

August 12, 2025

Parks Commission in Attendance: JoAnn, Sarah, Alex, Brad and Chris

Staff in Attendance: Jonn, Bob, Nicole, Eli and Karl

Call to order: 6:00pm

June minutes passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

There was a question about the U Ave park and any update available. Jonn shared that there is a consultant on board and all approvals have to go through FEMA as part of the project. Once that is done, there will be a neighborhood meeting.

Correspondence and Communication:

JoAnn reported on the last Forest Board meeting, after being off for the summer, it was a catch up meeting. The next draft of the Forest Plan was presented to Board members and made available online for the public. The Board will review it this month and come prepared to the September meeting with their thoughts and recommendations. The hope is to vote to move it along to the City Council which is where any further public comment would be taken.

Pickleball Court Discussion

Delores was in attendance to speak as a neighbor to the Clearidge courts. She expressed frustration that the City has not done more to address the noise at the courts. She would like to see the courts and park closed and removed. She stated that in her research, it is recommended to have pickleball courts 150-650 feet from residential homes and has seen other US residents take legal action regarding courts that are too close to homes. She feels she can no longer enjoy her yard and believes that the noise violates various City codes and ordinances regarding decibels. She believes the noise curtains do not help. People are playing past 8pm, the posted time that the courts close. Delores wants to know why it is ok to have these courts in a neighborhood, feels they should be in an industrial area. She shared various other issues they have had with parking and people driving through the neighborhood. She is requesting that the courts be closed and locked and only allow play from 9am to 6pm.

Jonn spoke about the efforts to disperse pickleball throughout town with discussions on hold at the school district due to high staffing turnover with the key departments. Council did hear the proposal in July and had lots of questions but no action was taken.

Jeff from Anacortes asked about the district courts and if citizens could play during school hours. Jonn responded that, yes, when not in use by PE classes or team practice, the courts would be available.

Debbie from Anacortes expressed surprise at the neighbors as these are the only public courts in town. She feels that the parking lot has been helpful and is being used regularly. She spoke with a neighbor that was walking her dog and the neighbor stated that she could not hear the play

going on. Debbie shared that the noise curtains have helped and that shortening the hours will not solve the issue of people playing beyond the posted times.

Delores spoke again sharing that she is wanting peace and quiet during the summer and can not escape the noise. She feels that shortening the hours and locking the gates is a must. When tournaments are played the noise and parking is even worse. She stated again that the courts shouldn't be in neighborhoods.

Theresa from Anacortes respects the neighbors and believes another facility would be great but a reduction in hours hurts families. She stated that the majority of the year, play is not possible due to darkness and rain.

Michelle from Anacortes also expressed understanding for the neighbors while sharing what a great sport for all ages and abilities it is. She also believes looking for another space and facility would be beneficial.

Jean from Anacortes stated that she has been playing at the courts since 2017 and wonders why there have been a sudden uptick in complaints about the noise. She respects that there is an issue but posed the question of where else to go. She shared that the City is limited on space, suggested maybe the RiteAid building for a temporary solution.

Beth from Anacortes has been playing since 2010, often at Mt Eire school. She says it is a great option but the court is not regulation and the concrete floor can be dangerous. She feels it is a dangerous precedent to set by taking more hours away from a park as the hours have already been slightly shortened. With work she is unable to play midday. She brought up that airplanes have a higher decibel rating. Beth likes that the game and area have been welcoming to visitors and new people. She supports the idea of locking the gate but not reducing hours.

Steve from Anacortes is a neighbor to the courts and also believes it should be locked after hours. He agreed that the planes are loud but that noise is gone quickly. He would like the City to find a new area for the courts, not in a neighborhood.

Erik from Anacortes agreed that it is bad to have neighbor vs neighbor. He mostly plays in Mt Vernon. He feels that the City should come up with a new place with more courts, a long term solution. He also believes that double lined tennis courts are a bad idea.

Paula from Anacortes shared that she has listened to the concerns before and feels that based on the number of people that play, the players are not fully represented tonight. There are many younger people who work and can't play during the day. She was appreciative of the City and volunteers for putting up the noise screens, feels there has been a large improvement. She noted that the City measured the noise level without the screens and then after one side was installed, and there was a difference. Paula explained that she lives near Mt Erie school and there are challenges with traffic and parking and noise and after hours activities but looks at that as part of being in a neighborhood. She feels that having the park there makes for a nice, healthy environment for the neighborhood.

Delores spoke and invited others to come and listen at her house when play is going on and see what the noise level is. She asked about a change in zoning to remove the park and said there could be lawsuits.

Beth spoke again and advocated for a short term solution, possibly 3 days with shorter hours. She acknowledges it will take a creative solution.

Kellee from Anacortes stated that the noise and complaints have grown as the sport has grown. She feels there needs to be more courts away from neighbors. She asked what the readings are and if they are above legal limits.

Jonn stated that he had been out a few times and one was a windy day at that makes it tough to get accurate readings. However, by the basketball court, where there are no screens, it is about 90, and on the protected side measured about 65. Jonn will check in with the code enforcement officer to get more accurate readings.

Beth suggested there should be a noise study with readings taken at different times of day in order to get accurate data. She acknowledged that all neighborhoods have challenges. She posed that by streamlining play, shortening hours two nights a week, that would help in the summer. She would like to see the park stay but be able to find a solution.

Keith from Anacortes thinks locking the courts is a good idea.

John from Anacortes shared that he believes in science and has empathy for neighbors near a highway. He would like to look at the situation of noise on a decibel scale with 60 being the level of your dishwasher and pickleball falling from 60-70. He feels that it would be hard to prove that anyone is being injured, possibly just annoyed. John shared that it is reasonable to be empathetic and reduce noise by players but feels that this is a park that should be available to the community. He invited everyone to help build more courts.

Jonn invited continued public comments be sent in via email, they will be sent to the Parks Board for discussion next month.

It was asked about next steps and a timeline. Jonn shared that the Board will discuss this with staff at the next meeting but unlikely that a change will be made quickly. Delores once again stated that she would like to see the courts closed on Sunday and two evenings each week closed early.

Department Reports:

Nicole reported that it has been a very busy summer and she is proud of the crew. The team has been short handed all summer. Nichola has now been appointed as the foreperson and Steve has been moved to team lead. Staff is in the process of hiring for a new maintenance tech, despite it being the busy summer season. HF Sinclair is planning a large work party at Tursi park in September.

Eli shared that summer has also been busy for the recreation department. They just finished 6 weeks of summer camp at Washington Park, this was mostly lead by student recs and they did a

great job. Soccer season is coming and that is the largest league run by the department. There will be several PeeWee programs starting up. A new event being planned is a Fall Family Bingo night in partnership with the Senior Center. The highlight of the fall season is the Haunted Forest to be held October 25th out at the loop at Washington Park.

Karl shared that the Center is very busy right now as well. Staff and volunteers are getting ready for their Senior Resource Fair to be held on September 13th. They are working with the Foundation to do some video clips for marketing the fair on social media. The Center staff recently met with City staff and the Foundation to discuss upcoming budget and goals. Upcoming programs and events are a revolutionary war series, ukulele performance, and the annual Fall Prevention in October.

Jonn gave an update on the Heart Lake grant. It is with contracts and the mayor to sign. Bob will lead this project and they have 2 years to get to completion. The skate park restroom and parking lot should be done by June of 2026. The pocket park at U and 2nd is part of the outfall project and is in process. The Depot plaza expansion should go to bid in October and start construction in March. 2026 will be a tight budgeting year so staff are looking for creative ways to get projects done.

Other Business:

A question was asked about the Community Center and Jonn responded that the initial fundraising has been tough to acquire. They are still looking for major donors.

Chris asked about the list of priorities that Jonn had asked for and what that was going to be used for. Jonn shared that those priorities will be used for the CFP. However with it being such a lean year, it is important that citizens let the elected know what they want. Concern was raised that without general fund money, things will slip and not get done. The City expects to see fiber stand on its own after 2026 and for general funds monies to return to departments. He did share that in 5 years, the parks maintenance team has only been fully staffed for 18 months of that.

Adjourned at 7:08pm

Respectfully submitted by Darby Jordan