

# City of Valdez



## Meeting Minutes –Final

Tuesday April 12, 2022

### Parks and Recreation Commission

#### Regular Meeting

REGULAR AGENDA - 7:00 PM

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The Valdez Parks & Recreation Regular Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm, in City Council Chambers.

#### II. ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commission Chair Sarah Jorgenson-Owen  
Commissioner Pete Carter  
Commissioner Brain Teale  
Commissioner Mike Britt  
Commissioner Benjamin Rush  
Commissioner Carl Gressel

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Amy Goold  
1- Commissioner Mike Britt

Also present: 2 - PRCS Director, Nicholas Farline  
PRCS Office Manager, Anne (Nikki) Duhamel  
PRCS Civic Center Manager, Jennifer James

#### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### 1. Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes from March 8, 2022.

MOTION: Commissioner Pete Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin Rush to discuss the approval of meeting minutes from March 8, 2022.

All commissioners agree that no discussion is warranted.

**Vote: All approved. 5 yeys, 0 nays. 2-absent. Minutes approved.**

#### **IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

There was no public business from the floor.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. Alaska on Target Shooting Range Expense Request**

MOTION: Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Gressel to discuss Alaska on Target Shooting Range Expense Request.

Director Nick Farline states that it has been sometime since an expense request for the Valdez Shooting Range was brought forward to the Commission. Director Farline reminds that while the Commission does not have spending authority, we still deemed it important to review these requests and get input and conclusiveness from Commission that these expenses are within the agreement between the City of Valdez and range operator, Alaska on Target. Director Farline states he spoke extensively with owner, Ms. Rhonda Wade and recommends the Commission approves this expense as it has been submitted. Director Farline states with the snow melting soon, Alaska on Target will be able to get out the storage conex and do some good work on the range.

Ms. Rhonda Wade speaks to the Commission stating Alaska on Target hopes to get more progress on the range in the near future with safety range officer classes scheduled in April. Ms. Wade further explains that the vendor, Targets USA has a long standing with the state, and is an Alaska owned and operated company. Ms. Wade adds that Targets USA is willing to come to Valdez and do different shooting activities and expos in the near future. Ms. Wade further adds that shooting sports have become even more popular, and there are several shooting clubs in the Mat-su Valley, and in Anchorage, who would love to come to Valdez to shoot, bringing further business and people to our community.

Commissioner Gressell asks if the targets can be used for competition. Ms. Wade confirms that these targets are the basics to get us a good foundation to do various types of shooting. We hope to get more interest generated and add to the target packet request, Ms. Wade states.

Commissioner Rush thanks Ms. Wade for spearheading these efforts for the range. Commissioner Rush inquires if the items on the quote can be obtained for cheaper? Ms. Wade points out the City of Valdez has been purchasing targets from this company since 2009. The company has a Chief Range Safety Officer in Birchwood who is willing to help Valdez with set up and training, Ms. Wade states. Targets USA will bring down the equipment and help us get our programming going, Ms. Wade adds. These targets are of great quality and are also the vendor used by our Valdez Police Department. Director Farline includes that the quote from Targets USA is under our city procurement threshold and does not require us to seek additional bids.

Ms. Wade explains how the City Valdez will be able to offer a more robust range with different styles and stages in the future. Ms. Wade states Alaska on Target will likely come to the Commission next year requesting funding for more targets to build more stages, and to help grow the interest and investment in the Valdez Shooting Range. Commission Chair Jorgeson-Owen points out that Alaska on Target will still have funds left for additional necessary items after this procurement request. Director Farline confirms that once this request is approved, it would leave roughly \$3,000 for future use.

Commissioner Carter expresses his support for the Shooting Range and points out the two major concerns are still safety and garbage. Ms. Wade hopes to mitigate the trash issue by talking to those who use the range. As we invest in development and equipment, and if people cannot regulate themselves, then we can look at fencing and limited hours of access, Ms. Wade suggests. Commission Chair Jorgenson-Owen states that Parks and Recreation department should be able to help get the word out to the community to help with the range clean-up. Director Farline states there needs to be a shift in culture at the range through additional signage and onsite presence from Alaska on Target. Commissioner Chair Jorgenson-Owen agrees we can help educate the community on caring for the range. Director Farline states with increased usage and safety, and with the overall look of the range improving, we can go back to City Council and request funding, whether it be built in to the Parks and Recreation budget, or a separate CSO request.

Director Farline states he wants to close out the discussion addressing some of the larger upgrades. Last summer the department hired a firm to come out and survey the shooting range property and identify some ways we can fix the backstops and put shooting grade sand down to mitigate ricochet. Director Farline explains two thirds up the embankment impedes on state lands, so Parks and Recreation is working with the State of Alaska to extend the ownership of the parcel. Due to this, some substantial upgrades funded last year were unable to be completed, Director Farline explains. The process working with the state is slow, but Parks and Recreation has Capital Facilities and the Planning department involved and we hope in the next coming months to be able to address these other upgrades, Director Farline concludes.

Director Farline is seeking the Parks & Recreation Commission's recommendation to move forward supporting the Alaska on Target procurement request.

**Vote: 5 yeys, 0 neys, 2 absent. Recommendation carries.**

Commission Chair Jorgenson-Owen thanks Ms. Rhonda Wade for her time.

## **VI. REPORTS**

Director Farline presents his last report to the Commission. Director Farline notifies the Commission that he is taking a new position and will be leaving the City of Valdez. Director Farline expressed a heart-felt thank you to the Parks and Recreation Commission for all of their time in volunteering and serving on the commission. Working closely with Jennifer James, Civic and Convention Center Manager, together

a transition plan is being formed. Ms. James will be the interim Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director until the position is filled. Director Farline has full confidence in Ms. James to fulfill this role until a new Director is brought on board. Director Farline is very cognizant of the big projects going on and knows that Ms. James will keep the momentum up and continue to report on these items.

Director Farline gives an update on the hire search for a new Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director. The position has been posted on nationwide specific Parks and Recreation sites included NRPA, ARPA, government jobs, and multiple other hiring sites. Currently we have a few applicants who have already applied, Director Farline states. A timeline has been created and a hiring committee has been formed including Ms. Jennifer James, Ms. Marcie Robertson, Park Maintenance Supervisor, Human Resources, and a few other City of Valdez Directors. Applications will be reviewed this coming Monday to which Director Farline has made his initial recommendations. Review of applications will occur the following week. Director Farline's last day with the city is April 29, 2022. We hope to have a new Director onboard just ahead of budget season. With our seasoned, successful Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services managers the new Director will be in good hands, Director Farline expresses.

Commissioner Teal thanks Director Farline for all of his time and hard work.

Director Farline gives an update on the Meals Hill Design. Request for proposals for the Meals Hill Design was posted last week. When submitting the ARPA EDA Travel and Tourism Outdoor Recreation Grant, part of our funding strategy was not to include the design, Director Farline explains. Elements of the design are currently funded at 35%, and with this RFP it will bring the design up to 95% completion. Prior to Director Farline's last day, proposals will be received and reviewed and a consultant will be settled on to start design work. Director Farline explains that the design should expel the rest of the EVOS funds and bring the design up to shovel-ready. If Parks and Recreation does not get the ARPA EDA Grant, we will have these designs ready to go to submit for future grants, Director Farline concludes.

Director Farline reports that through the Comp Plan, there has been several priorities identified and recently addressed at a Director's Retreat. One item was how to foster more Commission and City Council involvement. Often times there is a lag of information and communication on a Commission level and on a City Council level, Director Farline explains. One strategy is to have the Chair of the Commission to give a five to ten minute report City Council on high level happenings. It is important for Council to hear from the Commission, whether it be the chair or another member to represent to council. Ms. James can readdress this at the May Commission Meeting. Director Farline states. The determined Commission designee can speak to City Council about our Trails Sub-Committee, Director Farline suggests. Currently our letter of Interest collection and public outreach is being done by Office Manager, Nikki Duhamel.

Director Farline gives an update on the Trail Subcommittee next steps. At the May Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, we will have a silent ballot and vote to be passed out to the Commission to select the applicant(s) of their choice, Director

Farline explains. If only one person applies for the role then they will be chosen. Each applicant should have identified which trail user representative they most identify with, Director Farline clarifies. If we do not get enough applicants, the process will need to be extended. The department is utilizing all resources to advertise to the community, Director Farline states.

Director Farline includes that also in May, will be the Shoup Bay Trail Public Process recommendation. The commission will be able to make suggestions on the process and how to move it forward.

Director Farline gives an update on Parks Maintenance division. It has been a very busy winter due to all the snow. The Mayors Cup was a beautiful day and a successful event, with Parks Maintenance providing lots of in-kind services. Director Farline states the 120 races and other youth snow machine racing were very well received by the community. Our trail grooming has stopped for the season, and Salmonberry Ski Hill is in the process of being closed for the season, Director Farline informs. This summer will be the first time having new part-time permanent Park Maintenance staff positions on board. The division is busy preparing for the summer season, Director Farline concludes.

An update is given on the Recreation Division by Director Farline. Attendance numbers are up for City Pool use and rentals and the Recreation Center have also increased. With the community coming out of the pandemic and the weather getting nice, it is good to see more engagement in our activities and programming, Director Farline states. Recreation is currently working through some reorganizing and reallocation of temporary funds to fill some part-time permanent positions. The division is focused on how to obtain consistency in staff, especially with lifeguard positions. Director Farline includes Summer Fun camp registration is opening up in May. Director Farline concludes, the new edition of the Valdez Compass, our department activity guide, will be distributed the last week of April to all our facilities around town.

## **VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Commission Chair Jorgenson-Owen thanks Director Farline for his hard work and commitment to the Commission the past three and a half years. Commission Chair Jorgenson-Owen acknowledges Director Farline efforts in establishing a department 5 year Master Plan and all of his contributions in acquiring Meals Hill.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commission Chair Jorgenson-Owen adjourned the meeting at 8:06 pm. The next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14, 2022.