



City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686

Meeting Agenda Beautification Commission

Monday, March 17, 2025

5:00 PM

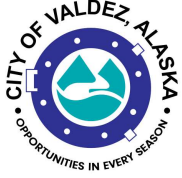
City Council Chambers

Work Session on Park Strip Upkeep and Beautification - Council Invited (in lieu of Regular Meeting)

WORK SESSION AGENDA - 5:00 pm

Transcribed minutes are not taken for Work Sessions. Audio is available upon request.

1. [Work Session: Park Strip Beautification and Clean-up Coordination](#)



Legislation Text

File #: 25-0119, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Work Session: Park Strip Beautification and Clean-up Coordination

SUBMITTED BY: 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:

The Beautification Commission drafted a letter to City Council and the City Manager to discuss park strip maintenance and beautification needs. They noted significant public input on the state of the parkstrips, specifically the Black Gold Parkstrip and deterioration of the soil and ground cover. The goal of this work session is to brainstorm options for coordinated efforts between COV departments, contractors and community volunteers and to discuss options for improving the parkstrips.

Attached are background materials that may help to inform the discussion.

To: City Manager John Douglas and Valdez City Council
Cc: PRCS Director Ken Wilson and Public Works Director John Witte
From: City of Valdez Beautification Commission
Re: Coordination and Clean-Up Efforts for Black Gold Park Strip
Date: January 3, 2025

City of Valdez code invites the Valdez Beautification Commission to advocate for, promote, and enhance the aesthetics of the local human-built environment to reflect the beauty of the surrounding natural environment and to consult with other city boards and commissions on their work as it relates to community aesthetic. Commissioners are dedicated to enhancing our community's visual appeal and environmental quality. With this commitment in mind, we would like to bring to your attention the current state of the Black Gold Park Strip and the need for a coordinated clean-up effort.

Valdez's park strips are central public spaces that play essential roles in the city's identity and recreational offerings. Unfortunately, those not visible from the town center have been declining, with signs of neglect, including insufficient topsoil in key areas and overall aesthetic. To address these concerns, we propose a comprehensive clean-up initiative that prioritizes collaboration among the Streets and Shop Division (Public Works), the Parks Maintenance Division (PRCS) and any contractors involved.

We respectfully request:

1. **Immediate attention to maintenance needs:** Removing debris, weeds, and pathway clean-up to improve the park's appearance and usability.
2. **Provision of additional topsoil:** A layer of quality topsoil is essential to revitalize the grounds and support future landscaping efforts.
3. **Enhanced coordination and communication:** To ensure the project's success, a clear communication strategy between the relevant departments and contractors would be helpful. Seasonal updates and joint meetings would help align goals and resolve potential issues promptly.

The Beautification Commission is prepared to assist in planning, monitoring, and advocating for these efforts. We believe working together can restore the Black Gold Park Strip to its rightful condition as a community asset. We would like to invite you to our regular February 2025 meeting to discuss this further.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your support and guidance in moving this project forward.

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.”

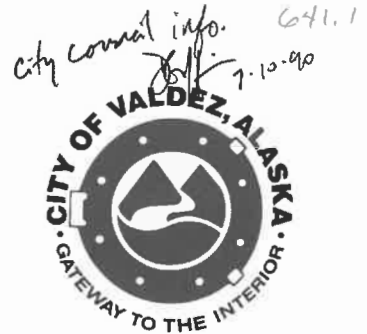
- **Illegal camping**
 - **McCay:** “Take care of Boondocking with appropriate signage. I am not against boondocking but please provide signage with a vehicle limit per night and basic rules (no toilet on board, no boondocking allowed). We see tents, small vans camping in the old town area, and we also 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.”

MEMORANDUM



TO: Doug Griffin
FROM: Nancy Peterson, Director
Parks & Recreation *NLP*

DATE: 7/10/90
SUBJECT: Lawn Maintenance
Playground Equipment

Lawn Maintenance

As of today, July 10th, all city lawns have been raked, thatched, fertilized and mowed. As is usual this time of year the Parkstrips are beginning to recover from the winter damage and look like parks. This year's extraordinary accumulation of litter and gravel required more extensive clean-up, but things are well on their way to recovering. The Parks & Recreation Commission flagged the trees to be removed from the Parkstrip yesterday and the contractor is removing them today.

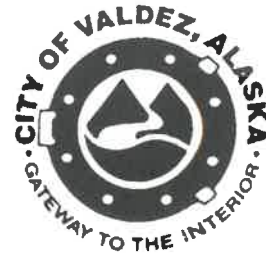
I met with Mr. Smith this morning to review the on-going maintenance standards that the City expects (ie; weed trimming, grass heights, pruning etc.). As this is the first year for the contractor, as well as myself, we are both learning as we go and each new phase of the contract (clean up, restoration, maintenance) requires us to interpret and agree upon compliance with the contract.

In response to the Ballfields not being in premier shape for the tournament on the last weekend of June, I have to accept responsibility for that. Communications with the Softball Association has not been the best this year and I did not learn of the Tournament until that Friday. It was an oversight on my part not to contact Mr. Smith to assure early mowing of that area.

Playground Equipment

More than 30 cubic yards of sand have been added to the Playground areas in Black Gold and Mineral Creek Parkstrips. All concrete footings are covered and broken equipment has been repaired or removed. The Litter Patrol is going to assist the Parks Supervisor in painting the equipment this week.

MEMORANDUM



*City Council
info
[Signature]
12-18-93*

TO: Doug Griffin, City Manager
FROM: Nancy Robb, Director P&R

Nancy

DATE: 10/14/93
SUBJECT: Snow Storage/Park Usage

The Parks & Recreation Commission reviewed the "Options to improve the compatibility of snow storage and park uses in the Meyring and Black Gold ParkstripS," at their October 12th meeting. The Commission supports pursuing options 1, 3, 4, and 6. They also would like the City to look at:

1. Adding the pile by the Community College to option #4.
2. Pursuing storm drains if funding is possible.
3. Pursuing additional paved parking/storage lots to the North end of Meyring parkstrip next to the Little League Field and/or picnic shelter.

Options to Improve the Compatibility of Snow Storage and Park uses in the Meyring and Black Gold Parkstrips

Options	Pros	Cons	Staff Recommendations
1. Change anti-freezing agent in sand mixture for streets from calcium chloride to urea.	Will be less harmful to grass.	Will be a little more expensive to purchase and may mean an increase in fertilizer cost.	Implement this change in the Winter of 94/95. (Currently have supply of Calcium Chloride for this winter.)
2. Increase pavement at culdesacs and construct a parking lot on the south end of Meyring Park.	Would provide area for snow to be stacked without damaging grass. Piles could be pushed down in spring without damage to surface. Grass that was remaining would be healthy.	Paving is expensive. Would reduce the amount of grass and green space available. Would encourage traffic to cross parkstrips.	Try other options first.
3. Regrade slope of parkstrip at south end of Meyring Park to improve drainage.	Would improve drainage and enable contractor to remove gravel sooner.	Cost for topsoil would be \$2-3,000.	Highly recommend as option.
4. Use Dozer to knock down piles in Spring.	Would melt snow faster and allow grass renovation to begin earlier.	Cost to do all piles annually - Approximately \$10,000.	Use dozer to knock down two biggest piles (south end of Meyring and near Little league field) only. Cost: Approximately \$1,000 annually.
5. Install storm drain/catch basin in area near Little League field and south end of Meyring Park.	Would greatly improve drainage in these areas.	Cost: Approximately \$20,000.	Try other options first.
6. Purchase equipment to aerate, topdress, slit seed and apply herbicide to grass.	Will improve the health and visual appearance of the lawn areas.	Cost: Approximately \$30,000 for equipment purchase. Annual cost: \$1,500.	This is the number one recommendation of the Staff. These are necessary and common maintenance practices. They are not part of the current Lawn Maintenance contract.