



# City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.  
Valdez, AK 99686

## Meeting Agenda

### Beautification Commission

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Friday, June 26, 2026

12:00 PM

City Council Chambers

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#### Regular Meeting (Rescheduled from 6/15/26)

#### REGULAR AGENDA - 12:00 PM

*Rescheduled from June 15, 2026*

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. [Discussion Item: Review of Commission Role and Responsibilities](#)
2. [Discussion Item: Identifying Project and Maintenance Priorities for 2027](#)

V. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

VI. ADJOURNMENT



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 26-0264, **Version:** 1

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**ITEM TITLE:**

Discussion Item: Review of Commission Role and Responsibilities

**SUBMITTED BY:** Sheri Pierce, City Clerk/ Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk

**FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

**RECOMMENDATION:**

n/a

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

In response to concerns raised on the effectiveness of the commission/ ability to move priorities forward, City Clerk and/or Deputy City Clerk will provide an overview of commission's advisory role and how the group fits into the city's administrative structure.

Topics covered will include:

- Responsibilities assigned in Valdez Municipal Code
- Limits of authority (no spending authority)
- Process for making recommendations to City Council
- Role in public outreach/ options for gathering community feedback

CHAPTER 2.66  
**BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION**

**§ 2.66.010. Establishment—Composition—Appointment of members.**

- A. The city beautification commission consists of five members appointed by the city council for staggered three-year terms.
- B. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the commissioners are appointed.
- C. The commission shall elect its chair and chair pro tempore from among the appointed members.

(Ord. 21-09 § 1; Ord. 24-12 § 4)

**§ 2.66.020. Powers and duties.**

The commission is an advisory commission to the city council. It shall:

- A. Work to advocate for, promote, and enhance the aesthetics of the local human-built environment to reflect the beauty of the surrounding natural environment.
- B. Work to build community, a sense of place, and civic pride through beautification projects, educational programming, grant programs, and other activities focused on the aesthetics of Valdez, including but not limited to design, landscaping, and public art.
- C. Receive, consider, and evaluate public input, opinions, and recommendations regarding aesthetics of the community and advise the city council of any findings or recommendations.
- D. Advise on aesthetic components of city projects and public-private partnerships, as requested.
- E. Advise on code enforcement efforts related to community aesthetics, as requested.
- F. Consult with other city boards and commissions on their work as it relates to community aesthetics.
- G. Participate in the city comprehensive planning process as it relates to community aesthetics.
- H. Make recommendations to city council through the city budget process regarding beautification programs and beautification project priorities for funding.
- I. Meet at least once per month and cause minutes of each meeting to be recorded and filed with the city clerk.
- J. Perform such other activities as may be requested of it by the city council.

(Ord. 21-09 § 1; Ord. 24-12 § 4)

**§ 2.66.030. Quorum and voting.**

A quorum of the beautification commission for the conduct of any meeting, work session, or public hearing shall be a majority of the commission. No actions shall be taken by the commission except by concurrence of at least three members.

§ 2.66.030

§ 2.66.030

(Ord. 21-09 § 1; Ord. 24-12 § 4)



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 26-0263, **Version:** 1

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**ITEM TITLE:**

Discussion Item: Identifying Project and Maintenance Priorities for 2027

**SUBMITTED BY:** By Request of Chair Kathy Nielsen

**FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

**RECOMMENDATION:**

n/a

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

The commission has engaged in planning and project prioritization in prior years.

The goal of this discussion is to identify a key project or projects along to actively move forward with for the 2027 budget cycle.

Recommendations for maintenance needs with an aesthetic impact should be considered as well and categorized separately.

Approval of recommendations will take place during the regular July meeting.

Attached are documents from prior planning discussions for commissioners to review and consider.

## **Summary of Beautification Commission Member Priorities - June 2023**

- **Main Street**
  - **Lane:** “The lot on SW corner of Meals and Egan. Although privately owned, it is prominent-ugly on the beginning of our main street.”
  - **McCay:** “Fix Egan Street. Develop the street, create the plaza or build apartment buildings with retail space on the bottom floor, have the theme for the main street, make a plan to connect Egan with harbors, Kelsey Dock, Galena, Kobuk, Fairbanks St to have a flow for walkability and future growth of the community.”
  - **Benda:** “Improve the empty lots on main street.”
  
- **Park Strips**
  - **Lane:** “All the snow dump areas but mainly the two park areas. They need to be shaped up with good grass cover, quickly, rather than looking like landfills.”
  - **Benda:** “Do something with the park strips in town. They are damaged because of snow removal, but we still use them all summer and have built beautiful picnic shelters. Is there a balance that can be found?”
  - **McCay:** “It is also disappointing to see the state our park strips are in June (Black Gold Park Strip for example).”
  
- **Maintenance Planning**
  - **Benda:** “Ownership of projects-who maintains them once they are built? Christmas lights still up and on until March is just as sad as no lights at all.”
  - **McCay:** “Maintain what we have and take care of the assets that bring visitors to town and provide great recreation opportunities to locals - Develop annual maintenance plans for non-paved roads to main attractions, for example: Valdez Glacier Lake, Robe Lake, Old Town Valdez, Mineral Creek. Make sure the roads are graded several times in the summer, brush is cut, there are portable toilets provided, trash cans or dumpsters, picnic tables in some areas, fire rings, make sure City has MOA agreement with the State of Alaska to provide basic service at Robe Lake instead of pushing the responsibility between City and State and nothing gets done for years.”
  - **Knight:** “Figure out a long-term maintenance plan for all beautification projects (i.e., the arch, the welcome sign, the planters and light posts, banners, murals, etc.)”
  
- **Duck Flats Boardwalk**
  - **Neilsen:** “The Stan Stephens memorial boardwalk on the duck flats. Will require permitting. Federal project money may be available. This is a project that provides opportunity for various groups to work together, i.e., educational, environmental, tourism.”
  - **Weaver:** “Boardwalk at the flats. (Marsh area)”
  
- **Royal Center Mural**

- **Lane:** Goldminer mural. High focus area for locals and visitors. Perhaps the repair could be paid for by interested locals. I know a resident who will donate \$1,000 toward the work.
- **Knight:** support the repainting of the All-American Route mural. Make it a community art project activity during Goldrush days.
- **Benda:** Solution to the aging mural on the Egan building.
- **Code Enforcement**
  - **McCay:** “First of all we need to put a major effort into cleaning up our town and enforcing the code. As we drive around in the trolley and see Valdez from the Visitor perspective, it is a little bit disturbing, especially traveling on Robe River Drive (by the schools), Brewery Row, streets near College (Lowe and Mendeltna), Egan Drive.”; “Code Enforcement - maybe put money into educating people about the code (video), neighborhood cleanup days (more than once a year), and educate residents how they can report violations and how the process works from the report to fixing the problem and show results.”
  - **Knight:** “Prioritize the cleanup of the junk yards. Work with Dan to develop plans and a timeline with definitive benchmarks for the clean-up process. If this is not possible, figure out pretty ways to screen the eye sores.”
- **Town Plaza**
  - **Neilsen:** “Town Plaza concept on Fairbanks Drive, between the library and city hall. To be considered and implemented when street or other major maintenance is planned. A central place within our city for visitors to stop and for the community to gather for outdoor activities.
  - **Weaver:** “City Plaza between City Hall and Library”
- **Art Walk**
  - **Knight:** “Work with the Mural Society to figure out themes and places for new murals and then develop a mural/wood sculpture walking tour. One for sure place for a mural is the Museum Annex, since it looks like it will be there for quite a while.”
  - **McCay:** “Murals and Wood Carvings, create Art Walk around town connecting visitors and locals with businesses and creating fantastic marketing opportunities for Valdez. Create a mural theme (Plan as community) for downtown, have another wood carving competition and get more art, maybe have a program offering local businesses to keep the carving in exchange for maintaining and storing it (City could provide small cash incentive for maintenance of the art, this will reduce maintenance for the City). Make plans so everything becomes cohesive, colorful and attractive, use Art Walk to create walking/biking maps for people to explore with some purpose.”
- **Gazebo**
  - **Weaver:** “Removal of the gazebo and add a digital info center like the hatchery has.”
  - **Benda:** “Gazebo-Is there a way to utilize it? Is it really an eyesore, or just a weird unused building?”

- **Bike Path Extension**
  - **McCay:** “I would like to see a wildlife viewing platform at the hatchery and possible extension of the bike path to the canyon.”
  - **Weaver:** “Bike/walking path for ten mile then to the canyon.”
- **Memorial Park Benches**
  - **Weaver:** “Park benches in memorial around the city.”
- **Illegal camping**
  - **McCay:** “Take care of Boondocking with appropriate signage. I am not against boondocking but please provide signage with a vehicle limit per night and basic rules (no toilet on board, no boondocking allowed). We see tents, small vans camping in the old town area, and we also see the aftermath of human waste.”
- **Post Office Area Landscaping**
  - **Lane:** “South side of the Post Office. Again a very high focus area. A few years ago someone enjoyed landscaping this area but now it looks terrible.”
- **General Cleanup Efforts**
  - **McCay:** “Working with the staff and citizens to come up with cleaning up the city. I don’t have a solution to this but cleaning up will sure show the beauty that Valdez has.”
- **Additional comments:**
  - **McCay:** “I think we need a mix of fast summer projects and long-term improvements.”
  - **Neilsen:** “We might want to begin by acknowledging the fixed realities of any project. Such as which department or agency would be responsible for implementation. I'm all for big dreams, but in order not to waste time and energy we have to be pragmatic.”

# Valdez Beautification Commission

## 2022 Strategic Planning Session

August 12<sup>th</sup> 2022

5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

**Overall objective:** To discuss City Beautification Commission's priorities and vision

**Attendees:** Kathy Nielsen, Chair  
 Patricia Relay, Chair Pro Tem  
 Ruth E. Knight, Commissioner  
 Jennifer Benda, Commissioner  
 Meg Weaver, Commissioner

**Recorder:** Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk    **Absent:** Abigail Ferrara, Commissioner

### Notes from Discussion

Reference	VMC Powers and Duties	Text
A	2.66.020 (A)	Work to advocate for, promote, and enhance the aesthetics of the local human-built environment to reflect the beauty of the surrounding natural environment.
B	2.66.020 (B)	Work to build community, a sense of place, and civic pride through beautification projects, educational programming, grant programs, and other activities focused on the aesthetics of Valdez, including but not limited to design, landscaping, and public art.
C	2.66.020 (C)	Receive, consider, and evaluate public input, opinions, and recommendations regarding aesthetics of the community and advise the city council of any findings or recommendations.
D	2.66.020 (D)	Advise on aesthetic components of city projects and public-private partnerships, as requested.
E	2.66.020 (E)	Advise on code enforcement efforts related to community aesthetics, as requested.
F	2.66.020 (F)	Consult with other city boards and commissions on their work as it relates to community aesthetics.
G	2.66.020 (G)	Participate in the city comprehensive planning process as it relates to community aesthetics.
H	2.66.020 (H)	Make recommendations to city council through the city budget process regarding beautification programs and beautification project priorities for funding.
I	2.66.020 (I)	Meet at least once per month and cause minutes of each meeting to be recorded.
J	2.66.020 (J)	Perform such other activities as may be requested of it by the city council.

Priority/ Project	Additional Notes/ Goals	Related Reference(s)
Beautification Matching Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting a variety of projects, not just art</li> <li>Requesting funds from Council during the budget process to support the program</li> <li>Public/ private partnership</li> <li>Bolstering the existing program is the top priority for the current year</li> </ul>	A, B, H

Priority/ Project	Additional Notes/ Goals	Related Reference(s)
Engage with the comprehensive planning process moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question: How is this plan reexamined and adapted moving forward?</li> <li>• Engage with P&amp;Z Commission and Planning</li> <li>• Can commission members engage on Title 17 rewrite?</li> </ul>	A, F, G
Landscaping and beautification of park strips and snow lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Parks and Rec Commission and parks maintenance staff</li> <li>• Need for resilient updates to green spaces</li> <li>• Challenges with balancing snow removal and desired summertime uses</li> </ul>	D, F
Support code enforcement activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to Danial Plaster relating to code enforcement</li> <li>• Find out more about whether connexes are allowable in the downtown core.</li> </ul>	E
Gather public input on beautification priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a public meeting to gather input on beautification initiatives</li> <li>• Use Flash Vote to get public input on projects/priorities</li> </ul>	C
Support wayfinding and trail signage/ upkeep projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with EDC and Economic Development department – what is the next phase</li> <li>• Explore having more walking trails and boardwalks downtown</li> <li>• Trails as an excellent aspect of beautification</li> </ul>	B, D, F
Continued improvement of Main Street/ Egan Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Capital Facilities Department on the annual timing for light pole decorations (Graduation banners, holiday lights, etc.)</li> <li>• Look at options to make this street more walkable/ citizen and tourist friendly</li> <li>• Provide input on any proposed development on vacant lots (i.e. pipeline property)</li> <li>• Example given on Homer Spit shops- how to work toward something like this?</li> </ul>	A, D
Town Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with city administration to see this project through</li> <li>• This has been ongoing and talked about extensively/ planned for in the past</li> </ul>	
Develop an Art Walk for Valdez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can engage with VCVB and Economic Development department</li> <li>• Integrate wooden statues and mural into a map</li> </ul>	

**Other topics brought up (idea parking lot):**

- Valdez Mural Society – how to work in partnership with/ support the work of this group
- Concerns over the community perception that the commission just gives out money - exploring how to move away from this perception while still supporting the grant program
- William T Riker Statute – engaging the group looking for this
- Creating a duck flats boardwalk
- Work on the gazebo