

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, July 5, 2011
Assembly Chambers, 6PM

I. ROLL CALL: 6:00pm

Members Present: Odin Brudie, Jim King, Melissa Goldstein, Dixie Hood, Gerry Landry, Kate Walters, Chris Mertl

Members Absent: Jeff Wilson, Jeff Sloss

Assembly Liaison: Bob Doll

Staff Liaison: Brent Fischer, Parks & Recreation Director; Jessica Beck, Administrative Assistant II

II. PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – none

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Mr. Mertl motioned to approve. Approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. June 7, 2011 – Ms. Hood motioned to approve. Approved.

V. REPORT FROM ASSEMBLY LIAISON

Mr. Doll said the next assembly meeting will be July 11th. There isn't anything significantly related to the PRAC. The July 11th meeting will be Mr. Doll's last assembly meeting.

VI. CHAIR REPORT – none

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There is one action item on the PRAC Agenda: The Willoughby District Land Use Plan- Barbara Sheinberg and Zoë Morrison of Sheinberg and Associates presented this plan to the PRAC in January of 2011. Lands and Resources Manager, Heather Marlow will be giving an update on the plan and requesting support of the plan from this body.

The Willoughby District has been recognized as Juneau's Civic, Arts and Cultural area for at least 50 years. In addition to the nearby State Capitol and the Alaska State Museum, the District is home to the State Office Building, Centennial Hall Convention Center, Andrew Hope Building, the Juneau Arts and Culture Center, Zach Gordon Youth Center and Juneau's public broadcasting office and studios.

The CBJ Comprehensive Plan establishes direction for growth in this area.

This long range plan will be a blue print for development in this area for the next 20-25 years. It will be used by CBJ staff, public and private landowners, developers, and the general public. The projects in it will be accomplished over time by a series of near to long term public sector investments in park and plaza space, infrastructure, and parking; and through private sector investments.

I recommend that this plan be forwarded to the Lands Committee with the understanding that the wishes of this department is that the Zach Gordon Youth Center remain in its present location and if it cannot, then follow the direction from the Zach Gordon Youth Center's staff as stated on page 55 of the Willoughby District Land Use Plan dated June 2011.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Willoughby District Master Plan

Heather Marlow gave an update on the Willoughby District Land Use Plan. Ms. Marlow said with a community endorsed plan that helps to guide, coordinate and set clear rules, the Willoughby District can be much greater than a series of smaller projects. The land inside the area has several different

ownerships, including private, Alaska Mental Health Trust, State, CBJ and Federal. This area began as an Auk Tlingit fishing area, which then grew into an industrial, military and civic area. This plan intends to guide the direction of future redevelopment and investment, to realize the long term ideal of being a cultural and civic district that showcases Juneau to residents, visitors and all Alaskans. The Comprehensive Plan directly supports the Willoughby District Land Use Plan. The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan has 11 projects that directly affect the area. The Transit Development Plan also deals with the area including a downtown circulator, rerouting primary service routes and more bus stops. There are several projects that tie into the area and therefore make now a good time to start working on this plan. A project currently in the design phase is a building to house the State Library, Archives and Museum. The CBJ is currently working on extending the seawalk from the Douglas Bridge to the Subport area, including a redesign of Marine Park. In the later future CBJ would like to expand Centennial Hall, relocate the City Museum to the Willoughby District and rebuild or remodel the JACC. The Willoughby District Land Use Plan would build upon assets that already occur in the area, including already being home to Juneau's arts, cultural and civic uses, popular shops and restaurants, almost 1600 people work in the area, close to 1,000,000 tourists are nearby every summer, it has a rich history, it's close to the waterfront, has beautiful views and the transit center is next door. The district is also a good location for a district heat or energy project. There are challenges that will need to be addressed including the current sidewalk grid creates super-blocks, much larger than the normal sized street block. This makes it difficult for vehicles to circulate successfully in the area. The current primary land use in the district is parking lots. Several buildings are rundown and more residential units are needed. Egan Drive around the area needs to be more context sensitive, there is little public open space and area creeks and streams are in concrete or culverts. The themes for the district include a strong pedestrian oriented retail corridor where store fronts front on the sidewalk, more housing, more public space, restored creeks and streams, better connections between public spaces, a connected grid of streets, and better building design and expansion of Civic, Arts, and Cultural uses already in the area. It's all meant to showcase the capital to people. Buildings will be mixed use, with an active 1st floor and residential or office spaces above. Safety will be enhanced with more people living in the area and more stores open during the daytime and evening. Parking will also be enhanced with more parking under and behind buildings. Ms. Hood asked how many stories high 50 feet is. Ms. Marlow said it's about 4 floors. Included in the 50 feet is also elevator housing or air conditioning, so typically buildings will be 40 feet with structures on the roof that bring it up to 50 feet. Mr. Brudie asked if there were tools to leverage having more open spaces. Ms. Marlow said the plan needs to include open spaces and be adopted. Then, changes to Title 49 need to include pedestrian connections in the developed areas. Mr. King said he appreciates the in depth look at the area. He doesn't live downtown and he said he doesn't see anything in the proposed area for him. Parking is a problem downtown and the bus system doesn't work for him. It seems like Juneau is building two cities, one downtown and one in the valley. He asked how the valley could be tied into something like this. Ms. Marlow said this plan is trying to create a consolidated campus for the state capital. It will help employees and users to get around. To enhance the campus, this will also be the center for large civic uses, such as the State Museum. There would be concert series, lectures series and other events that could be held downtown to bring people to the area. The two areas, valley and downtown, should be enhancing each other, not competing. Mr. Mertl said this is a great project. He thinks the super-blocks are an asset. By having super-blocks it gives our community an opportunity to do something different. We could create a civic area but have it be different than other towns. There should be way more green and open space. He would like to see it more pedestrian than vehicular. Ms. Hood said she is happy to see parking going under or above buildings and not sprawled all over the place. She wishes there were more effort, however, to not attract cars downtown. Ms. Marlow said one of the major fears from property owners in the area is that the city is going to use eminent domain to gain land, which is not going to happen. They're trying to show people what their neighboring land owners are working to do in the future. Renee Guerin was at the last PRAC meeting when this issue was discussed. She was concerned about the Salvation Army and the Zach Gordon Teen Club. This updated plan is more in tune with what the Salvation Army and Zach Gordon Youth Center wanted and thanked Ms. Marlow for that. *Mr. Mertl motioned for support of the Willoughby District Land Use Plan. Approved.*

IX. INFORMATION ITEMS – none

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Youth Activities Board: Jeff Sloss** – absent.
- B. State Parks Board: Jim King** – The State Parks Board didn't meet this month. Two state park cabins are being built at Eagle River. Three retired carpenters from Pennsylvania are building them and everyone should stop by to visit them.
- C. Lands Committee: Jeff Wilson** – absent.
- D. Juneau Urban Forestry Partnership: Chris Mertl** – They've been busy completing park maintenance and tree pruning the last few months.
- E. Aquatic Facilities Advisory Board: Kate Walters** (pending Assembly appointment) – The board is meeting tomorrow. On the agenda is making the pool more affordable for people with lower incomes.
- F. Jensen-Olson Arboretum Advisory Board: Kate Walters** – The board met last week. It's been a good summer but dry. They've been irrigating a lot. Winter killed some of the plants. They have an intern working on invasive plant issues. They're working on smaller projects and Merrill got a new truck. They are doing another wine tasting but are still working on a date for the event.
- G. Docks & Harbors Board: Dixie Hood** – Did not attend the meeting but there was a news article about Docks & Harbors being concerned about the Noise Ordinance. Mr. Doll said the noise at the AML dock is an issue and if it becomes the central issue the assembly will most likely not adopt the problem.
- H. Trail Mix, Inc.: Melissa Goldstein** – Did not attend the last meeting. They are busy working on the Mt. Roberts, Under Thunder and Montana Creek Trails. Applied for funds from the Recourse Advisory Committee with the Forest Service for installing bridges on the Treadwell Ditch Trail.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE – none

XII. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – none

XIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Jim King – Thanked Ms. Marlow and said he's not against the plan. We should think more about the cars. There are a lot of appealing aspects in the plan. The Forest Service has a RAC program, where they have \$600,000 to give away for certain projects. They are looking for proposals to use this money. Trails are one of the things eligible but it has to be used for existing trails or abolishing trails. Replacing the old bridge across the Mendenhall River that would go from visitor center to the campground would be a good project.

Dixie Hood – Thanked Bob Doll for being steady and reliable in terms of regularity. She requested that Mr. Wilson, as the Chair, write a letter of appreciation.

Kate Walters – She would like an update of the resurfacing of Project Playground. Did Capital Playground get their clearing for a vegetable bed? Mr. Fischer said there has been some normal maintenance and they are working on a master plan.

Chris Mertl – Thanked Park & Landscape for their maintenance of shrubs and weeding. He went to the Roller Girls Roller Derby and they packed Centennial Hall. They did a great job. Thanked Mr. Doll for working with him over the years and working with PRAC. There is a lot going on with Eaglecrest. Maybe we could have a joint meeting with them. Asked how the sports signs were coming along. Mr. Fischer said they are up at Miller and he has not heard any comments.

Gerry Landry – The forest service is always taking input and PRAC should give input to them. He has contact information for several people we can communicate with.

XIV. NEXT MEETING – August 2, 2011

XV. ADJOURNMENT: 7:52pm, Approved.