



Minutes

**Auke Lake Management
PRAC Neighborhood Open House
Wednesday November 28, 2012 Assembly Chambers**

- **Welcome & Introductions**

Staff Present: Brent Fischer, Parks and Recreation Director; Fran Compton, Administrative Assistant II; Amanda Wilkins, Administrative Assistant I
PRAC: Jeff Wilson, Chair; Kate Walters, 2nd Chair; Gerry Landry; Odin Brudie; Tom Rutecki; Eric Morrison; Chris Mertl; Jerry Nankurvis, Assembly Liaison
PRAC Absent: Dixie Hood; Jim King

Mr. Wilson said that if the public would like to testify, they will need to sign in. He said that written testimony will be entered into the Auke Lake management file.

- **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 to 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, set buoy line, established a no wake zone, provided for fines up to \$250
 - Ordinance 2008-26(c)
This expanded the no wake zone 650 south and the buffer zone near the trail.
 - CBJ Code 67.01.095
- **Public Comment**
 - Five minutes per person
 - Sign up sheet
 - Additional comments may be sent to:

Auke Lake Management
 CBJ Parks & Recreation
 155 S. Seward St.
 Juneau, AK 99801

Mr. Wilson said that PRAC would like to hear from users. Mr. Wilson said DNR owns the lake, but P&R manages the lake. He said there will be a lot more users on the lake due to the upcoming development. CBJ has looked at developing the lands around the lake for a new subdivision by Pederson Hill. PRAC would like to hear from the public what they would like to see as part of the management plan; PRAC will make recommendations and forward to the assembly. Mr. Wilson said that the Assembly will make any changes to ordinances regarding Auke Lake.

Mr. Fischer said that the meeting on December 6th will be cancelled. He said that the PRAC will not address the management of the lake on December 11th. Mr. Fischer said he would like the public to have ample time to comment on any recommendations.

John Pugh, 1011 D St. Mr. Pugh said he has worked for UAS for the last 25 years and his office overlooks the lake. He said he would like to thank the PRAC and P&R staff for holding the hearings. He said that it has been awhile since there have been meetings regarding use of the lake and there have been changes to the lake. He said it is important that public bodies hold meetings to review policies and consider what might be better. Mr. Pugh said the hearings in 2007 were held, multiple use for the lake was discussed. Mr. Pugh believes this has increased in the last few years. He said there has been an increase in kayak users, swimmers, canoes, and water skiers. He said that the trail loop around the lake is new. He believes the walkers and hikers are a new important addition

that was not there when the ordinances were placed in effect. He said his main concern is to take into consideration the needs of the multiple users. Mr. Pugh said that the completion of the planned park will change the nature of use on the lake. Mr. Pugh said there also has never been any enforcement of the ordinances and that has been a problem; people use boats over 16 feet, purge their engines of salt water, and running inside the buoys. He said without enforcement, the ordinances do not work. He said it is not appropriate for teenagers to be on the lake in machines that can go over 70 m.p.h. unsupervised. He said there needs more education for the teens and the parents. UAS loves the lake; they have a dock on it, they loan out canoes and kayaks to the students.

Mr. Landry asked what park Mr. Pugh was referring to. Mr. Pugh said it is the DOT Park that needs to be complete; he believes this would help control the atmosphere.

Mr. Rutecki asked what the most popular activity with the students. Mr. Pugh said canoeing and kayaking; UAS does not have motorized vehicles to rent. He said that swimming during the nice days has increased, due in part to the Auke Man. Mr. Rutecki asked if it used much in the winter. UAS does clear it for skating; locals and faculty do ski on the ice as well.

Mr. Wilson asked if noise is an issue for classrooms. Mr. Pugh said planes were more of an issue than jet skis and does not see it as a major issue. He did say that he has heard people complain who hike the east side of the lake. He said that it not a reason to take anyone off the lake.

Ron Flint said he is a lifelong Juneauite on Auke Lake. Mr. Flint said he had spent time on the lake as a teen water skiing and participated in the ordinance process in 2007. He said he uses the lake to inter tube with his kids. Mr. Flint said there was not a lot of regulation until 2006; he said they just went through this process to put the ordinances in place. He does believe things do need to be addressed in light of the tragedy from the summer. Mr. Flint said to look into how some of this is done in the lower 48; he suggested everyone go in one direction on the lake. He said he loves to run the Auke Lake trail and is thinking of doing the Auke Lake triathlon. He said it seems that most days there is no one out there; but the sunny days draw lots of people to recreate on the lake. He said that CBJ needs to figure out something to compromise with all the user groups. Mr. Wilson asked do if CBJ needs to get out there and enforce the ordinances that are in place. Mr. Flint said the rules are already there, just need to be enforced. Mr. Wilson asked if there is a point to limit the number of motorized users on the lake. Mr. Flint said it is possible; he suggested that everyone go the same direction.

Dave Hanna, 11495 Mendenhall Loop Road. Mr. Hanna said he has lived on Auke Lake for 50 years, and recreated on it. Mr. Hanna said it is really important to realize that motorized use is a historic use on the lake. He said it is also

important to remember that it is the safest place for kids to recreate; the lake is close to emergency services and monitoring. He said he suggested at other open houses to have a rule in place that there is an observer when towing takes place. He said this is in place at most regulated lakes. Mr. Hanna said that CBJ may have to put a speed limit on the lake or to have everyone go the same direction when the lake gets crowded. He said people can't hear the traffic on the lake due to the traffic on the highway. He said Auke Lake is not a pristine lake; it is an urban lake, it has a road on three sides. He said that he would encourage Parks and Recreation to have a meeting that is a work session that would involve all the user groups; he said it would be fair to hear from user groups who use the lake.

Mr. Morrison asked if Mr. Hanna knew of any other fatalities from motorized use. Mr. Hanna said a jet skier fell off his ride and no one found him, and two mechanics who tried to fly a plane off the lake and clipped the trees.

Mr. Wilson said he was on the PRAC in 2006 – 2007 and one of the things discussed was self-management by the user groups. Mr. Wilson said there is always one who does not follow the rules. Mr. Wilson said that Parks and Recreation does not have the budget to enforce the ordinances or the power to write tickets; they have to call the police for enforcement. He asked Mr. Hanna if he had any suggestions. Mr. Hanna said enforcement is necessary and said rules aren't good if they aren't enforced. He said self-enforcement works sometimes, but it needs to come from someone else. He said that the police need to write tickets. Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Fischer how Parks and Recreation could enforce the ordinances. Mr. Fischer said that there would need to budget adjustments with support from the Assembly. He said that the Parks and Recreation Ranger do not write tickets. He said that some of the offenses are not infractions, they are minor offenses. Mr. Fischer said that if it takes a call to get JPD out there, they would write the tickets.

Gerald Grant 3170 Noel Ave. Mr. Grant recreates on the lake regularly. He said most people are responsible on the lake; there are rules but the rules not enforced. He said it is the last place to Jet Ski in Juneau. He said there is no need for more rules if the current rules are not enforced. If recreation users move from the lake to a place outside where emergency services cannot easily reach them, it could be a terrible situation.

Mr. Wilson asked if the joy of a jet ski is to go really fast. He asked if there should there be a speed limit or horse power limit on the lake. Mr. Grant said that maybe a speed limit would be helpful. Mr. Wilson asked what the horse power is on a jet ski. Mr. Grant said they are 1200cc, so maybe 100 horse power. Mr. Wilson said that it is the responsibility of the users to use the lake safely.

Jason Haffner 48104 Lockerby. He said he was born and raised here. He said the lake is an incredible thing for Juneau and he loves the lake. He said that the

jet skiers go out on the really nice days. Mr. Haffner said he tries to keep an eye out for swimmers. He said he was on the boat that picked up Savannah Cayce this summer. Mr. Haffner said that it is usually young kids going over the line, and between the buoys. He said he tries to talk to them and most of the time they listen. The area is getting smaller for them to ride. He said he hopes that CBJ does not take away the privilege of riding in the lake.

Mr. Brudie asked if the buoys and boundaries are obvious. Mr. Haffner said if you are boat savvy, it is pretty obvious; they are bright red.

Mr. Landry asked if expanding the motorized boundaries would help with congestion. Mr. Haffner said he is worried about losing the lake completely; he is not against widening the boundaries, but it feels like it is closing in on the users.

Mr. Wilson said that the lake has gotten smaller in the last 5 years for users. Mr. Wilson asked if Mr. Haffner if he uses a jet ski or a boat. Mr. Haffner said he built his boat specifically for the lake; the boat goes about 20mph, and they always have an observer.

Stewart Barnes 8137 Pinewood Dr. Mr. Barnes proposed mandating education for the users. He said that there was a situation on the Mendenhall Wetlands with residents complaining of buckshot through their windows. He said Fish and Game mandated that all hunters that use the Mendenhall Wetlands have to go through a Hunter Education course. He said that the State of Alaska has a Water Wise course, the US Coast Guard has a boating safety course that the board could look at. Mr. Barnes said that enforcement is an issue; the ordinances need to be enforced.

Mr. Wilson asked if taking a safety course was required to run a boat. Mr. Barnes said the state of Alaska does not require a boat safety course; he said the state has highest fatality rate in regards to boating in the country. Mr. Wilson would like to look into the education aspect more. He said that PRAC wants to advocate for safe use for all users. Mr. Barnes said that CBJ has jurisdiction over Twin Lakes and Auke Lake. Mr. Wilson said that CBJ has jurisdiction over Twin Lakes and DNR owns Auke Lake.

Mr. Fischer said that DNR allows P&R to have authority over the lake. He said that DNR looks over the recommendations from Parks and Recreation and works with the department. Mr. Barnes said Office of Boating Safety is offered through DNR.

Mr. Landry said DNR has a boating safety officer that will be in Juneau next week.

Mr. Rutecki said that because the state owns the lake, could enforce the safety course. He suggested patterning the education on the wetlands.

Marion Hobbes said he was born and raised here. Mr. Hobbes said he has watched things diminish for youth to be able to participate. He said kids who play on these kinds of machines tends to grow up to be mechanics. Mr. Hobbes said he is frustrated with the UAS having 300 foot extension. He said he wants the lake to be open for all users. He said accidents will always happen; he said the government cannot prevent them and too many restrictions will not help. He said the education course is a good idea, but PRAC needs to research more on who it would apply to. He asked would the education course be for those who own or use certain things, or just for those who use the lake. Mr. Hobbes said the responsibility needs to be on the people and CBJ needs to not put out rules. Mr. Wilson said Mr. Hobbes testimony is true; there are a lot of users for limited resources. He said they are trying to accommodate users. Mr. Hobbes said there will be problems with the ATV course out the road; he said riders will go where they want.

Mr. Wilson asked if there was any more public testimony. He thanked everyone for coming and reiterated to submit written comments to the Parks and Recreation office. He said that PRAC and Parks and Recreation are working on a plan and will bring it before the public again. Mr. Wilson said that PRAC will eventually submit recommendations to the Assembly. He said they hope to have recommendations to the Assembly before the ice thaws on the lake.

Mr. Wilson asked if the board had any comments.

Mr. Mertl said the enforcement is important. Parks and Recreation has a long history of cooperating with a lot of other groups. Mr. Mertl said that PRAC does not need to rewrite the ordinances; enforcement needs to be addressed. He suggested they come up with a partnership in the city to address the enforcement issue.