

**Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee  
Minutes of October 25, 2012 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee ("Committee" or "TPAC") was held at the Talkeetna Roadhouse on October 25, 2012. Core members John Strassenburgh, Chris Mannix, Howard Carbone, Billy FitzGerald, Jim Trump, and Roger Robinson were present. Talkeetna Community Council member Rick Schreiber and community members Ruth Wood, Doug Smith, Kathy Stoltz, and John Zebutis also attended.

- I. Six core members were in attendance, establishing a quorum. Chair Howard Carbone called the meeting to order at 7:08.
- II. The minutes of the July 17, 2012 meeting were approved as written.
- III. Under Announcements, Howard stated that scholarships are available for trails symposium (ages 18-25) April 14 – 17 2013 in Arizona. Howard also gave an overview of the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation -- Agnew Beck borough-wide trails planning, currently underway. There will be a community meeting in Willow on October 27<sup>th</sup> and at the Y Fire Hall on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Ruth announced a Jessica Stevens appreciation event Friday evening, October 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Northern Susitna Institute building.
- IV. Under Persons to be Heard, John provided additional details of the Agnew Beck Trails Planning project. Discussion and action on this subject was moved to New Business.
- IV. Under Unfinished Business, Howard reported that he has been unable to reach Pat Owens at the Borough regarding access to Talkeetna Lakes Park through unofficial entry points, the placement of boundary signs around the perimeter of the Park, and the use of bear resistant containers for garbage and food storage.

Also under Unfinished Business, Howard reported the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service ("RTCA") grant application had been submitted but denied. The application was an effort to obtain "technical assistance" to help with comprehensive trails planning for the Talkeetna area, with emphasis on obtaining legal access for routes we already have so that we don't lose these trails in the future. Howard explained that RTCA felt that our projects were worthy, and encouraged us to reapply. It was noted, however, that RTCA will help us design a trail, but not assist in getting trail easements or rights-of-way.

Discussion followed on possibly submitting another application next year. The question of whether or not to reapply was tabled until a later TPAC meeting, after we see if or how this project can be integrated into or coordinated with the Agnew Beck planning project.

- V. New Business:

1. The first discussion item was the Village Park. Kathy Stoltz and Howard gave an update of the work accomplished by the Village Park Working Group, and what remains to be done. Progress is being made on improving the Village Park, but there are complicating factors such as having to coordinate three landowners: the Alaska Railroad, Mat-Su Borough, and a state right of way. Concerns about the possibility of losing the Borough funding that has been allocated to the Village Park, restrooms, the replacement of the pavilion, and an information kiosk were discussed.

Howard then explained a separate project, refurbishment of the planter box and construction of a log arch to serve as the main entrance to the Park. He explained the reasons for making this a locally controlled project and suggested obtaining Revenue Sharing funding. Discussion ensued, and it was determined that the project needs to be more clearly defined and costed out. Further consideration of the project was tabled until this was done and various funding strategies investigated.

2. The second item was the Agnew Beck planning project ("Plan"). John explained the preliminary list of Priority Trail Projects generated by Agnew Beck after the stakeholder interviews conducted last summer. Various projects on this list and on previous planning lists were discussed.

The Ridge and River trails were discussed at length. These trails are very important to this community. Chris moved and Jim seconded that TPAC write a letter to the MSB Trails and Parks Foundation and to Agnew Beck stating that TPAC desires to have the River and Ridge Trail system, and link to town (Talkeetna) included as a priority in the Plan's final recommendations. The motion passed unanimously. Billy volunteered to write the letter.

Discussion then turned to an item on the Agnew Beck Trail Projects list -- a trail from Willow to Talkeetna. There were no project details available, so TPAC could not really take a position. However, TPAC is very concerned any time a potential trails project connects to the Talkeetna Community Council area and appears on a project list without the Talkeetna Community having first being involved.

TPAC then developed a preliminary list of projects that it views as key components of an integrated Talkeetna trail system.

- River and Ridge Trail System and link to town
- Trail connection from town to the mountains to the east.
- Path along North Spur Road (extending the bike path from 2nd St. to Main Street).
- Spur Road crossing between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets
- East side "Loop Trail" – south along the Spur Road, northeast on Old Lake Road Trail, back into town along trail parallel to Talkeetna River (note, this has got some significant land ownership obstacles)

- West side Riverfront Trails.

TPAC then discussed concerns, three of which are:

- Choose access points to the backcountry (e.g., trails to the east) carefully to facilitate management of impacts and to avoid incompatible uses. The question of motorized and non-motorized use also came up. The group felt that there are several options already for motorized access to the Talkeetna Mountains high country but there is not a non-motorized route. The committee discussed the value of a non-motorized trail to treeline, but only if it can be protected from motorized use *and* it accesses an unspoiled area of high country, *and* if a suitable legal route can be found.
- Fear loss of connection from town to the Ridge Trail and beyond.
- TPAC wishes to be involved at the front end on any potential trail project that connects from outside the area to the Talkeetna Community Council area.

Chris moved and Roger seconded that TPAC recommend to the Talkeetna Community that it write a letter to Agnew Beck and the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation that explains these projects and concerns. The motion passed unanimously. Howard volunteered to draft a letter for the Council's consideration.

VI. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



John Strassenburgh

