

SECTION 36

PARK MASTER PLAN

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 14, 2009

5:30pm-7:30pm

NOTES

5:30pm – 5:35pm **Introductions**
Introductions
Collect signed CAC policy

The revised CAC policy was distributed to committee members to be signed. These were promptly returned to Susan Luescher (DOWL HKM).

Committee members had requested a map showing wildlife corridors. This was not available, but comments and information regarding wildlife in the area of Section 36 from the Section 36 Land Use Plan were handed out to members.

5:35pm – 6:15pm **Special Guest Presentations**

A number of special guests were invited to speak at the visioning meeting to provide information to committee members to help them develop a vision statement and program elements.

Rick Sinnott – Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)

Rick stated he does not have detailed information on Section 36 as compared to Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP) and Kincaid Park. However, the 13 or 14 brown bears that have been collared by Sean Farley (ADF&G) have not visited the area. Other wildlife such as black bears, lynx, moose and smaller game are likely to be present. Rick is not as concerned with bear encounters in Section 36 as other parks in the Municipality. Wildlife encounters would likely be with moose or lynx.

Bears and moose don't use the creek areas of Section 36 because they typically are too steep and rocky. The southern wetland areas are heavily used by moose in the spring, possibly as a calving area, and black bears would likely use the southwest portion of Section 36.

Members asked if there were specific things to avoid in regards to development of Section 36. Rick stated it is too hilly and wet for a sports field. He also felt that bird

species would be similar to other places in Anchorage. He expressed interest in reviewing whatever is proposed for the Section 36 Master Plan.

Aimee Wedemeier – MOA Parks & Recreation – Get Outdoors

Aimee is part of the “Get Outdoors Anchorage” program, which promotes outdoor recreation and education to youth in Anchorage. She described children in Anchorage as having “nature deficit disorder.” They do not get enough time outdoors. In today’s society, children are preoccupied with indoor activities such as video games. Safety concerns may also contribute to parents’ desire to keep children inside. Children no longer spend unprogrammed time outdoors exploring nature.

The Get Outdoors Committee/Coalition has been formed to be a voice in the community promoting the benefits of spending time outside. In December 2008, P&R hosted a kick-off event attended by more than 100 community members representing nearly 60 agencies. At that meeting, specific goals and focus areas were developed. The committee is currently working toward implementation of the goals identified at the kick-off meeting.

Ian Moore – Arctic Orienteering Club

Ian gave an overview of orienteering. The club had over 1500 participants in its events in 2007. He believes that the Arctic Orienteering Club is the only organized group currently using Section 36. The group has been using Section 36 for 10 years. About 25 events are held each year, mainly in the summer months. Section 36 is one of 11 map areas that the club uses.

Goals for the club include avoiding development in the better orienteering areas – south of the ridge and north of the creek. The density of trees on the north side ridge makes orienteering there difficult. Jerry Lewanski asked whether trail crossings through the areas would create problems. Ian stated that trails near an orienteering route, provides a route choice and people will sometimes follow the developed trail, giving them an advantage. The orienteering club prefers trail to be constructed parallel to Clark’s Road.

Tom Harrison – Chugach State Park

Chugach State Park is currently in the process of updating the 1980 Master Plan. Opportunities for connectivity between Section 36 and Chugach State Park are being studied. Obstacles include the topography and private property located between the areas. In 2002, an access inventory was conducted to assess possible connections

into the park from Anchorage. Connectivity options should continue to be explored and could possibly become a future project.

6:15pm-6:20pm Break

6:20pm – 6:45pm Vision Statement

Below are the vision statements submitted by committee members:

Encourage, enhance and provide appropriate recreation opportunities and facilities.

To provide for the retention of the natural environment for wildlife, minimal impact-sustainable trails and trail connectivity, outdoor educational opportunities for children and families, and parking/access in non-obtrusive locations.

Section 36 should be used for habitat conservation, accessible low-impact recreation and education opportunities, and connectivity to Chugach State Park and the Rabbit Creek Greenbelt.

Section 36 should be developed with a sustainable network of multi-use trails, identified parking areas for current and potential future use, and a site selected for a warm up shack/shelter for organized public use.

Section 36 should remain as natural as possible and developed only to the extent necessary to provide parking and very limited network of sustainable walking trails.

A place for all ages to play, learn and enjoy nature without disturbing the natural beauty of the area with easy access and ample parking.

These vision statements and combining them into a shared vision statement was discussed. The vision statement, “Encourage, enhance and provide appropriate recreation opportunities and facilities,” was used as a starting point. What is “appropriate” needs to be explored. As the goals and program are developed, the use and level of development will be further defined.

There was discussion regarding facilities and the role they play in recreation. Many of the city’s parks don’t have facilities. An observation was made about the Hillside ski area – here people are expected to be outside, but because of the chalet, many are indoors. This defeats the purpose of having an area for outdoor recreation and can become very expensive and ultimately changes the character of an area.

Tim Potter (DOWL HKM) pointed out that it can depend on how the word “facilities” is defined. Facilities can be anything from a soft-surface trail to a picnic shelter. A general concern was that facilities is a word that worries people and the use of it should be limited. Facility details should not be incorporated into the vision statement, but will be further defined in the goals and program development phase.

Jerry briefly discussed his vision statement. He believes enticing people straight from a computer to complete wilderness will not work. Attracting people outdoors must be done incrementally using appropriate facilities. Susanne Comellas stated the public needs to be interested in developing the area. The only way to get them invested is to get them into Section 36. She suggested utilizing Bear Valley Elementary School, their PTA organization and the local population as a starting point to encourage others.

Trails, picnic areas, campgrounds and outdoor education were all discussed and it was decided unanimously that the area should not have athletic fields. Section 36 is classified as a Community Use Park and Natural Resource Use Park in the Anchorage Park Plan, which must be considered in this planning process.

6:45pm – 7:30pm **Program Elements**
 Type of Use
 Level of Development