

Meeting Minutes for Anacortes Parks Commission

October 10th, 2023

Board members present: JoAnn York-Gilmore, Brad Adams, Sarah Nichols

Staff present: Jonn Lunsford, Bob Vaux, Karl Wolfswinkle, Dustin South, Nicole Johnston

Meeting held by Zoom and in person at City Hall

Called to order at 6:00pm

Minutes: September minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Public Comments:

Sally Turner was in attendance to speak about the Ace of Hearts Dog Park. She shared that she and her husband Bill started the dog park 20 years ago. She stated that the park is used every day of the year, sometimes two or three times a day by the same person/dog. Since Covid and the building of higher density homes without yards, there has been an increase in use. Sally shared that the more dogs using the park, she feels there should be more money allocated in the budget. Bill and Sally would like to see the park expanded in order to serve more dogs. They are looking at grants and fundraising and have raised almost \$3,000. Jonn shared that the baseball field can not be converted as it was built with a youth athletic grant. The other options that Parks staff has discussed with dog park users are altering the parking lot, paving the parking area, irrigation, adding gravel to the path around the park or expanding in the other direction. City staff are looking at the options as the budget is being reviewed and capital projects are being considered.

Correspondence and Communication:

Bob brought a request from the Disc Golf community. They are hoping to host their 3rd annual competition November 17th & 18th. This event has national recognition and has gone great in the past. The Board expressed support for the event.

JoAnn gave an update from the Forest Board meeting. It was a fairly short meeting with very few members of the public in attendance. The FAB is also holding meetings for the Forest Plan update. There will be two more special meetings held in November and December to take public comment on any changes to the Forest Plan. JoAnn also reported that the e-bikes monitoring has been completed and the report is in process.

Jonn reported on the Parks Foundation. They are looking forward to supporting progress on the Guemes Channel Trail and other 2024 projects.

ACFL Plan Update:

Bob reported that the Forest Board and staff were surprised to see so few members of the public at the meeting. Written comments that have been submitted are being posted weekly. The goal is to have the approved plan complete prior to 2026.

Recreation Events Update:

Dustin gave an update on all of the upcoming events for the recreation department. The Mt Erie run is on October 14th followed by the Haunted Forest on October 28th. Tickets are sold out for the Haunted Forest. There will be a downtown Trick or Treat for the little kids, hosted by the Chamber and local businesses. There are team puzzle events happening each month, with the December event being an individual competition. The Winter Wonderland walk is December 8th & 9th from 5-8pm. This is a very popular event! Breakfast with Santa has been replaced with Visit the North Pole, this year held on December 12th featuring a professional blue Santa. Boys basketball will run in November and December with girls to follow.

Staff Reports:

Karl reported that the Senior Center is having a busy fall with the highlight being the fantastic 50th anniversary celebration. The Anniversary team had a meeting to organize more frequent celebrations. Next week is Fall Prevention week. Staff and volunteers are looking forward to the holidays and having some of the local school kids in to decorate. There will be new classes offered after the new year, but the hula and ballet for seniors classes are happening now and are very popular.

Nicole had nothing new to add to her report. The team is dealing with leaves and chestnuts! The ACFL maintenance job has been posted and is open until October 23rd. The small tracks behind the depot are being pulled up as part of a larger project to spruce up the area of the Depot and Jim Rice Civic park.

Bob shared that there is a volunteer work party on October 14th at A Ave and Fircrest to help pull scotch broom. There has been no work on the new Friends of the Forest executive director. The skate park is going great with the Grindline site supervisor suggesting ways to make the park even better. The builders have so much pride in the project as they are skaters themselves.

Jonn reported that he has been working on the budget for 2024, going to Council with it on October 16th. Parks will be pulling from reserves again for operational costs. Staff is looking forward to fiber finishing and funds coming back to other departments. Washington park is doing great financially, nearly doubling revenue from 2021 to 2023. Some improvements happening before the end of the year are a new pay station for the B lot parking, paving at the upper restrooms, and new signs in the campground.

Other Business:

Questions were asked about homeless camp that was dealt with, is this a unique situation? That "bunker" was the work of a father/son team that staff have been dealing with all over town for years. It was off trail #239, far enough to be hidden. It took several hours just to peel off the branches and such that made the roof, then 1700 pounds of trash were hauled out by the team. A summons has been issued by the police department to appear in court. Bob and Brian have found other forts in the ACFL and are working to disassemble them. The Rotary has continued to help and keep up on the Centennial Trail.

There has been an increase in graffiti at all parks, mainly Tursi, Storvik and Volunteer. It is the same tag and police are aware and are contacting the schools to see if it is recognized.

The high school volleyball team may come to a future meeting to speak about having sand courts at Storvik.

The potential of having an ACFL ranger is off the table for now. It would require negotiation between two unions and a complete change to the job. It has been agreed that the school resource officer will spend the summer in the ACFL and parks. This will set the tone as tickets are issued for off leash dogs, alcohol, fires, etc, then people will take notice and obey the rules. This is great as over 40% of the City is trails or parks.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm

Respectfully Submitted by: Darby Jordan