker. He said he believes the jet skis are an issue.

Barb Sandberg said she lived there (on the lake) for 40 years. She said in the beginning of the regulation, no motors were allowed on the lake at all. She said once the city allowed motorized use on the lake, several people went to the city and pled to have alternate nonmotorized days. They were told no by lands department. Ms. Sandberg said there has been a huge increase in swimmers; friends on jet skis say they cannot see the swimmers in the lake. She said in the winter, 4wheelers use the dock to access the trails and skidoos run across the lake. She said she watches a lot of big boats purge their bilges at night in the lake. Ms. Sandberg said there is an issue with people who are drunk in boats as well.

Mark Morris said he and his family just moved onto the lake in June. The improvements to the lake are excellent (the trail, the bridge, the boat launch). He said for a resident living on the lake, it is a wonderful place to live and CBJ has made it a pleasant place to be, so thank you. Mr. Morris said he has 3 teenagers, 2 airplanes, 3 jet skis. He said they used the jet skis first few weeks after moving to their current home. He was there the on the day of the accident, and said the lake was mayhem. Mr. Morris said he intercepted 6 people and asked them to stop; 50% of the people

were grateful to have the rules to explained, and the other half said no one bothers to enforce the rules. Mr. Morris said the biggest offenders are people on jet skis. He said that since the day of the accident, his family does not use their jet skis. Mr. Morris said that even if someone was trying to be responsible, there is not enough time to stop with the speeds most people hit. He said that it is just a matter of time before a jet skier hits a swimmer. Mr. Morris said he believes jet skis are too big, too heavy to be on the lake.

Laurel Erikson said the improvements may not be the best thing, but they bring responsibility. Mr. Erikson said people have a much easier way to bring their watercraft to the lake; the city has a responsibility. He asked what the point of the regulations is if they are not enforced.

Rod Erikson said he has lived on the lake for 28 year. He said the neighborhood was instrumental in drafting the ordinances. He believes that having the meetings will help get things fixed. Mr. Erikson said on a sunny day, the lake gets crazy. He said down south, there are fixed rules and they are enforced. Mr. Erikson said enforcement is not happening on the lake.

Ron Swanson said management plans are great, but unless there is enforcement, it is meaningless. He said the lake needs a cop; they also need to tighten up on the unrestricted jet skis use. Mr. Swanson said that when the police are called, they do not show up for complaints. The neighbors cannot police the lake; it needs to be from CBJ.

Laurie Craig said she lived on the lake for 30 years. Ms. Craig thanked Mr. Schaaf and the CBJ staff for taking an interest in this. Ms. Craig said one of the biggest complaints is the noise aspect; having 3 -5 jet skis on the lake put it at capacity. She said she would love to see it become nonmotorized; this would allow kids to enjoy swimming, rowing, kayaking. Ms. Craig also thanked the CBJ staff for the life rings. She also believes the trail needs to be monitored better than it is; people who live there clean the trash on the trail. Ms. Craig said the question should be how we can make the lake work for many people. She said UAS is making big investments on the trail and lake; the US Forrest service just opened a lab near the lake. She would like CBJ to think long term.

Dave Hanna said he has lived on the lake since 1960. He said the lake has always been motorized; he remembers hydroplanes with open exhaust running on the lake. Mr. Hanna said Auke Lake is the only fresh body of water in Juneau where boats and jet skis can

be run. He said there needs to be enforcement of the rules. He said one of the rules should be that whoever tows, whether it is a skier, or a tube, the boat or jet ski needs to have an observer. He believes that to take the use of the lake away is not the answer. Mr. Hanna said he would like to see the uses remain open, but with enforcement.

Caroline Hassler said she works at the university. She said she as a teenager that kayaks, swims on the lake. For her, she said, it seems that nonmotorized would be the way to go.

Larry Holland said it would be a shame to take away the motorized use of the lake. He said there are predictable patterns of use; on sunny days it will explode with use. Mr. Holland said the lake should have a patrol boat enforcing the rules.

Barb Sandberg said the trail head is supposed to park in the parking lot. She also said there are 15 – 30 cars in the lot from people who attend classes at the university, and personal parking for residents in the area.

Holland said he thinks the cars parking in the lot have more to do with the university closing the throughway.

- o Additional comments may be sent to:

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