

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
March 10, 1998
Juneau Douglas High School Library
7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair Dan King.

I. Roll Call

Members Present: Ken Dean, Jim King, Tim Kelly, Dan King, Paul Grossi, Nancy Waterman

Members Absent: Glen Alt, Kay Gouyton, Alex Lukshin

Ex-Officio Members
Present: Timi Hough

Staff Present: Kim Kiefer, Bob Grochow, Carrie Macaulay

II. Action Items

A. Auk Ta Shaa Discovery application for use of property in Amalga Harbor area

Kim Kiefer referred the committee to the Director's Report and the permit conditions outlined. Auk Ta Shaa Discovery operated an identical operation at this location under the name Alaska Discovery in 1996 and 1997. She recommended that the permit be awarded with the same conditions that were assigned in prior years. One slight change is that the Smith property that was used by the group in the past now belongs to the CBJ. She recommended that the fees for use should be increased accordingly as the applicant will be using more CBJ land.

Ken Leghorn of Auk Ta Shaa stated that the storage racks were removed on time at the end of the season last year, although they were removed late the year before. Jim King inquired about the meaning of "Auk Ta Shaa," and Ken Leghorn said that it means "Woman of the Lake."

Public Comment:

Dennis Harris: He doesn't want to see an increase in last year's level of use, due to the increasing use of the area by local residents.

Public participation was closed.

Tim Kelly said that he hasn't be able to read all the letters commenting on the various permits yet as they were handed out at the beginning of the meeting, and felt that he couldn't make a judgement without reading them. He would like to defer final judgement to next week's meeting. Nancy Waterman suggested that a recess be called so PRAC members could read through the written comments. Kim Kiefer said that last year recommendations were given at the first meeting, and then fees were assigned at the second meeting. Dan King said that while he understands the concerns, there is a need to get the ball rolling.

At 7:20, a 10 minute recess was called so PRAC members could read the written comments that were submitted regarding the various permits. The meeting was called back to order at 7:35.

Jim King said that he would like to digest the information he=s just read and make a decision next week. Nancy Waterman said that she understands Jim=s concerns, but that she is prepared to move ahead. She feels additional recommendations could be made to staff at next week=s meeting if necessary. Dan King said that fees will be also be addressed at next week=s meeting.

Nancy Waterman said that 2,500 is a large jump in numbers compared to last year. Ken Leghorn said that 2,500 is a high estimate. Last year they requested 1,500 and had 870 customers. Nancy Waterman said that she would like to lower the number from 2,500, taking into consideration the increased public use of the area due to the recent acquisition of more land by the CBJ.

Motion by Jim King that the permit be approved with the same conditions as prior years and a lower participant number to be worked out between the applicant and CBJ staff. The motion was seconded by Nancy Waterman, and passed unanimously.

B. Alaska Paddle Sports at Auke Lake and Smuggler=s Cove

Kim Kiefer referred the committee to the Director=s Report and the permit conditions outline, and recommended that the permit be approved with the same conditions as the 1997 permit.

Dick Rice of Alaska Paddle Sports said that several Auke Lake residents have given him unsolicited support of his operation. His use is compatible with the lake.

Public Participation:

William Dunn: He has lived in Juneau for 40 years. During that time, residents have lost a lot. He has concern about all of the commercial use applications. While he doesn=t oppose the Alaska Paddle Sports operation, he does feel that cars in the parking lot cause erosion, and there is often trash in the parking lot as well.

Loren Domke: He doesn=t have a problem with Alaska Paddle Sports, although he feels it is a violation of the zoning ordinance. He would like to see them rotate their launching locations among various spots.

Ken Leghorn: He supports Alaska Paddle Sports. Their classes have trained many of his guides, and are providing a service for locals, not tourists.

Public Participation was closed.

Dick Rice said that they will be operating for five days per month. Last year they requested approval for 240 customers and had 60 customers. This year they are requesting approval for 375 customers.

Motion by Ken Dean that the permit be approved with the same conditions as the 1997 permit. The motion was seconded by Paul Grossi, and passed unanimously.

C. Alaska Paddle Sports application for use of salt chuck in Amalga Harbor area

Kim Kiefer that this is a new application for 1998, and asked Dick and Judy Rice to describe their proposal.

Judy Rice of Alaska Paddle Sports said that this permit would give them an opportunity to offer more advanced classes to their clients, including wave and current instruction. Use would be very low level, approximately 3 or 4 times per summer. They plan to put in at Smuggler=s Cove, paddle across to Outer Point, get out of their kayaks for a break to stretch their legs, and continue on their journey. They only plan to put their kayaks in at the proposed locations, not to stay their for any length of time.

Jim King inquired about their intentions at the salt chuck, noting that the banks in that location are degraded. Judy Rice said that they have worked with the SAGA crew in the past. They have not had any conflict with fishermen in this area. Jim King said that it wouldn=t take much to overcrowd the salt chuck area. Fish and Game has done a lot of work in the area, and the needs of the fishermen should be considered. Dick Rice said that he has not encountered any problems with fishermen in the area. Their clients are mostly locals, and often include some of the fishermen. He and Judy are happy to address any concerns and work out specific access points. They are not in this location during any DIPAC operations.

There was no public participation.

Motion by Nancy Waterman that the permit be awarded per Kim Kiefer=s recommendations in the Director=s Report, and also including recommendations that departure points be rotated, car pooling encouraged, and that Alaska Paddle Sports address erosion concerns at the salt chuck. The motion was seconded by Tim Kelly, and passed unanimously.

D. Gastineau Guiding application for use of Outer Point Trail.

Kim Kiefer referred the committee to the Director=s Report and the permit conditions outlined, noting that this is a repeat application. She recommended that the permit be approved with the same conditions as previous years.

Bob Janes of Gastineau Guiding said that he has been operating guided hikes at Outer Point for the past four years. He brought 5,800 tourists there his first year, and 5,200 last year. He doesn=t expect his numbers to be any higher than last year. This year, his business plans to stock trash bags in all their vehicles so that trash encountered on the trail and in the parking lot may be removed. He also said that he will train his drivers not to slow down to view the marmots near the blind curve for safety reasons.

The DOT has said that legal parking is a gray area in this location. He is willing to park his vehicles further away if necessary.

Kim Kiefer said that the Parks and Recreation Department has not received any complaints about Gastineau Guiding's operation at Outer Point in the past year. There are other CBJ groups such as the Tourism Advisory Committee that may have, however.

Public Participation:

Dennis Harris: He felt that this was a bad policy four years ago. He feels that the city should encourage tour operations to go to private land. The complaints from citizens have stopped because they aren't doing any good. No one listens to the public, including the Assembly, the PRAC, and the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC). One cannot go to Outer Point for a quiet place to think for lunch, or at the end of a cycle trip, which is a pity. Awarding this permit is a wrong decision. If the permit is awarded, the conditions should be more stringent and the fees should be higher. He knows what the PRAC will do.

Bill Chisam: He is a North Douglas resident. He has been going to Outer Point 3 or 4 times a week for the past several years, although not during the day on weekdays. There is no real degradation of the location, nor is there a litter problem. Gastineau Guiding has performed very well. His dogs force him to look for trails that have low use by anyone, local or tourist. He is more concerned about non commercial use of areas such as Basin Road, which is a mess. He supports Gastineau Guiding.

William Dunn: He agrees with Dennis Harris. A part of his soul belongs in that location. Many years ago, he watched a porcupine dozing near a stream at Outer Point. There used to be good fishing there, and it was a quiet place.

Sandy Warner: She has some general comments. We need to be looking at the cumulative impact of commercial use of CBJ lands, and no one is doing that. Commercial use has a great impact on everyone. The fees imposed for this use aren't high enough. Funds should be channeled for new trails. Last summer, she came upon a Gastineau Guiding tour on Perseverance Trail. There were 18 people in the group, traveling 3 abreast. When people pay for a tour, they think they own the trail, and have a bad attitude, expecting her to step off the trail when they pass by.

Public participation was closed.

Jim King said that he is concerned about the marmots.

Dan King said that the PRAC has addressed the cumulative impact of commercial use, and have looked to the Forest Service for help. Concerns about cumulative effect are valid.

Motion by Nancy Waterman that the permit be approved with the same conditions as the 1997

permit. Ken Dean seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

E. West Travel application for use of Outer Point Trail

Kim Kiefer referred the committee to the Director's Report and the permit conditions outlined. She recommended that the permit be granted with the same conditions that are assigned to Gastineau Guiding.

Larry Johanson of Alaska Sightseeing/Cruise West said that this is his 5th year of using CBJ trails for commercial use. They limit their group size to 10, and use a 10 passenger van to travel to the site. His operation has a history of leaving no trace at the site. There won't be a problem with groups traveling in opposite directions. He had a 10 day temporary permit last year for this location, and Gastineau Guiding staff didn't even know West Travel staff had been giving tours there during that time. He and Bob Janes work together to ensure different staging times so there are no conflicts. Bob Janes said that the flow of the trail is pretty well understood by all commercial operators.

Larry Johanson said that he anticipates 150 customers at the most in 1998.

There was no public testimony.

Motion by Nancy Waterman that the permit be approved with the same conditions that Gastineau Guiding has, and a recommendation that staff work with Gastineau Guiding and West Travel to ensure that parking accommodations will be met for all users. The motion was seconded by Ken Dean, and approved unanimously.

F. Westours application for use of Twin Lakes parking lot

Kim Kiefer stated that Westours held a permit for this in the past, although they did not have one in 1997.

Connie MacKenzie of Grayline/Westours said that they want to use the parking lot at Twin Lakes to stage their bike tours. Tours consist of 13 to 15 bikers and two guides. They don't want to use the bike path, but the bike lane on the highway. They plan to bike from Twin Lakes to the Mendenhall Glacier. Last year, they staged their bike tours from their shop location on Hospital Drive, however, they did not feel that it was safe due to the movement of motorcoaches. Twin Lakes is a nicer atmosphere. They plan to stage the bike tours on alternating Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons, with a total of 500 passengers for the season. They have no problem working around special events such as Day at the Lake and the 4th of July. The van and bike trailer would take up two parking spaces.

Public Participation:

Sandy Warner: One year ago, there was a series of community meetings between the public and the Tourism Working Group. From those meetings, an agreement was reached in which the industry agreed to regulate itself and not use Twin Lakes for commercial operations. She has concerns about the use of the parking area, particularly on sunny days. She recommends that the tour stage from Grayline's busbarn. The nature path along Twin Lakes is heavily used by locals. Another problem in the past is that the chase vehicle travels at bike pace and holds up the regular traffic.

Dennis Harris: He is an avid cyclist. Twin Lakes is a heavily used area by locals. The area is extremely crowded on sunny days. He feels commercial use here is very inappropriate. There was an agreement between the Tourism Working Group and the tour operators last year that Twin Lakes would not be used for commercial purposes. Last year, a minor concession was made so buses could pull off the side of the road so tourists could get out and view the salmon spawning in the stream. Perhaps Grayline could check with the Tlinglet and Haida Center next door to see if their parking lot could be used for staging the bike tours. The committee has discouraged use of this area in the past. Lemon Creek is not a scenic area, so maybe the trip could be originated somewhere else such as Auke Bay School parking lot.

William Dunn: He agrees with the previous speakers.

Public comment was closed.

Dan King said he feels that Grayline should consider other areas. Ken Dean said that the installation of the accessible fishing dock will increase use of the area this summer.

Motion by Nancy Waterman that Kim Kiefer work with TAC staff and the applicant to review the agreement between the TAC and the tour operators, and to determine an alternate location to stage the bike tours.

Kim Kiefer said that TAC staff told her that there was a recommendation/verbal agreement not to use Twin Lakes for commercial use. The agreement is voluntary, however.

Paul Grossi said he is troubled by the weekend use, and that weekdays would be better.

Connie MacKenzie said that she has worked closely with the TAC. Her understanding of the agreement is that the park and the path at Twin Lakes wouldn't be used, but the parking lot is a separate entity. She just wants to use the parking lot for 15 minutes on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons.

Tim Kelly said he doesn't see how that would be a violation.

Nancy Waterman said she doesn't feel that parking lot can be viewed separate from the rest of the park. **She restated her motion that Kim Kiefer work with TAC staff and the applicant to**

review the agreement between the TAC and the tour operators, and to determine an alternate location to stage the bike tours. Paul Grossi seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5 - 1.

G. Alaska Travel Adventures application for beach adjacent to North Douglas Boat Launch Ramp.

Kim Kiefer recommended that the permit be approved with the same conditions that were assigned in 1997.

Jeff Keys of Alaska Travel Adventures said they will have the same program this year that they did last year. He works with the Harbor Department, and they launch their kayaks away from the boat launch ramp.

Public Participation:

Dennis Harris: He wanted clarification as to whether ATA plans on 600 - 750 clients per season or per week. Jeff Keys said that he anticipates 600 - 750 clients per season. Last year he had a total of 652 clients. He has a limit of 46 per trip, and often tours aren't filled to capacity.

Public Participation was closed.

Dan King said he doesn't have a problem if the Harbormaster doesn't have a problem.

Motion by Ken Dean to approve the permit with the same conditions as assigned in 1997. Paul Grossi seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

I. Cycle Alaska application to use Kaxdegoowu Heen Dei

Kim Kiefer stated that in 1995, the Assembly designated the area north of Montana Creek to remain free of commercial use. The PRAC doesn't have the authority to approve Cycle Alaska to use the entire trail, just the part south of Montana Creek. A letter PRAC members received from Bob Spitzfaden has a copy of the court decision to prohibit commercial use of the path north of Montana Creek.

Rob Waldman of Cycle Alaska said that he wants to use the entire trail. He feels that the Assembly decision to prohibit commercial use north of Montana Creek was a quality of life issue as well as mitigation for the impacts of the trail construction. His operation wouldn't use River Road. Their tours consist of 4 to 12 people, and their rides are slow - some are even tandems. They would not have

commercial vehicles in either parking lot. Their bikers would enter the park from a path. They would operate two times per day, at about 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Their bikers are instructed to ride in single lanes, and to pass politely. They want to get their clients off the shoulders of the roads and into the rainforests.

Joyce Waldman added that the trail was built with federal funding to provide access for families and people with disabilities. It is a safe route for her clientele. The hours of use would minimize impact to locals. Rob Waldman said that he has noticed that use is only heavy during the early morning, lunchtime, and after work hours. Joyce Waldman said that last year they staged their tours off Fritz Cove Road, traveled through UAS, the Back Loop Road, Montana Creek Road, and to the West Glacier Trail.

Public Participation:

James Wilson: He wants to make the PRAC aware of the restrictions on commercial use north of Montana Creek Road. Is Cycle Alaska asking the PRAC to ignore the restrictions placed by the Assembly?

Wayne Wilson: He would like to know where the bikes are staged at. Joyce Waldman said that they come to the Back Loop Road from Fritz Cove. Wayne Wilson said that he has concerns about the blind corners on Fritz Cove Road, and encountered large groups of Cycle Alaska bikers last summer in dangerous situations in terms of blind corners and no shoulders on the road.

Dennis Harris: He feels bad for objecting to this application, but the city's policy was made clear when this trail was created. The trail is already overused. He has been at that trail many times between 4:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., and it is always busy except in the dead of winter. The TAC should recommend that there be no commercial use of this area. He wants to see Cycle Alaska succeed, but this is not the way to do it. He didn't see the notice about this meeting when he was at the trail on Saturday.

Bill Chisam: He is not opposed to responsible commercial use of city land. His concern is that the Kaxdegoowu Heen Dei is a unique place that receives tremendous use. The objective of Cycle Alaska is good, but they are looking at the wrong area. The trail should be left alone for Valley people to use.

Jeannette Voss: She is against this application. She lives on Whitewater Court, off River Road. The trail is already crowded with residents. She uses it frequently with her young granddaughter. It should not be a commercial trail.

William Dunn: He had his first spring outing on this path a few weeks ago, which is when he saw the notice regarding this application. He agrees with the previous speakers.

Bob Janes: He finds it interesting that there was a lot of public comment against building this trail five years ago, and now everyone loves the trail. Trails are important to this community. He supports what Trail Mix is trying to do in looking at the overall picture and make trail issues a priority in Juneau.

Public participation was closed.

Ken Dean said that he was one of the original instigators of this trail. In the beginning, everyone thought asphalt was a sin, although it is ideal for a wheelchair. We are losing our focus. The trail was built for those with disabilities, not for baby strollers and rollerbladers. He uses the trail 3 - 5 times per week as a shortcut to get to work. He doesn't see the heavy use that others have mentioned. He is concerned to see people making an issue over who can use the trail.

Motion by Ken Dean to approve the permit, leaving from the Brotherhood Bridge entrance, and turning around at the Montana Creek Bridge, in compliance with the Assembly decision. The motion did not receive a second.

Rob and Joyce Waldman said that they are aware of the conditions imposed by the Assembly. Their intent is to open a discussion on this topic. They want another means to protect the neighborhood and allow tourists to use the entire path. They would like the PRAC to recommend that they use the area south of the Montana Creek Bridge, and then have the Assembly reconsider their ban on commercial use of the north end of the path.

Reintroduction of motion by Ken Dean to approve permit, leaving from the Brotherhood Bridge entrance, and turning around at the Montana Creek Bridge, in compliance with the Assembly decision. Motion was seconded by Paul Grossi.

Nancy Waterman said she will vote against the motion because she feels this application should be referred to the Assembly.

Ken Dean clarified the motion to state that the PRAC recommends that the permit be approved for using the path only south of the Montana Creek Bridge and north of Brotherhood Bridge. Jim King made a friendly amendment that the hours of use be 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., which are the same as Outer Point. Paul Grossi seconded the amendment.

Nancy Waterman said she will still vote against approving the permit, because she feels the issue should be deferred to the Assembly. There should be a broader discussion. CBJ staff needs to work with the Assembly, the neighborhood, and the applicants on how commercial use in the area should be addressed.

The motion failed by 3 to 3. No recommendation on the application by Cycle Alaska was given by the PRAC.

Nancy Waterman encouraged Kim Kiefer to work with the applicants and the Assembly to bring this issue to a larger forum.

I. Review of Unfunded Parks and Recreation Projects

Chair Dan King decided to delay Item I to next weeks meeting. The meeting will be moved from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation staff will contact PRAC members and permit applicants with the location of the meeting.

III. Review and Discussion Items

Kim Kiefer reminded the PRAC members about the beach access tour on Sunday, March 15 for 12:00 to 5:00.

IV. Chair Report

No Chair Report was given.

V. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

VI. Ex Officio Report

Timi Hough was introduced. She will be replacing Tish Griffen as the UAS Ex Officio member.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.