

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
April 21, 1998
Floyd Dryden Library
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dan King at 7:07 p.m.

I. Roll Call: Dan King, Nancy Waterman, Ken Dean, Kay Gouyton, Alex Lukshin, Timmy Hough, Tim Kelly

Staff Present: Bob Grochow, Carrie Macaulay

II. Public Testimony on Non Agenda Items

There was no public testimony on non agenda items.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. **March 17, 1998**

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Action Items

A. **Point Stephens Subdivision Public Hearing**

Mr. Bob Grochow reviewed Directors Report. This proposal has been through the Public Works Committee and the Lands Committee; they have approved the sale of park land to improve water system at Point Stephens. The issue has been referred to the PRAC for their recommendations. Nancy Waterman said that the committees have discussed many options for providing water and access in this location. Dan King said that the Assembly consensus is for adoption of alternative 3, which would involve selling of part of the park to raise money for the water line.

Public Testimony:

John Neary, Pt. Stephens Spur Road: He opposes the sale of the park land. He feels that it sets a bad precedent and is short sighted of the city. The park will be more valuable in future as lands are developed, such as the NOAA facility. Many changes will take place out the road in the coming years. The location has everything such as views, salmon, etc. The community at large wouldn't benefit from the sale of the park land. The State Department of Fish and Game might be interested in building a trail to make the park more accessible. He doesn't mean to say that people shouldn't have water, or a private or public road, but not at this expense.

Michael Fisher, Tee Way: His back yard is what would be developed. He agrees with John Neary. When he moved there, it was untouched, and it has many special natural resources such as a nature trail that is used by bears. It should stay that way because only so many spots in Juneau have those qualities. He is disappointed that this would be sold for development of a waterline. The value of a park is greater than a waterline. A letter by Michael Ziegler in the PRAC packets that sums up how he feels about the project.

Jeanne Fisher, Tee Way: She has lived there for 13 years. She and her husband bought their home when the area was established as a park, assumed that it would always stay a park. This issue sets a poor precedence for the city to sell parkland for water lines. Where will it end? It is ¾ mile long piece of property, it has good cross country ski trails in the winter, and the weather is generally much better there than in town. Overall, it is a beautiful place. Maybe the trails could be upgraded, and some picnic tables added. She is very much against the proposal. She has asked the city about a possible water extension fund, but was told that this project would be a very low priority. The city hasn't looked for other funding for this project. They could sell some other property in the borough for the waterline project. She referred to petition with 50 signatures opposing this project that was distributed to the PRAC members. What would be left if part of the park was sold would be unacceptable. It will be too small.

Billy Fisher, Tee Way: He and his friends like the park, they have good adventures there, and it is really exciting.

There will be more pollution, less trees, it won't be beautiful, and not as many birds and other animals will go there if the park is sold. He hopes that the city doesn't build on it because he likes to go out and play every day. Please save the park.

Virginia Fiekler: She lives in town. She thinks it is very unselfish that some of the people who live out there pay taxes and don't have water. There should be water and a road out there. If there is a trail, there should be access for the elderly and crippled. There is no way to for her to get to the park at this time.

Bruce Baker, Tee Way: He has several recommendations. He feels that people at Pt. Stephens need to have water and sewer access, and they deserve to have that. He is also in favor of improved access to the park for the general public. The park is not going to get protected as it is unless there is a larger constituency. The advantages of improved access outweigh the disadvantages. He would like to see as little of the park sold as possible. Given Alternative 3, which the Assembly seems to support, he would like the south edge of the park moved as far south as possible. The key is to find a combination of funding sources. The sale of lots at Tee Harbor is the only option mentioned. There is other land that isn't park land that could be sold. No tax money is included in this project. He would like to see Parks and Recreation and/or Land Acquisition money used as partial funding. He would also like to see some Fish and Game Sportfish access money used to improve access to the shore. A creative combination of funding sources has been lacking in this project. The lot lines should be vacated for whatever is left of the park to discourage future bites of the apple if part of the park is sold. John MacKinnon has mentioned that concept in passing. If the city does sell one or more lots on Pt. Stephens to finance the waterline, he suggests that the PRAC recommend to them that a letter of intent be drafted which makes it a matter of record and would explain that the rest of the park should be preserved for future generations, and their intent that another bite of the apple not be taken in the future. Mr. MacKinnon used the term "finality" at the last Assembly meeting when discussing this issue.

Dan King said that the COW did discuss vacating the property lines and putting this on the record on Monday, April 20.

Nancy Malony, Glacier Highway: She opposes the sale of park land for funding of a waterline. This sense of urgency regarding the need for water lines is not real. The original petition for the waterline includes only 3 households. Now the request for the waterline has been linked to access to the park, and it has grown into a bigger issue. The park will not be improved by cutting it in half. The money could be used from the sale of land to put in a water line, an access road, and develop the remainder of park, however this would benefit only a few citizens with public funds, and at no cost to the city. A less expensive alternative should be found. She doesn't want to see the city sell off half of the park at the expense of the public. If the city feels there is no alternative, it should be funded from the Lands Fund. Access to the park should be addressed separately. The area has held park status since 1985, and was reaffirmed in the Comprehensive Plan in 1996 as Natural Area Park. She asked the PRAC to please recommend to the Assembly that the park be left for the all the public to enjoy. She has a petition with 67 signatures opposing the sale of the park. None of the signers on this petition are on the previous petition distributed by Jeanne Fisher. She also has a letter to read from someone else: Michelle Mosute, who lives at the Auk Nu Condos: She is opposed to sale of the park land. The need for a water line only affects a few residents. She doesn't feel that this sale should be used to fund an extension of city water for the benefit of a few residents. Park areas will become increasingly valuable as the population grows. Please recommend to Assembly that the entire park be retained and not sold.

Dan King said that Alternative 3 cuts park in half and develops a trail and picnic table.

Tony Mecklenberg, Point Stephens: At this point, the waterline is a complete unknown. The waterline system should be scoped out before this is pursued. Dan King said that no hydrology tests or numbers have been run yet, but it is felt that there would be adequate pressure for household use.

Katheryn Mecklenberg: She wishes to point out that Alternative 5 could still be an option, because it allows the waterline to avoid the park. The project could be funded by taxes and the local improvement district. People in other parts of town are asked to contribute when there are improvements. She would be willing to pay for the roaded park improvement rather than have an additional lot sold. There is an existing trail that has been used since 1930s, used by everyone, including the police and public service officials. Power lines run parallel to the trail. This is established use, and could be improved with a waterline and possibly a road. Neighbors should be cooperating with each other to come up with a route for the waterline. The trail is shown on Act of Congress Plat and it is the intended route for accessing these lots.

Bruce Baker: He said that situation is not as simple a situation as the Mecklenburgs describe. Their suggestion is a legal can of worms. He owns property that includes part of that trail.

Ms. Mecklenburg is opposed to developing the park for residential/private use. It should be a park, and planning for the park should be considered separately. Trying to do this planning in the package could lead a bad park. The trail is in a bad area, and it starts off steeply. There are bad viewing opportunities, and the improvements are a hastily conceived idea. Water and road development shouldn't be at the expense of hasty planning of the park.

Willow Ritter, Pt. Stephens Road: She has lived at Tee Harbor for 38 years, and purchased land there in 1960. Three generations of her family grew up there. She wants to echo Billy Fisher's comments, that the park is a great place with lots of fun. Progress is balanced by a dark side, which is the development of water lines. Only three residents live there year round. They are entitled to water, but it should not be funded by selling the park. She suggests that the CBJ adopt a "Pay as you go approach" to share the burden and save the park. The neighborhood is almost unanimous that park should remain a park. Alternative 3 is not their choice – it is an alternative only. Water is a continuation of the breadline, used for fishing. It would be environmentally irresponsible for a sewer outfall in that area. We should save the park for tomorrow.

Vern Fieler, Trails End Drive: He is one of the original 6 that started the petition that the Assembly has been given. Their point is to find an alternative funding source for the water line. He really likes the parks, but wants to realign the right of way for access to the road and water. He would like to find other funding sources. Now it is viewed as trading public lands for the benefit of a few. He sees access to park as an improvement, as the park is currently unused by public. This would allow access and parking for locals, and provide utilities such as restrooms. It is not a sole gain for the few residents. Some of the residents would live out there full time, but the ½ mile walk and lack of water line discourages them. All he wants is the access and to be included in the water system. It may seem selfish, but the community could gain by better access to park. People park at Tee Harbor parking lot to get to the trail. The trail is dubious, mostly providing access to residents to their homes.

Bruce Baker said that he hiked length of park twice the other day. It is a bushwack, except for some trail in a few segments.

Adrienne Celewycz, Cohen Drive: She is opposed to sale of any parkland. It is very inappropriate to sell parkland for private benefit. This park is waterfront and prime property. He has used a cistern at his property. The cost of people's waterline should not be traded by the loss of park land. An alternative funding source should be found. He doesn't think that any park land was ever improved by cutting it in half. Not every park should become Disneyland-like.

Diana Donahue, Tee Way: She owns several lots at Tee Harbor. She is not in favor of selling parkland to fund the project. She is not against neighbors getting water, but there are other means available. In the original petition to get water, money was found to fund the project. This could happen again for these few residents, especially if it is done in conjunction with improving the park. She doesn't want the neighborhood to be like West Juneau, which is begging for park land.

Mike Donahue: He has heard disturbing news regarding petitions that have been picked up that they showed only one person against the project rather than 50.

Dan King said that the it is going to the Planning Commission next. The Assembly has the final word. Nancy Waterman said that the PRAC is advisory, and makes a recommendation to the Assembly. The Planning Commission does make land use decisions, and the Assembly makes the final and political decisions.

Public Testimony closed.

Nancy Waterman made a motion to recommend that the Assembly retain the Point Stephens Natural Area Park in our park system. The following recommendations to be forwarded to the Assembly: The CBJ Parks and Recreation Department should continue implementing recommendations in the CBJ Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan including developing a management concept for the area from Tee Harbor to Berner's Bay (page 8 – 4). If only a small portion of the Point Stephens Natural Area Park is considered for purposes of disposal from public ownership, the appropriate public process should be followed. The community, the Planning Commission, and the Assembly must

make this change in the CBJ Comprehensive Plan, the CBJ Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, and the CBJ Land Management Plan, and the plan for Lands Disposal. The subdivision executed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and approved by the Juneau Platting Board on August 18, 1965 should be vacated.

The motion was seconded by Kay Gouyton.

Ken Dean said that he adamantly opposes disposing of parkland for private development.

Ms. Waterman stated her reasons for the motion (see appendix I of meeting minutes).

The motion passed unanimously.

Kay Gouyton made a motion recommending that a letter be written by the PRAC stating that they do support alternative funding for water line and access. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Auke Rec By-Pass Park Public Hearing

Bob Grochow said that Tracy Moore from DOT was supposed to be at the meeting to discuss plans regarding the park that will be created with fill from the Auke Rec Bypass Project, but he was unable to get a hold of him. The original Auke Rec By Pass project included a 12 acre fill site that was near the end of the by pass road. However, it was located within the primary watershed of Picnic Creek, and a major fill site would not be approved in that area. City staff and DOT staff took another look at the entire area to identify a site that would be suitable for a community recreation facility, and possibly a future school site. The new site was selected ½ mile south of first site. This would result in a smaller site of approximately 6 acres on the east side of the bypass road. As part of the project, DOT would construct an access road and develop a multipurpose field for the city that could be used for softball, baseball and soccer. They would also provide parking, fencing, and other amenities. PRAC packets include a site plan. P&R Staff has worked with DOT staff on the layout of the park. The site plan concept has been approved. There will be a half acre area that could be used for a community garden. All waste fill will be contained in this park area. The actual usable area would be 6 acres, although total park is closer to 12 acres. The new site is located about halfway between Auke Rec and 1st Lena Loop Road turn.

Public Testimony:

Ed Buyarski, Andreanoff Drive: He is a master gardener and a community gardener founder. He is all for the ballfield. However, the Master Gardeners/Community Gardens need more community garden space. Out the road has better weather for gardening. He is interested in having more space at the site. This space will be difficult to develop for a community garden. He wants to have some orchard space too. He wants to show what can grow here. He is looking at the size and shape based on the present community garden and CBJ requirements, which say that they must have equal parking/handicapped access as garden space. This would bring it down to 10,000 square feet, or 40 to 50 plots. That isn't necessarily a problem either. His needs are: flat ground (ground shouldn't be tightly compacted like ball fields), the area will need to be fenced, especially if there is an orchard (cost of fencing is \$10 per linear foot, for 4 feet, otherwise it won't keep out bears or porcupines), and the fence/gate wouldn't have to be locked. He uses electric fencing on his property. They would also need water - a surface collection system would be fine. If there was electricity, they could pump water from a pond or some other source. Port a potties would be fine. The parking area for the ball fields is 100 yards from the nearest edge of community garden site. He thinks the whole area could be rearranged and drop the elevation of entire field to more flat space. Maybe the field could be turned by 90 degrees. He wants to hear what can be done as far as water, access, and electricity. The Community Gardeners are interested in paying money to develop area.

Bob Grochow said that the site plan has been a real challenge. He will try to answer some questions in the absence of Mr. Moore. He too, would like to have a larger flat area. The reason for the odd location of the ball field is due to an uphill slope in that corner. It allows them to fit an adult softball field in that space. If there was a lowered elevation, the right hand corner moves to left so a smaller area would be left. It was raised as high as possible to make as much flat area as possible. He now wonders if lowering the community garden area might increase the total area. Maybe he could sit down and work this out with DOT. There are plans for fence openings around the perimeter of the field to retrieve baseballs and soccer balls.

Dan King asked if the area could be squared up as more of an L shape? Bob Grochow said that it could not be done without retaining walls. The are maxed out with sloping.

Dan King said that Lena Park will be built next year on the old dump site.

Nancy Waterman said that she still has many questions. Bob Grochow said that there has been no overall planning for this area yet. All planning has happened in a segmented fashioned. Nancy Waterman said that someone at some point needs to take charge and bring all elements go together. Bob Grochow said that if the fill doesn't get dumped here, the project won't happen, and this is why there is a big push to get it done now. This opportunity may not come along again for a decade or more. Dan King said that we have been working on this for a couple of years. A new community will be developed in this location. Kay Gouyton said that our concern is that there will be a development, and it needs resources. Free fill was something that couldn't be passed up. We have been looking at this for the past three years. Ideally, you would plat the whole thing out, but it is felt that this is an opportunity couldn't be missed.

Public participation closed.

Alex Lukshin asked if DOT could change anything at this point. Bob Grochow said that we are locked into the volume of the fill, it must be done within the confines of the permit area, and the components that have been discussed, such as an access road, community garden, sports fields, and the level of development. We could ask for fencing for community garden. He is not sure if there is much we can do differently than what is shown.

Nancy Waterman thanked Bob Grochow for his work. She doesn't feel that we have enough information tonight to make a decision. She would like to designate a subcommittee to meet with Tracy Moore and Parks and Recreation staff and CDD staff and explore the largest possible concept that we can.

Bob Grochow said that DOT is looking for PRAC approval of what they have put together, knowing that there may be some changes.

Kay Gouyton made a motion to accept that this is area that will be used, and that the PRAC wants to maximize use of the area as much as possible. The PRAC would also like to review any additional work. Ken Dean seconded the motion.

Alex Lukshin would like to see a subcommittee meeting with DOT staff. Nancy Waterman said that she can't support Kay Gouyton's motion because she doesn't know exactly where the site is.

Tim Kelly stated that he is concerned that by delaying a decision, an opportunity to get this fill might get away. Nancy Waterman said that she is confident the opportunity will not pass the PRAC by. The DOT is desperate to find a cheap place to put fill.

The motion passed: 2 nay, 4 yay

C. Marine Park Decking Proposal:

Bob Grochow reviewed the director's report. One year ago Marine Park management transferred from Parks and Rec to Harbors. Harbors has identified as it's #1 project to deck over the upland portion of dock facility, which would take out the open hole. The Harbor Board has asked the PRAC to review and comment.

Dan King would like to ask Mr. Graham to come to next meeting. He is out of town tonight. He would also like to get some information ahead of time before the next meeting.

Bob Grochow said that the Harbor Board is only asking for comments on Marine Park area.

Kay Gouyton said that everyone loves going to that area at lunch. The Harbormaster should bring more information and come to the next PRAC meeting.

Tim Kelly said that he feels that this proposal would very much affect Marine Park. He is concerned about additional bus parking in the area.

Bob Grochow said that the committee needs clarification.

V. Review and Discussion

A. Unfunded Parks Projects

Dan King said that the PRAC project list has been taken to the Lands Committee, and Assemblyman Kibby looked at the list and worked it over. Assemblyman Kibby said that anything that has to do with planning will not fly in this project. Also, anything that has to do with workout equipment at pool will not fly. Master plan project implementation should be renamed Fish Creek Park Project Implementation. The workout equipment at the swimming pool won't be funded because it is competitive, a conflict with private enterprise.

Nancy Waterman said that tonight we saw an indication of how important it is to finish master plans. What are our alternatives? Dan King said that his proposal will not include anything that includes the term "plan". Bob Grochow said that Assemblyman Kibby communicated that concept to Kim Kiefer also. It can be done.

Nancy Waterman said that a draft master plan for Joe Smith and Butts property is in the works.

Tim Kelly said that the city should purchase the Gross Theater property if it would come up for sale.

Dan King said that Assemblyman Kibby wants a list of what improvements should be done to each trail. James King of Trail Mix should be able to come up with that list. Assemblyman Kibby is not opposed to trail improvements.

B. Athletic Field Signage

Bob Grochow said that the director's report provides updated information regarding this topic.

Dan King said that the Assembly COW feels that it is not a problem, but there are concerns about alcohol advertising. P&R staff will work on drafting an ordinance. The director will issue permits and work out other kinks.

Bob Grochow said that CDD is working on a sign ordinance.

Alex Lukshin asked about the status of the water fountain at Dimond Park. Bob Grochow said that there is a contractor lined up to do it. He thinks TW Hall is doing it.

Nancy said that she has been hiking around lately. There are several areas where trespass on parklands is happening. It would be timely to take advantage of work that Cristi Herren has done on beach access parcels. Someone should get the CBJ legal department to send letters to people to document trespass. Bob Grochow said that he will work with Cristi to get a list of people who are trespassing on CBJ Park lands..

Nancy Waterman wanted to remind staff that the PRAC would like to review commercial use permits in October next year instead of March.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.