

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES
May 5, 2021

A regular meeting of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Commission was held in-person and by Zoom from the Mona Lisa Drexler Assembly Chambers, Juanita Helms Administration Center, 907 Terminal Street, Fairbanks, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Mark Oldmixon, Chair.

A. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Culley Benjamin Roth
 Linda Unsicker Mark Oldmixon
 Judith Shiffler Jason Witt
 James Lounsbury

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Bork, Parks and Recreation Director
 Sharon Wittenkeller, Recording Clerk

B. MESSAGES

1. Communications to the Parks and Recreation Commission – None.
2. Citizen’s Comments – limited to three (3) minutes – None.
3. Disclosure & Statement of Conflict of Interest – None.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda and consent agenda made by Commissioner Unsicker and seconded by Witt. Carried without objection or roll call vote.

D. MINUTES

Minutes from March 15, 2021 were approved.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Carlson Center Plan

Mr. Bork gave an update on the Carlson Center plan explaining that the FNSB Finance Committee met for several weekends in April and approved the budget and the Carlson Center plan as presented with a 5/4 vote. The next course of action will take place on May 6, 2021 at the Assembly meeting which will allow public testimony on the proposed budget.

Commissioners and staff questioned and discussed the following items:

- Reasons for opposition of the Carlson Center Plan.
 - Increase in the budget and staffing.
- Bid process for the Carlson Center to be privately run.
- Costs and tracking costs for running the Carlson Center.
- Level of interest from vendors, caterers and suppliers for the current Carlson Center plan.
- Consolidation of the Carlson Center Advisory Commission.
- Status of the Carlson Center Advisory Commission
- Combining the Parks and Recreation Commission with the Carlson Center Advisory Commission.
- Far North Athletic Complex Plan.
- Letter of support for combining the Parks and Recreation Commission with the Carlson Center Advisory Commission.
- Proposed scheduled use of activities in the Carlson Center – ice time/soccer time.
- ASM contract expiration and FNSB management of the Carlson Center.
- RFP steps and length of process.
- RFP opportunity option for private management of the Carlson Center.
- Covid clinic in the Carlson Center.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Staff Reports -
 - a. Monthly Operations Report
 - b. Additional Comments from Director

Mr. Bork reported that the Assembly approved the overall budget for the Carlson Center and approved a .3 FTE authorization to Park Maintenance at North Pole. There is a .7 FTE seasonal caretaker that works out of Chena Lakes and various parks. Parks and Recreation is taking on responsibilities of the high school outdoor ice rink and they needed additional staff support. They bumped the .7 position to a 1.0 to allow for them to continue work throughout the year instead of being laid off in the fall in order to provide backup for the ice rink. At the Assembly budget hearing, Assemblymember Wilson brought up incorporating day use fees at Chena Lakes as either a day use fee or parking fee for use or rec areas to include Chena

Lakes, Tanana Lakes, and the Birch Hill Recreation area. It was discussed that fees collected could go towards maintenance of the parks and be set up as a revolving fund. There were still many details to work out and there is a possible motion to take effect in January 2022. The proposal will also be introduced to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Bork continued his report noting they are in summer operation which included: gravel removal and cleaned up, minor flooding in drainage areas, onboarding staff, and that there is a critical staffing shortage. There are 16 positions open, only 7-8 have been filled. They are participating in the tourism job fair at Pioneer Park the following Friday. There could be a delay in flower planting or parks opening due to staff shortages. Pioneer Park will feature a mini golf 18-hole course this summer and will be opening Memorial Day weekend. The train will be shut down this summer for maintenance. The Fairbanks Disc Golf Association is in development of creating a course at Tanana Lakes designed to be a flat, year-round course, and baskets will remain in place throughout the winter. The goal is to have the course finished by the end of the summer.

Commissioners and staff question and discussed the following:

- The reason for the low number of job applicants.
- Far North Athletic Complex bid process and update
- Funding and match funding Far North Athletic Complex
- Vendors at Pioneer Park and cabin use for 2021.
- Newby Park management and turf funding.
- Community efforts in using, leasing or fundraising to use borough property.
- Exclusive use and non-exclusive land use of borough property.

G. EXCUSE FUTURE ABSENCES

The Commission discussed future meeting dates in June and there were not noted future absences due to lack of a next scheduled meeting.

H. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Oldmixon commented on commission vacancies and drafting a letter of support for combining the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Carlson Center Advisory Commission. He discussed his priority for diversity of commissioners serving on the commissions and inquired on the option of revisiting the smoking and vaping park restriction issue.

Commissioner Shiffler inquired if all in-person meetings will be held at the Assembly Chambers instead of the Big Dipper. She expressed concerns for the issues of establishing a quorum for commission meetings. She also noted

her background for serving on the commission and that she was involved in initiating the first elementary running club at University Park Elementary and organizing the races at Birch Hill Rec for elementary students.

Commissioner Unsicker gave her support for addressing the smoking and vaping park restrictions and the letter of support for combining the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Carlson Center Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Witt offered his support for the recruitment and diversity of commission members.

Commissioner Roth echoed Commissioner Witt's comments.

I. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.