

Rabbit Creek Community Council Special Meeting, June 19, '03, 7pm

Rabbit Creek Community Church

Topic: Rabbit Creek Greenbelt Development

Approximately 45 people signed in. (see sign in sheet)

Board members present were Jess Grunblatt, Nancy Pease, Dianne Holmes, Susanne Comellas, Jo Utic, and Ky Holland. MOA Parks personnel in attendance were Wes Acree and Carolyn Bloom. MOA forester Susan Rodman and AK Fish & Game Biologist Rick Sinnott attended. Residents across the Council area are encouraged to attend for the larger issue of area-wide parklands accessibility, as well as the Greenbelt topic.

There were no minutes or treasurer's report.

Ky Holland opened the meeting about 7 pm and asked for people to state their name and what area of the council they lived in. The meeting was organized as a work session to list concerns and find solutions to those concerns regarding further development of the Rabbit Creek Greenbelt. Ky explained that this meeting follows a May 27th meeting where the history and current proposal was reviewed in detail. The Council is seeking approval for additional Greenbelt development from the Parks and Recreation Commission. A shorted summary of the project and proposal was give by Ky for those that were not attending the May 27th meeting.

Concerns expressed:

fire danger

horses

desire for no further development

Deb McEwen presented the concerns of some of the residents of Canon Rd, Griffin Rd, and DeArmoun Rd along the greenbelt north bluff (see handout). [These concerns are echoed in the comments of group 2 below.

Duane Triplett requested that Sue Rodman be given an opportunity to address the group. Sue reviewed the work that Firewise is doing to reduce the fire load. The audience asked if the trail development was going to increase the fire risk to the area – she replied that home owners in the area needed to take responsibility to reduce the fire danger around their homes following the AWARE/Firewise recommendations.

The question of erosion on steep slopes was raised and Al Meiners, former head of Chugach State Park, spoke on good trail design and how erosion can be minimized or eliminated. His focus was on the reduced danger for erosion and damage to the area by having designed usage patterns vs. unplanned use that lacked proper trail design. He stated that no-development does not preserve the status quo because use of the park will increase whether there are facilities in it or not. The meeting broke up into small group work sessions for 30 minutes to work on specific areas. The meeting regrouped and the moderators summarized the results:

Group 1 (Ann) – West Issues (Cannon Road/Griffin Park)

Trail Purpose:

Currently some local use.
Other deterred by lack of “free” entry.
To channel & manage use
RCCC is trying to implement '87 trails plan/master plan
Primitive walking trail
Pedestrian (foot) Trail
Consensus: NO PAVEMENT [Ref to Area wide Trails Plan]
Away from creek – design with topography & vegetation

Access Points:

From buffalo & 140th (S. side of Griffin Park)
Need locals and Engrs to consider access options
Canon Road is through Park
BLM easement exists along section line between the two areas – neighbors are concerned. This need to be investigated if we want this connection.
If you leave a gap and have access on either side, people will find their own way – keep people on planned trail rather than wandering.

Parking:

Bothers residents
No space
Don't have to have parking – local use would be predominate, access from new bike trail.
DeArmoun Road improvements could provide parking
No room for new parking
Cleared gravel area exists – Canon Road Private??? Need info.

Other Concerns/Issues:

RCCC needs to report back
Liability
Emergency Access
Easements

Group 2 (Wes/Carolyn) – North Issues (Griffin Road, DeArmoun Road)

Issues /Concerns [See proposal submitted by group at start of meeting. These issues parallel those concerns, but are further documented in their report.]

1. Access – Re-evaluate northern choices. [move to Gunderson?]
2. Gap – Determine legality ASAP. Perhaps build only a loop trail.
3. Trail Type – Non-motorized, No horses
4. Signage
5. Environmental Impact Statement
6. Erosion
7. Fish & Game Concerns
8. Future trail plans – designate not paved.
9. Public input.

Group 3 (Tom) – Rest of area and issues at large.

Park Access:

- Parking?
- Liability Issues?
- Propose that designated parking be provided.
- Purpose is access for neighborhood [emphasis by Tom in notes]
- Propose – single use plan, nature trail, walking. (Existing trail along creek for horses) [emphasis by Tom in notes]
- Concern regarding fire risk – need to remove dead trees & other fuel.
- Desire for no [emphasis by Tom in notes] further development of trails (new trails) – Satisfied with existing access to existing trails.
- Concern regarding loss of critical wildlife habitat, vegetation along creek (damage to salmon breeding).

Bears:

- At current use, E-W trail OK
- If increased use, move away from creek.11

Summary of meeting:

A small work group (who?) will work on the easement issue and e-mail others.

Ky asked for a show of support for one of the following plans:

Options:

- 16 votes – Option A – Implement Plan As Is
- 6 votes – Option B – Modified plan (no constrains... no pavement, limited use, no gap crossing...)
- 17 votes – Option C - No Development of Park

After PARC suggestion of another meeting – 25 expressed interest to meet and discuss further.

!! Concerns must be addressed about legal access and use of easements.