

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 5:30-7:00 pm

Telephonic

I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order by Chair Griswold at 5:32 pm
- B. Minutes taker: Nick Jordan
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Paul Paquette, Cliff Reid, Tess Tulley
- D. Board members absent: none
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom, Michael Burmeister
- F. Public Present: Diane Dubuc, Michael Mahmood
- G. Minutes Approval for October 21, 2020: Paul moved, Tess seconded, unanimous
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Move Kelp Farm Discussion to top of agenda, unanimous

II. Public Comments: re proposed kelp farm

Diane Dubuc spoke in opposition. She owns a charter fishing business trolling for king salmon through that location in the winter. She noted that ADFG did not express opposition on June 29, 2020 but now a fish biologist is drafting a letter of opposition. She does not believe that it is in the State's best interest as the location is in a Special Use Land Designation with special resource values. That area of beach is the busiest in the bay year-round. She also had concerns about timely annual removal of gear. She believes the proposed kelp farm is in a bad location.

Michael Mahmood believes kelp farming is a great opportunity for Seward and Resurrection Bay. He works at the local shellfish hatchery, and growing kelp seed supports year-round employment there. Kelp helps reduce CO₂ levels in ocean waters and Resurrection bay has good potential. He is NOT opposed to a different location and cannot speak to the proposed site. He noted permits are hard to get if this one is denied. He has not met the owners but hopes to have a farm in the bay.

Virginia Allen (email read by Carol Griswold) is opposed to the location due to many user conflicts including trolling, boating, and kayaking. She believes allocating this public resource to a single user would be bad policy. She hoped for more public notification and information in the future.

Kari Anderson (letter emailed to board) is opposed to the location as incompatible with the recreational and park uses recommended by the 2000 Kenai Area Plan, and noted it should be prioritized for those uses. The area is a prime destination for winter paddling as it is protected from the north winds. She felt the lease would impact existing businesses: winter king salmon trolling, kayaking, and paddle boarding. None of her Lowell Point neighbors are in favor due to increased vessel traffic and visual impacts.

Gary McMaster (impacted property owner): Nick Jordan relayed message of disapproval of kelp farm location, unapproved boat launch site on his property and concern over impact on his view.

Jack Blackwell noted that state parks will be commenting, and the Kenai Area Plan recommended this area as an addition to state parks.

After some discussion, Carol offered to incorporate the many changes and email a second draft for comments, suggestions, and approval prior to submitting the letter. Board agreed.

III. Board Contact and Correspondence:

Cliff Reed submitted Board meeting notice and updates to Seward Daily Trail Report on Facebook; several comments were posted. This is an excellent outreach for state park users. Thank you, Cliff.

IV. Reports:

A. Staff Report and Report/Update from Jack Ransom:

1. Welcomed Robert Barnwell to the Board, and noted prompt appointments.
 2. Mike Burmeister was back from Soldotna on fuel reduction in campgrounds and boat launches
 3. Round Two of CHSRA interpretive signs sponsored by Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area are underway. Thank you, Carol for input.
 4. Parking fee compliance was great; steady use in both lots and lots of use on weekends.
 5. Duck hunting issue was resolved; hunters made aware of issues and moved on
 6. Thanks to Nick for submitting letter of support for trails grant; grant in March
- Staff Report/Update from Jack Blackwell:
7. Appreciate how Board has adapted to COVID-19, creative meeting outside
 8. Other boards meeting through MS Teams. The video is taped and archived.
 9. Covid-19 has had a big impact on field crews, slowing work
 10. Michael Burmeister extended his season two months with beetle kill removal

B. Committee Reports

1. Tonsina Mining Issue: ADFG biologist Brian Blossom has not yet responded to Cliff's inquiry about a permit to the miner to cross the anadromous South Fork Tonsina Creek. Mark reported horrible trash on the beach where the Argo and camping gear was left. He was appalled that miner can trash this area and that it is unenforced by the state of Alaska. Persistent trash and toxins are being added to Tonsina Creek, and it flows into the state park. Cliff noted the claim does include the waterfall and there is a dredge in the pool by the fall. The miner is in violation of the Allowed General Uses. Bob noted what a beautiful wild area it is; last spring he followed wolf tracks in the snow. Nick expressed frustration that state parks had worked so hard to clean it up and now there's so much more, with the potential for gas cans to pollute stream. Mining is not a good use for this public land. Jack Blackwell suggested identifying the issues and impacts on park visitors. Board is on the right track to communicate with DNR through Samantha Carroll, Regional Manager of MLW and ADFG. He will talk to ADFG Brian Blossom.
2. Local issues: Lower parking lot potholes: no funding for plowing, but it might be possible to get it graded once a year while area is being serviced. Continue to post on FB that the upper parking lot is the best place to park, then walk down trail to beach.
3. Website and Interpretation: (Carol) Two CHSRA signs are almost done. She appreciated working with DNR interp staff.

V. Old Business:

1. Seward CAB Bylaws: Jack B noted bylaws need a consistent format for all CABs. Director is reviewing options, and suggested waiting. He recommended action minutes less than one page to

reduce work load supported by the video platform archived for more information and to allow more public participation from home.

2. CAB History update: Carol emailed update handout

VI. New Business:

1. Carrying capacity of LPSRA and CHSRA discussion: no time
2. Board Recruitment: four vacancies with a minimum of 7 and maximum of 11. Board approved adding notice of recruitment.
3. New email account for public comments: Carol noted it would be nice to not use personal email account. Nick suggested a Gmail account to utilize GoogleDocs. Carol will research options.

VII. **Public Comments:** none

VIII. Adjournment

- A. Board Comments: none
- B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 5:30 pm. TBA
- C. Motion to Adjourn: Paul motioned, Tess second. Unanimous. 6:58 pm.