

**Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee
Minutes of May 31, 2016 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee (“Committee” or “TPAC”) was held at the Talkeetna Library on May 31, 2016. Core members John Strassenburgh, Mark Wildermuth, Ellen Wolf, Jim Trump, Roger Robinson, Chris Mannix, and Iris Vandenharn were present. Other attendees were Ruth Wood, Brian Okonek, Ann Yadon, Jeff Lebeque (DNSC), Mark Burcar, Aubrey Smith, and Kathleen Fleming. In addition, guests Eric Phillips, Hugh Leslie, Mark Goetsch, and Russ Gaubatz, of the Mat-Su Borough were also present, as was Laura Hoffman of YCC.

I. Seven core members were in attendance, establishing a quorum. Chair Iris Vandenharn called the meeting to order at 7:06.

II. The agenda was approved.

III. The minutes of the February 22, 2016 meeting were approved.

IV. YCC Update

Laura Hoffman provided an update of YCC projects for the coming summer, specifically described in an email to Iris from Laura dated May 9, 2016. These include planting 2 flower beds in the Village Park and 6 to 8 days of trail work on the X Lake Loop in Talkeetna Lakes Park. Possible additional projects were rehabilitating, with Mark G., the eroded crossing between X and Y lakes; assisting Mark G. in completing the Whigmi Parking lot; and invasive plant surveys in the Village Park, Talkeetna Lakes Park, and Christiansen Lake Park.

In response to a question, Laura also summarized the Su Valley High School trails project for this summer.

V. Mat-Su Borough Update

Mark Goetsch reported that MSB is looking for a camp host for the Riverfront Park, putting flowers and plants in the Village Park, landscaping at the Library, and installing bear resistant containers (donated by NPS) in the Village and Riverfront Parks. In response to questions, Mark described the steps needed to finish Whigmi parking lot, said he would look into the need to block off some trail use of Government Lot 9 due to bank erosion and beaver activity, indicated that the dilapidated fence at Talkeetna Lakes Park would be removed by MSB Solid Waste staff, and stated he would look into putting a NO PARKING sign in front of the Pavilion at Christiansen Lake in order to ensure unimpeded public access.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Comsat Talkeetna Lakes Park Access: Roger gave a brief summary of current status, highlighting specifically the safety problems associated with the informal access near the intersection of Comsat and Christiansen Lake Road and

suggested possible alternatives along with some of the pros and cons. This is a worsening problem that, in order to resolve, will need collaboration with ADOT and guidance from someone knowledgeable in trail design. Next steps are that Iris will contact the Interior Trails for trail design guidance and the Sub-Committee will contact ADOT about solutions it would support.

B. Talkeetna Lakes Park signage: Iris summarized the recent recommendations of the Talkeetna Lakes Park Signage Sub-Committee. Ellen moved and Jim seconded a motion to accept the Sub-Committee report. Passed unanimously.

C. Village Park: The Village Park Working group came together this month and gave recommendations for planting trees. Mark G. described plans to plant trees in the Village Park, including birch, lilacs, and mountain ash.

D. Process for community participation in development decisions in Talkeetna area parks: Iris reported that the agreement between the MSB and TCCI has been completed.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Ridge Trail: Iris reported the status of the Ridge Trail planning effort, including the acceptance of TCCI of the Trail Care agreement for the Ridge Trail; the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation grant of \$10k and MSB match of \$15k to fund the preparation of a Ridge Trail – Trail Development Plan for borough lands that underlie the Ridge Trail area; boundaries were identified and marked for the Beaver Road gravel pit resource management land and the Ridge Trail land; and TCCI / TPAC responsibility for developing an Request For Proposal for the planning project. Iris formed a Sub-Committee to draft an RFP (including the Scope of Work), seeking assistance from the MSB where needed. Chris M, John S, and Mark W volunteered to be on the Sub-Committee, and Iris will ask Tod Marder also to be on the Sub-Committee as a nearby landowner who is very familiar with the area.

B. Culvert X-Y Lakes: Mark G. described the trail rehabilitation project as a 6" diameter x 8' long culvert / pipe lying on current grade and backfilled to provide a level tread surface over the portage between the two lakes. Borough trails specialist Eric Haggserom and maybe the YCC will be involved in this project. The timeline is still unclear.

C. Proposed development of Loop B of the Spencer trail master Plan. Mark G. and Hugh Leslie described this as a 3' single track constructed using hand tools and no heavy equipment, although a mower would be used and possibly a small mini-excavator. Chris M has GPS data of the center line of the trail, and Borough officials indicated that trails specialist Eric Haggserom will flag the trail. MSB officials also indicated that TPAC will be invited to walk the trail and check the flagging in advance of commencement of any trail work. At this point, the Borough contemplates that the MSB trail crew will have 2 weeks to complete the trail. Iris will suggest to TCCI that Chris M be the Community liaison if TCCI

approves the trail development. Jim moved and Roger seconded to proceed with the loop B project, to complete as a hiking trail. Discussion ensued. Motion approved with 11 for and one “no” vote. *Note, this motion reflects TPAC’s endorsement of Loop B, but TPAC, as a standing committee of the TCCI, lacks the authority to “proceed” with this project. The role of TPAC is to recommend to the TCCI. Although improperly worded, this motion represents TPAC’s recommendation to the TCCI.*

VIII. New Business

A. Fish Lake access parking lot location: Iris summarized the two options for locating a parking area, off the Spur Road or at the south end of Dragonfly Hollow in the Emmer subdivision. Lengthy discussion ensued, covering such things as the pros and cons of the two options, provision for potential expansion of the parking area, management concerns, and the rules that might apply to parking within the easement. Further discussion was postponed until the next TPAC meeting.

B. Application guidelines Talkeetna area parks for community members: Iris explained the Application Guidelines for accepting proposals for trails and other facility development in Talkeetna area parks. Ellen moved, and Jim seconded a motion that TPAC adopt the guidelines as a starting point in evaluating project proposals for non-MSB applicants, with the addition of “Show of volunteer and in Kind support”. Motion was approved with 11 yes and one “no” vote.

C. Talkeetna Lakes Park mayday trees: Brian explained the effect and spread of the mayday tree invasive plant within Talkeetna Lakes Park and in the northern valley. He indicated that the trees range in size up to a 9” diameter trunk and taller than a birch tree, they are toxic to young moose, and tend to deplete the nutrients of the soil. The trees exist throughout Talkeetna Lakes Park. Funding to YCC for invasive removal has been cut. No solution was apparent.

D. Funding for signs in Talkeetna Lakes Park: Potential sources of funding for signage in Talkeetna Lakes Park were discussed, including a TCCI Revenue Sharing Grant, MSB, Denali Nordic Ski Club, and the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 9:56.

Respectfully submitted,

John Strassenburgh