



MEMORANDUM

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor and City Council
Date: April 2, 2024
From: Recreation Champions

The Recreation Champion group, consisting of Council Members Aderhold and Erickson, previous City Manager Dumouchel, Recreation Manager Illg, and Community Development Director Engebretsen, has met multiple times the last few months to pursue information as requested by the City Council through Resolution 23-118. The working group has completed multiple tasks and this memorandum provides an update on where we are now and suggests next steps.

The group identified seven possible recreation facility locations and created a scoring matrix to assist in prioritizing the sites. Each member of the Recreation Champion Group scored each site based on the criteria. We also asked two community volunteers with engineering and construction backgrounds to assist with scoring the possible sites. Based on scoring, the top three potential sites include: the Homer Electric Association (HEA) lot by the police station, West Homer lot between the elementary school and Sterling Highway, and Hazel lot adjacent to the library's western lot (see attachment). The matrix and top three selections were reviewed and supported by the Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission at their January 18th Special Meeting allowing an opportunity for public input.

The group reviewed possible funding strategies to purchase a non-city site, including the following (note: none have been proposed formally):

- Land Acquisition Fund
- General Fund
- Possible land swap
- State of Alaska Community Assistance Fund
- Free main allowance fund (may need more direction from entire council before pursuing this option)

The group also hosted an informal public conversation on March 5th for affiliated recreation user groups and community members to provide a brief update about the Recreation Facility process so far in addition to the having the discussion about the concept of creating a possible "Friends of Recreation Group". Approximately 25 people attended, including Mike Miller from the Homer

Foundation and local attorney Andy Haas to provide general information related to the process of establishing a non-profit organization and methods to use the community foundation as a fiscal agent. While there was not overwhelming interest from anyone at the meeting to pursue this concept, some agreed that it would be ideal if such a group was created. A friends group could assist the project through fundraising efforts, grant applications, and overall advocacy and support. It was also determined that initial commitment from the city would serve as the catalyst to encourage community engagement in the creation of a possible friends group.

We propose to continue refining site selection and developing a rough order of magnitude cost estimate for constructing a modest recreation facility that has expansion capabilities. We also recommend that the City Council begin setting aside funds, as possible, for land acquisition and construction of a recreation facility.

RECOMMENDATION: Identify funding to earmark for this project in the upcoming budget process.

Attachments:

Scoring Matrix

Scoring Matrix Form

Copy of Supplemental Scoring Matrix

Maps of Locations