Memorandum
Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: PARKS, ART, RECREATION & CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION
FROM: RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II
DATE: AUGUST 18, 2022
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

REPORTS

A. Parks Report – Parks Superintendent Steffy

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Ben Walters Lane Sidewalk Status Report

    Ben Walters Sidewalk 35% Design Drawings

NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Sidewalk and Trail Maintenance

    Revised Memorandum

B. Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Karen Hornaday Park’s Proposed New Entrance Road and ADA Trail

    Revised Memorandum
MEMORANDUM

To: Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission.

From: Matt Steffy, Parks Superintendent

Date: August 18th, 2022

Subject: Greatest Parks in the Universe Staff Report

- Campground attendance appears high this season, though we are still struggling through the old ways of collecting data and the new. Staffing limitations combined with crossovers to new technology like the kiosks have taken a bit longer to normalize. I can provide more input on this process at the next meeting.
- The houseless situation in campgrounds has continued to be an ongoing issue this season. The Homer Police Department have been a great partner in coordinating contact, outreach, and facilitated removal when required. There are still no great solutions for this issue, but City staff and Camp Hosts continue to do our best with the resources we have.
- The Custodial Contract for public restrooms has been a great relief on our Parks staff. This has freed up extra time to accomplish important tasks such as flowerbed renovations, playground repairs, trail work, and vegetation clearing. Parks administration continues to coordinate the transition of custodial services from Parks to Building Maintenance.
- Flower beds all over town have been going through full renovations. Removal of all subsurface material, roots, and gravel, followed by brand new beds built from the ground up. This process will continue across town under our new Beautification Management Plan, which is under development. The Shadow Wall at Pioneer & Main will be going through a more vigorous renewal. We have coordinated with the original artist, Tom Reed, to repaint the whole wall next spring after cleaning and crack-seal work is done. Once the wall is finished we will be digging out the whole flowerbed and building it up with larger peonies and additional flowers.
  - Our Parks flower specialist, Michelle Morton, has determined that there is a large problem with botrytis (a type of root rot) in many of the peonies around town. It spreads very easily. We are working on slowing and mitigating the issue with increased nutrient management, flowerbed maintenance, and appropriate watering practices. We have lost many peonies to this, but have a stash of large and healthy peonies awaiting transplant when needed.
- The 2022 Homer Peony Festival was a great success, and timed nicely with our renovations and upgrades around town. There will be a Festival Committee wrap-up meeting on September 14th to discuss this year’s success and next year’s plans.
- July 4th was a busy weekend as usual. Lots of campers and fun special events.
  - The 2022 Kachemak Bay Highland Games were hosted by the Kachemak Bay Scottish Club on July 2nd & 3rd at Karen Hornaday Park. The games were well attended and well organized, and a tremendous effort was put forth by both volunteers and staff to coordinate the volume of people in the park.
The First 50 Years of Homer High School Reunion group made use of Karen Hornaday Park as well on July 3rd with a large BBQ and social event at the main pavilion. The combination definitely put a strain on the capacity of the park, but also emphasized its value to the community.

- **Trails Update**
  - The Homer Drawdown initiative has been putting a lot of work into facilitating partnerships and conversations around non-motorized transportation in the Homer area. This highly coordinated movement involves City staff, PARCAC members, City Council, strong non-profits like the Homer Trails Alliance, and an extensive network of volunteers of all skill levels which continues to grow.
  - **Ground work** – The first component of the Drawdown movement consists of boots on the ground trail work that has been conducted every other week throughout the summer. The group has developed new connections in town on existing ROWs that provide more route options for non-motorized commuters. Volunteers sign waivers, are trained on the equipment at hand, and given direction on task assignment. City staff supervise the work.
    - City Staff from Public Works have already followed up on two of these brush clearing projects by laying a gravel trail in two locations. On Wright Avenue between Rangeview and Soundview, and on Lee Drive to provide a connector through to Kachemak Way. Both of these trails are a level three trail based on the City’s Trails Design Criteria Standard, which means they are considered ADA accessible.
    - Another project of note is the additional of slope-cut steps along the eastern and western side of the Woodard Canyon Nature Trail that begins at the western end of Danview.
  - **Symposium** – Economic Development Manager Julie Engebretsen, Public Works Director Jan Keiser, and Commissioner Lowney have also been working with Drawdown Coordinator Satchel Pondolfino and Homer Trails Alliance Director Adele Person on hosting a Trails Symposium this fall to collect input from the public regarding critical infrastructure needs and priorities for future planning.
  - **Policy** – Council Member Aderhold has taken the lead on educating the group about the public process, Council authority, and sequential actions of engagement.

- The City of Homer has been working through a partnership with Homer Soil & Water Conservation District to identify and eradicate invasive European Bird Cherry (Prunus padas) from properties owned by the City of Homer. We have made tremendous success and have begun the process of replacing them with ecologically friendly ornamentals consistent with our Streetscape and Wayfinding Plan. There are some beautiful Weeping Birch at Triangle Park that we hope will thrive and enhance the corner.
- Amanda Parrett has continued her project with reviving WKFL Park through her Master Gardner’s class. There are tremendous improvements around the gazebo with some more work to come at the top of the park.
- The Library West Lot project is keeping momentum up thanks to the folks at Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance through the National Parks Service. We are presently waiting for the first two draft proposals from the landscape architects to see what the next steps are.
- Christine Drais at the City Managers Office has been putting a lot of work into reorganizing the City’s webpage. There is now a separate page for “Parks, Trails, & Campgrounds.” We will be working on updating and expanding on the content in all the micro sites that this new structure feeds into. Members of PARCAC are invited to submit photo’s or content ideas if they would like.
- The large pieces of acrylic for the Tuyanitun art installation have arrived from the factory in Scotland. Unboxing will take place when I return next week. John Bishop has been working on the engineered foundation that will support the piece, and Public Works staff will assist with the installation.
- The Little Free Libraries continue to be a success. If you’ve got books, cards, or board games, keep them coming!
HOMER: BEN WALTERS LANE SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

TYPICAL SECTION

PROPOSED ASPHALT SIDEWALK

PROPOSED FILL SLOPE

SCALE IN FEET

 existing roadway

LakeSide Dr

3894 Ben Walters Lane

BEN WALTERS LN 28+00

BEN WALTERS LN 27+00

ROW

ROW
HOMER: BEN WALTERS LANE SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

PROPOSED ASPHALT SIDEWALK

PROPOSED FILL SLOPE

3948 BEN WALTERS LANE

TYPICAL SECTION

EXISTING ROADWAY

SCALE IN FEET
Memorandum

TO: Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission
FROM: Janette Keiser, Public Works Director
DATE: August 9, 2022
SUBJECT: Sidewalk /Trails Maintenance

I. Issue: The purpose of this Memorandum is to present a concept for new equipment to maintain sidewalks and trails.

II. Background: We will be building more trails, sidewalks and paths every year. Every time I've heard a conversation about non-motorized transportation, I hear a plea to keep these facilities available year-round. I've also heard pleas to keep the State's sidewalks, on the Sterling Highway, Lake Street and East End Road, clear. We've been challenged to do all this because of our equipment limitations. We've been using a Tool Cat to plow and sand sidewalks and paths as well as hand-operated snow blowers to shovel most trails. We're kept busy with City facilities, and while we can sometimes help the State out, we cannot commit to keeping State facilities clear, with our existing equipment. The Tool Cat is not up to the task.

We've researched what other communities do, particularly Soldotna, Kenai and Anchorage, which all have more pedestrian ways than Homer. They use a piece of equipment called a Trackless M-7, which is larger and more powerful than the Tool Cat. The Trackless units can be equipped with a snow blower with a chute long enough to blow snow into a dump truck, which the Tool Cats can’t do. They can also be equipped with a sander bucket for winter use as well as a street sweeping attachment for summer use. Anchorage, with hundreds of miles of paved trails, has 20 of these units. Kenai has 2 and Soldotna has 1. If Homer had something like this, we could more efficiently clear our growing inventory of sidewalks and paths as well as do more to keep the State-owned sidewalks, in the City limits, clear.

We intend to recommend to the City Council that we use funds from the HART Trails Fund to acquire a Trackless unit. It is a long lead time item – if we ordered it tomorrow, it would take 6-7 months to get. The estimated cost is between $180,000 - $240,000. There is currently over $600,000 in the HART Trails Fund. While this Fund’s purpose is to build more trails, the reality is that there is no point in building new trails and other non-motorized routes if we can’t maintain them.

III. Recommendation: That the PARCAC support the acquisition of a Trackless unit to better maintain the growing inventory of non-motorized transportation routes in the City.
Memorandum

TO:   Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission
FROM:  Janette Keiser, Public Works Director
DATE:  August 8, 2022
SUBJECT: Karen Hornaday Park – Action Item – Updated Version

I. **Issue:** The purpose of this Memorandum is to discuss the proposed new entrance road and ADA trail at Karen Hornaday Park.

II. **Background:**

The good news is that we’ve been notified our application for the Karen Hornaday Park Pedestrian Entrance Trail, submitted in 2020, has been approved in the amount of $150,000. The concept was for a trail that would run parallel to a proposed new entrance road, veering to the eastern edge of the property near Woodard Creek, pursuant to the 2009 Karen Hornaday Park Master Plan.

The bad news is that since 2020, life has changed. There was a slope failure on the eastern edge of the parking lot, along the steep Woodard Creek canyon. This makes the idea of reconfiguring the access road to the east side of the park, scary. Installing the new pedestrian pathway to the east is still a viable option, because the loads from pedestrian traffic are so much lower than vehicular traffic. We can improve the access road in its current configuration by digging out the frost boils. The parking areas would stay the same, until the Karen Hornaday Master Plan is re-visited to designate new parking.

III. **Recommendations:** We recommend that, in light of these developments, we do the following:
   a. Use the grant to develop a new pedestrian pathway that veers to the east side of the park, per the configuration shown to the RTP grant people.
   b. Use the available road repair budget to dig out the frost boils in the existing road.
   c. Re-visit the Karen Hornaday Master Plan.

IV. **Action Requested:** Staff will be making a recommendation to the City Council that the trail grant be accepted with the above stipulations. We would appreciate your support.