FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH
TRAILS ADVISORY COMMISSION (TAC) MEETING AGENDA
BLUE ROOM, AK CENTENNIAL ARTS BUILDING, PIONEER PARK
2300 AIRPORT WAY, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA
AGENDA
6:00 P.M.
MARCH 13, 2018

A. Roll Call

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes for: November 14, 2017

D. Citizen Comments

E. Presentations
   1. Badger-Salcha Subarea Plan Background Information – Melissa Kellner, Planner, FNSB Department of Community Planning

F. Communications from Borough

G. Action Items
   1. Election of TAC Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary
   2. Recommendations for Project Funding Priorities—Trails Advisory Commissioners

H. Informational Items
   1. Discussion regarding recreational trail use designations in the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan—Trails Advisory Commissioners

I. Committee Reports—None

J. Commissioner’s Comments

K. Agenda Setting / Next Meeting
   April 10, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., Blue Room, Pioneer Park

L. Adjournment
The Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) held a meeting in Blue Room on the third floor of the Centennial Center for the Arts at Pioneer Park.

Chair Carol Kaynor called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Members Present: Mathew Carrick Jamie Hansen
Carol Kaynor Helyn Lefgren
John Morack Jerry Rafson
Richard Shideler

Members Absent: Brian Accola Seth Adams
Jeff Oatley Geoffrey Orth
Joni Simpson

Borough Attending: Bryant Wright, Trails Coordinator, Parks & Recreation

B. Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: Commissioner Shideler moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Morack seconded the motion.
Discussion and Objections: None.

MOTION ADOPTED

C. Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Commissioner Lefgren moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Shideler seconded the motion.
Discussion and Objections: None.

MOTION ADOPTED

D. Citizen Comments:

- Maggie Demers moved near Skyline Ridge Park a few years ago. She heard about the damage on the trails from the spring and noticed new “non-motorized” signs at the trail. She was unaware that this trail was non-motorized, especially because there used to be official-looking trail etiquette signs showing multiple uses and who yields to whom. ATVs and snowmachines were also depicted on these signs. She believed that winter snowmachine use adds value to the trail for all users, including non-motorized, because it packs down the new snow. She understands that the current Trails Plan does not have a more specific use designation to allow snowmachines but not ATVs and would like to see the Plan changed to accommodate more specific use designations. She understands it is a hard balance to protect the trails and allow certain uses and was thankful for all the people who helped with recent trail restoration. She recommended that if a change were made to the Trail Plan, that the Skyline Ridge trails allow motorized uses, or at least winter snowmachines, but have some kind of black-out days during break-up or when the trails are fragile. She added that many people in the neighborhood were in favor of everyday motorized use and that there were lots of eyes on the trail. She welcomed any members of the commission to come visit the trail.
- **Chris Demers** lives a half-mile from the trail and shared Maggie’s sentiments. He believed trail damage was really from wheeled motorized vehicles whereas snowmachines actually help maintain the trail in winter and make other activities such as skate skiing possible. Chris also read aloud a letter from his neighbor, Robbin Garber-Slaught:

- **Robbin Garber-Slaught** (note read by Chris Demers) uses the Skyline Ridge trails for skiing and biking and connecting to many other trail systems. She felt that snowmachine traffic helps all other uses in the winter. She liked the new work that was being done to restore the trails. However, she felt that as good people pay attention to signs, banning uses just leaves the door open for the bad users.

- **Stan Justice** thanked the TAC for their efforts to recommend a change to the Trail Plan at the last meeting. He noted that if the Borough told him to stop grooming the Skarland Trail he would stop. He believed that other grooming going on at other local trails would also cease if the FNSB directed. So he believed there didn’t need to be a more formal permitting system to allow grooming. He thought such a requirement would be limiting in that people would be prohibited from grooming sections of trail that are in trespass and because most casual volunteers would not be able to insure themselves, as has been the problem with the Adopt-a-Trail program. He has spoken with Chris Garber-Slaught and they discussed a deficiency with the Trails Plan in that it does not differentiate between kinds of motorized uses. He suggested a change to allow snowmachines but prohibit large wheeled vehicles.

- **Sally Kieper** of Chickadee Loop has used the Skyline Ridge trails year-round since 2009, primarily for skiing in the winter. Once in a while she rides a snowmachine to the valley. She is a rule follower, and with new signs, feels she shouldn’t ride there anymore. She felt snowmachines should be allowed in winter and that the Summit Road Facebook group all agreed. The mentioned the old brown signs showing who yields to whom. She wondered where they came from, why they were taken down, thought that if the trail was non-motorized then it was inappropriate they were there in the first place. She added that the old signs looked very official compared to the recent laminated paper signs.

Commissioners Lefgren and Shideler explained that the signs were purchased by the FNSB with a grant to promote trail etiquette. They were meant to be placed by trail users, but people take signs down. Ms. Kieper also shared a note from her neighbor who felt that snowmachines should be allowed in winter and that ATVs should be prohibited when trails are wet and squishy.

Chair Kaynor closed Citizen Comments.

E. **Presentations:** None.

F. **Communications from the Borough:**

Mr. Wright reminded the TAC that, per their bylaws, they would have to hold an election at the end of the year, so this should be added during agenda setting. He noted the positions are Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. He commended Chair Kaynor for doing such a good job and noted that she had only been able to start her position after the May meeting. He said there were not rules prohibiting an officer from serving multiple terms in a row. He also reminded that there is still a vacancy on the TAC and will soon be a second as Joni Simpson has indicated she will not renew her membership after it expires in December. He asked Commissioners to seek out potential new members that could represent snowmachine riders and equestrian trail users to fill the void that would be left from Larry Morris and Joni Simpson’s vacancies. He also mentioned that they should be looking for someone from the underrepresented North Pole and/or Salcha areas. He said that the other members whose terms are expiring after this December (Jamie Hansen, Brian Accola, and Geoffrey Orth) have already or intend to renew their membership for another three-year term on the Commission. Mr. Wright received some feedback to pass to the TAC from the Mayor regarding the TAC’s recent recommendations. He said the Mayor called to say he had
reviewed the recommendations. Regarding the recommended changes to the Trails Plan, the Mayor requested that the TAC take a broader look at the Trails Plan rather than selecting specific trails to amend. The Mayor specifically recognized issues with the recreational use designation section and that it seemed there should be another use category to address winter use or specific motorized uses. The Mayor’s recommendation was to review the Trails Plan as a whole, or at least take on larger sections in their review. **Mr. Wright** recommended that the TAC consider how they want to take on these issues and look at further Plan amendments during agenda setting. He reiterated that recent suggested management changes, for example the trail use designations, would need to be included in the Trails Plan to be acted on. **Commissioner Rafson** asked whether the Mayor was withholding action on any recommendations until the entire Trails Plan was amended. **Mr. Wright** said that the Mayor mentioned sitting down with the Legal Department to resolve some of the complexities regarding Borough management of the trails. **Commissioner Rafson** said the Trails Plan was done with hired consultants and it took a long time. He worried that if progress was halted until the Trails Plan was redone, it would be a long time until anything got done. **Mr. Wright** acknowledged that broad changes to the Trail Plan would take a lot of dedicated time and resources from the Borough and the TAC and likely a lot of money for hired help. **Chair Kaynor** said that in her conversation with Mayor Kassel, he did not necessarily recommend a comprehensive change to the whole Trails Plan, but rather suggested a specific change to the section about use designations. She added he did not say anything to the effect of “not doing anything until the TAC rewrites the Trails Plan.” **Commissioner Hansen** appreciated the suggestion for a comprehensive review of the Trails Plan. She was curious if there were any more immediate way to address some of the recent trail concerns expressed by users. **Mr. Wright** asked for suggestions, noting that more significant management changes like use designations would have to first be changed in the policy. He noted that the department doesn’t currently have the resources and/or powers to enforce use designations and maintain the trails at Skyline. **Commissioner Morack** reminded that the area is now a park, and not only protected by the trails policy. Because the Borough owns it as a park, he suggested exploring options to manage it differently than it has been before. He remembered that the TAC put forth a motion in the past to make the Skyline Ridge Trail “motorized” but the motion went nowhere. **Mr. Wright** said that because it is now a park, the Parks and Recreation Commission would need to be brought into decisions regarding the trails at Skyline. But because it’s also in the Trails Plan, which was approved by the Assembly, suggested changes would still need to go through the regular public process for approval by the TAC, Parks and Rec Commission, Mayor, Planning Commission, and Assembly. Because the process is comprehensive and cumbersome, the TAC should consider whether they want to go through that effort for just a small change, or put forward more changes at once. **Commissioner Rafson** suggested that they check with the Planning Commission or Legal Dept. to see if there were any variances or exceptions that could be made to streamline the process. He also mentioned that grooming for maintenance would be an exception to the non-motorized use rule that could allow snowmachines. He suggested that users of Skyline Trail who want the trails to be packed by snowmachine consider this possibility. He also said that instead of changing the use designations they are really considering adding a new use designation. **Commissioner Shideler** agreed that there needed to be a new use designation. He suggested it consider seasonal or type distinctions, such as winter versus summer, weight class allowances, or types of traction (such as wheels versus tracks). He thought this should be considered as its own item. **Commissioner Hansen** suggested this topic is basically on the agenda as recommending that the FNSB develop Trail Management Objectives which would address these specific considerations. **Commissioner Morack** thought the TAC couldn’t take on the entire Trails Plan and would need to negotiate with the Mayor about how much amendment would be acceptable to move forward. He understood why they might not want to do this one change at a time, but he didn’t believe they had the capacity to rewrite the whole thing. **Mr. Wright** suggested the TAC look carefully at the Plan and its main topics, find what key changes they want made, and prioritize those changes. Then they can negotiate how many of those topics
to tackle before pushing amendments forward. If the TAC feels there aren’t enough resources to accomplish this, they need to make that known. Chair Kaynor wanted to acknowledge that, while the Skarland Trail issues may have initially stimulated conversation, the changes suggested by the TAC are all of a broader nature—which is exactly what the Mayor appeared to be asking for. She thought they should continue to prioritize and address these big issues while they have this momentum. Specifically, she thought they need to address the use designation issue. 

Commissioner Rafson asked about potential exceptions to the rules of the Trails Plan regarding recreational uses, such as being able to change the uses allowed on a trail. Mr. Wright believed there was not. Commissioners Shideler and Lefgren suggested adding another use designation in the Trails Plan, perhaps that allowed closures for certain times of the year. Commissioner Hansen noted that these specific considerations would be included in the Trail Management Objectives recommendation which is the next item on the agenda. While she understands the question about looking for a variance, she thought the TAC ultimately really needs to step back and take a look at potential changes to the Trails Plan to address use designations. Commissioner Morack agreed that making specific management recommendations for trails will eventually have to be reflected in an updated Trails Plan. Mr. Wright suggested moving onto the next agenda item. If the TAC wants to have further discussion or make suggestions regarding changes to the Trails Plan and use designations, this should be placed on the next meeting’s agenda during agenda setting.

G. Action Items:

1. Draft Memorandum Recommending the Fairbanks North Star Borough Develop Trail Management Objectives and a Trail Classification Matrix for Borough Trails and Adopt the Alaska State Parks’ Trail Management Handbook—Geoff Orth

MOTION: Commissioner Morack moved to approve this recommendation. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Shideler asked whether everyone thought the State Parks Management Handbook was the best fit for Fairbanks trails or whether there was a better alternative. Commissioner Lefgren suggested this was developed from trail management best practices from other regions and adapted specifically to Alaska’s conditions. Commissioner Morack said this handbook was very detailed and flexible. He mentioned multiple agencies using this handbook. He thought the biggest challenge would be to implement it. Commissioner Kaynor called for a vote.

VOTE: All were in favor.

MOTION ADOPTED

H. Informational Items

1. Recommendations for Trail-Related Local and Legislative Priorities—Trail Advisory Commissioners

Discussion: Commissioner Morack asked for a quick survey of what the status was of the projects shown. Mr. Wright provided brief updates on the following projects:

- **Trail mapping, signing and education program efforts**: Planning efforts continue on this and staff plans to seek grant funding to improve trailheads and wayfinding.
- **100-Mile Loop Trail/Rosie Creek Trails surveying, trail realignment and signage**: Staff continues to pursue an easement with Mental Health Trust. This will be part of the same “Master Agreement” that will include the Equinox Trail/Farmer Mine Trail re-route.
- **Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail Hardening Project**: No progress.
- **Skyline Ridge Trail Hardening, Access Control & Signage**: Significant progress has been made. Half of the trail has been hardened thanks to an RTP grant and additional RTP funds have been awarded to complete the other half next season.
Boulders have been installed and more are planned to protect the trail from large trucks.

- **Farmer’s Mine Trail Extension Easement Acquisition, Surveying and Construction:** Staff continues to work with Land Management and Alaska Mental Health Trust to secure an easement, the first step in this process.
- **Bridge over Goldstream Creek east of Ballaine Road:** No progress.

Commissioners also provided some background about these projects. Mr. Wright noted that these are all good, and mostly ongoing projects and should be kept as priorities if the TAC would like to see progress continue. Having set priorities also helps the department when applying for grant funds, which is often necessary to complete any projects. He asked the TAC to take a close look at these existing priorities, see if there are any updates they want to make, and also consider whether to omit some or add any new priorities.

Commissioner Morack asked for suggestions for addition. Commissioner Lefgren was glad to see progress on these projects. Mr. Wright also asked if, in addition to funding priorities, whether the TAC had legislative priorities they wanted the Borough to consider. Commissioners Morack and Rafson just wanted to make sure that this list made it in time for Borough annual funding considerations. Commissioner Lefgren suggested making this an action item to be considered at the next meeting.

I. **Committee Reports:** - None

J. **Commissioner Comments:**

Commissioner Hansen: Was interested in the direction the TAC is going and willing to take a look at the Comprehensive Plan for potential changes. She wants to give the Borough a tool to make the changes the TAC has already recommended.

Commissioner Morack: Spoke to the conundrum on Skyline Ridge trails, where we were unable to do anything about the vandals, yet when signs are put up the neighborhood is upset. He expressed a desire for a solution here.

Commissioner Carrick: Will be out of town for the January and February meetings.

Commissioner Lefgren: Asked whether the TAC should consider having a committee to review the Trails Plan, perhaps taking on one part at a time. One part could be the use designations and could consider adding a seasonal use description. She also attended a first meeting of a “Trails Foundation” group. Many people attended looking for a way to fund work on trails. This might help make progress in the future.

Commissioner Rafson: No comments.

Commissioner Shideler: Has been traveling and unfortunately absent but glad to be back. Fish and Game received money for hunter access, specifically the Murphy Dome Area that might affect trails there. He can bring more information to a later meeting. He relayed an experience a neighbor had near Ballaine Road in the Goldstream Valley by the bridge. The neighbor’s dog got stuck in a trap right next to the road. He has heard about traps all over that people and their dogs are encountering. This seems to occur this time of year when inexperienced trappers are active. Please be careful.

Commissioner Hansen: Had good things to say about the Summer Trails Challenge and hopes to participate in the Winter Challenge.

Chair Kaynor: Regarding Skyline and the expressed interest in snowmachining to pack trails, she suggested that someone could take on a role of grooming. As they’ve seen with other trails, motorized grooming is legitimate for maintenance. She thought the two designations in the plan are not workable and wanted to find a solution.
K. **Agenda Setting for the December 12, 2017, Meeting:**
   - Presentations:
     1. Badger-Salcha Subarea Plan Background & Trail Needs—Melissa Kellner, Planner, FNSB Community Planning
     2. ADF&G Hunter Access Program and Murphy Dome Area—Richard Shideler, Commissioner
   - Communications from the Borough
   - Action Items:
     1. Election of TAC Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary
     2. Recommendations for Trail Project Funding Priorities—TAC Commissioners
   - Informational Items:
     1. Discussion regarding recreational trail use designations in the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan—TAC Members
   - Committee Meetings: None.

L. **Adjournment:** Chair Kaynor adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Submitted by,

R. Bryant Wright, Trails Coordinator
FNSB Parks & Recreation
TRAILS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
October 10th, 2017

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) held a meeting in the Blue Room on the third floor of the Centennial Center for the Arts at Pioneer Park.

Chair Carol Kaynor called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

A. Roll Call
   Members Present:
   Carol Kaynor
   Brian Accola
   John Morack
   Jamie Hansen
   Geoffrey Orth
   Mathew Carrick
   Helyn Lefgren
   Seth Adams

   Members Absent:
   Richard Shideler
   Jeff Oatley
   Joni Simpson
   Jerry Rafson

   Borough Attending:
   Bryant Wright, Trails Coordinator, Parks & Recreation
   Melissa Kellner, Planner, Community Planning

B. Approval of Agenda:
   MOTION: Commissioner Orth moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Adams seconded the motion.
   Discussion and Objections: None.

   MOTION ADOPTED

C. Approval of Minutes:
   MOTION: Commissioner Morack moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Orth seconded the motion.
   Discussion and Objections:
   Chair Kaynor provided minor copy edits.
   There were no objections.

   MOTION ADOPTED

D. Citizen Comments:
   - Kevin Bjella spoke to bring two items from the June TAC meeting to the Commission’s attention: 1. an informational item that resolved to support communication and identify tools to resolve conflict over the use and maintenance of Skarland Trail and 2. The proposed formation of a subcommittee to address Skarland Trail issues. He said that these items gave property owners the impression they would have more input. But the new memo (this meeting’s Agenda Action Item 1) on line 36 would provide anyone blanket access to anyone who wants to perform construction or maintenance on the trail with no legal authorization, oversight or consensus among property owners and users. At the most this should only include grooming, not construction and maintenance. He said this doesn’t include a voice from the MuskOx property owners and doesn’t address their concerns that have been voiced at the last several meetings. He had a grievance with Line 104’s mention of the platted easement because he thought the easement was lacking in language to define approved uses, users, maintenance allowed and rights of property owners and users. He said he still has not been provided with evidence of how trail users are authorized to conduct trail maintenance without property owners’ consent and
assumes this is because such evidence doesn’t exist. He said this memo still doesn’t address long-term legal implications. He felt this was a “back-handed” approach by the TAC because they didn’t find time to communicate with the property owners who are important stakeholders. He believed motorized construction and maintenance were not the intended plan for this trail. He felt the owners can only be reactionary at this point. He believes the TAC is voicing a very clear agenda for the trails that does not include time to resolve opposing opinions from property owners.

- **Wendell Shiffler** had problems with the proposed ordinance to the assembly to amend the Trail Plan (this meeting’s Agenda Action Item. All of this should be taken care of when the total plan is revised which hasn’t been done in 10 years. He noted that the TAC is isolating the Skarland Trail issue caused by track setting by Stan Justice. He thought Stan Justice was using the TAC to bypass property owners’ rights and responsibilities and get the Borough to authorize his actions. He appreciated the work that Commissioner Orth and the TAC have done. But he asked the TAC to consider a few elements of the memo. First, where it says maintenance would be done “as authorized by the Borough,” he liked that it would at least place someone in the Borough as responsible for maintenance. Next, in section B, Trail Use Designations, it says designations will be set to reflect the desires of local residents. He believes that refers to the property owners in the Musk Ox subdivision. Lastly, he highlighted that “the primary recreational use shall have priority.” He stated that the original use of this trail before neighborhood subdivision and development was as an uninterrupted trail with a wilderness nature. He wished for the Skarland Trail description in the Trail Plan to be amended with community input when the whole Trail Plan is amended. He thought singling out the Skarland Trail was hasty. He has met with his neighbors and they don’t think they need to form an official trail group because they own the property. He has surveyed them and they don’t want to see snowmachines or track setting on the trail. He and his neighbors will make the Skarland Trail available for non-motorized use for the next 100 years or more. He asks the TAC to consider what they are proposing with the Skarland is a slippery slope. If this is done for the Skarland it ought to be done for all non-motorized trails.

- **Stan Justice** called DNR to ask about the ITPC’s application to develop the section line near the top of Ester Dome for the Equinox Marathon reroute. He said they were still working on the application but that DNR has taken a position that an easement does exist along the section line that goes over the top of Ester Dome. But he would continue to encourage the Borough to offer a land trade with Alaska Ski Corp to try and get access to the alder chute section of the Equinox Marathon. He thinks this is the best solution. He noted that the comment period ends tomorrow for DEC’s permitting of the Aurora Energy Power Plant’s warm water discharge into the Chena River. He thought the DEC had not adequately considered the river’s temperature and the mallard duck population increase. He is not sure if the FNSB wants to weigh in on it but if individuals want to they must do so by tomorrow. He encouraged the TAC to pass the change to the Trail Plan. He said it appears as a stand-alone issue so that the change doesn’t get bogged down with updating the plan entirely. He said all it does is clarify that the plan was not intending to address maintenance procedures by its use designation categories. He mentioned several trails designated for non-motorized recreation uses that are regularly maintained by using motorized equipment. He said people seem to be misunderstanding this point.

**Chair Kaynor** closed Citizen Comments.

**E. Presentations:** None.

**F. Communications from the Borough:**

1. Salcha-Badger Sub-Area Plan Introduction and Background Information
Melissa Kellner, a Planner in the FNSB Community Planning Department, reached out to the TAC to introduce planning efforts to accommodate the expected population influx from the Air Force. She requested that during agenda setting the TAC add her or another member of Community Planning as a presenter on this topic to allow more back and forth. With the F-35s coming to Eielson AFB in the year 2020, around 3,500 to 4,000 new residents will inhabit the Borough. Many of these people will live and work in the proximity of Eielson AFB spanning the Badger Road to Salcha region. FNSB has a Borough-wide growth management plan. Part of this plan is a "Regional Gap Analysis" to identify existing and needed services and infrastructure for expected population growth. With the large expected influx around Eielson, the FNSB needs something more area-specific in the Salcha-Badger area. This is focused on housing, services, utilities and infrastructure within a 20-minute commute of Eielson. Community Planning is working with a consultant to collect data and interests from the community to create this plan. They hope to adopt the plan in early 2019 after a yearlong process. There will be multiple opportunities to get information and provide feedback through open houses, workshops, interviews, surveys or other means. This will also of course go through a fully codified process for adopting any Borough-wide plans or ordinances that always includes at minimum a work session and public hearings at both the Planning Commission meeting and the Assembly meeting. They are looking for input on important trails in the area and hoped a TAC member would offer to serve on the advisory group for this project. This group would meet monthly with Community Planning staff or the hired consultant and discuss goals and provide feedback for this project. This would preferably a member who is especially knowledgeable about trails in the North Pole and Salcha areas. If no member is inclined to join the group, she asks that they recommend someone to serve on this group. She asked if there are any questions. Commissioner Accola asked if there are many established trails in the area that they know of. Ms. Kellner noted that there aren't many shown in the trails plan. But they would like to know of informal trails that are important to trail users.

Commissioner Accola mentioned there have been sprint mushing races out in the area. Mr. Wright added that the Category C Twenty-Three Mile Slough mushing trails are extensive in the Eielson Farm Road and Old Valdez Road area. Much of it is platted but there are many gaps. The Salcha Elementary Ski Trails are also part of our Trail Plan. There are well-used trails through State Forest Lands and along the Salcha River but they are not part of our Trail Plan. This would be a good winter for TAC members to check out trails in this area. Seth Adams thought it would be good to get someone who knows these trails well since there isn’t anyone on the Commission who does. Chair Kaynor said she would try and get in touch with mushers and other trail users she knows. Commissioner Lefgren asked about rezoning in the area. Ms. Kellner said most of the area is zoned GU with some rural residential and rural agricultural areas. Rezoning needs would be identified in the planning process. If there is a demand for high-density residential zones, for example, areas would need to be rezoned and have update infrastructure to accommodate. She also offered to bring a rough map of the 20-minute "commute-shed," but added that part of the planning process and responsibilities of the board would be to define the area boundaries.

2. Updates from the Trails Office:

Mr. Wright updated the TAC about two National Public Lands Day (NPLD) events that took place on September 30 as well as trail-clearing progress at Cranberry Trail on September Court. The first NPLD event was a volunteer effort to restore the Goldstream Connector Trail. The FNSB
hired Happy Trails Inc. to reshape the damaged length of the Goldstream Connector Trail (aka “Van Trail”) and add a total of twenty rolling grade dips. A new outslope and grade dips with drains now allow water to shed off the trail tread. Knowing that fine-tuning would be needed, staff coordinated with REI, Commissioner Orth (as Stray Dogs LLC), Alaska Trails and other local trail interests to advertise and conduct a volunteer hand-finishing effort. The response to the FNSB’s request for participation was very positive, and 30 volunteers showed up to help on the Saturday morning work session. Commissioner Orth taught volunteers the safe and proper uses of the hand tools (provided by Alaska Trails) as well as about the trail construction methods we would be using. Mr. Wright provided background on trail conditions, management and needs for trails in Skyline Ridge Park. Volunteers worked for about 3 hours, totaling 86.5 volunteer hours for an estimated value of $2,404.70 worth of trail work. Mr. Wright highlighted the needs for improvements to the Goldstream Connector, approaches to shaping the trail tread, methods used during the volunteer session, and his pleasure at seeing so many people show up to work happily together to care for the community’s trails. He thanked Commissioner Accola for attending and helping with friends and especially thanked Commissioner Orth for coordinating, offering his expertise, and being an excellent crew leader. Mr. Wright hopes to continue events like this each year on trails that need special attention. Commissioner Orth had positive feedback for the event, particularly the amount of volunteers it mustered. Commissioner Morack asked about the muddiness of the trail. Mr. Wright responded that the trail would still need time to heal, and it will take a few summers. The added drainage will significantly decrease ongoing erosion. The trail will be able to handle regular use once frozen and covered in snow and will be reevaluated in the spring.

The second NPLD event took place in the afternoon to celebrate the end of the Fairbanks Summer Trails Challenge. The Awards Ceremony and other trail activities took place at Tanana Lakes picnic pavilion. Staff prepared awards, a prize drawing (from sponsors Riverboat Discovery, Pago Restaurant, Goldstream Sports, and REI), s'mores and a BINGO-style "trail safari" scavenger hunt. More than 80 people attended. A total of 103 individuals completed the entire challenge by visiting and sharing photos of all ten hidden trail signs on separate trails. Of the finishers, 43 were children who tagged along with their mother or parents. The Summer Trails Challenge was especially popular with mothers with young children. A total of 204 individuals (that we know of) participated in the challenge by finding and sharing photos of at least one sign. From mid-June through September this program was able to tally 1,214 visits to trails in the Borough and at least as many visitor hours, though likely many more. Most of these visits are shared publicly on social media websites. The Challenge was incredibly well received and participants mentioned looking forward to more. Mr. Wright was pleased to see so many participate and that the program was reaching a wider demographic.

A crew from Eielson Air Force Base has finished cutting a new trail entrance to Cranberry Ridge Trail within the platted trail easement off September Court. Staff is pleased with the narrow trail and that it managed to meander interestingly within the straight and narrow 20-foot wide easement.

G. Action Items:
1. Draft Memorandum Recommending that the Fairbanks North Star Borough Amend the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan to Address Trail Use Designations, Trail Recommendations and the Skarland Trail—Geoff Orth

Commissioner Orth introduced this memo in light of concerns raised during public comments. He felt this was a fairly moderate change. Any work that needs to be done by volunteers on the trails would need to be authorized by the Borough. This is related to a memo passed last month specifically asserting that the Borough take on an active management policy for local trails. These memos combine to help solve issues with Skarland trail and address property owner and trail user concerns. Commissioner Adams thought that had the concerned property owners been at the last meeting they would not oppose this current memo because it works to address many concerns raised. Commissioner Morack recommended an addition to line 35 of the draft memo that he thought would give it more meat. Commissioner Adams and Kaynor thought the suggestion didn’t change the meaning of the memo and thus may be unnecessary.

Commissioner Accola liked Morack’s addition. He also suggested there wouldn’t be an issue with Skarland if there were a process to solve the question of authorization. Instead we’re stuck working on damage control. He understood how some may be uneasy with a “blank check” approach, saying there should be a process but not describing what it is first. If we work toward an approval process, we might figure out a solution before more problems occur. Commissioner Adams agreed an approval process would be necessary, but suggested that topic was outside the realm of this memo. That would be a process outlined in detail later, and it would refer to this change in the Plan that says “work must be authorized.” We can figure out how it will be authorized later, and the simplest way is probably to be a quasi-judicial commission. But figuring this out is a big issue and a long process itself and will take more than a couple meetings to figure out. Commissioner Morack still wanted the Trails Plan to be more specific about how authorization would occur. Commissioner Orth disagreed and thought it should be kept simple. He suggested the previous memo also suggested there will be a process, and then another memo that will be discussed as an informational item will address some elements of an approval process through adoption of Trail Management Objectives and a handbook. In the end, quite a few processes and procedures will be nested together. These will get very detailed and specific to trails and even specific trail sections. Commissioner Carrick agreed that this change to the Plan should be kept lean for now. He also agreed that the simplest way to have an approval process would be to make the TAC a quasi-judicial commission. But that is a separate endeavor that we shouldn’t be talking about in this discussion. Commissioner Hansen appreciated ideas about how an approval process would look and thought some of these details should be included in the Trail Plan when amended. She wasn’t exactly sure how to go about determining what the approval process would look like. She hoped that one could go to the Trail Plan for guidance for how they should go about doing something on the trails. She was concerned that by making this change now without more specificity, we will be left with something that is a bit confusing.

Commissioner Orth reminded the TAC that they have a responsibility to act as a forum for the community to make recommendations regarding trails, including maintenance and assigning priorities and he thought we should be firm on that. Commissioner Adams thought that by adding “as authorized by FNSB” the TAC would be forcing the Borough’s hand to do something about trail maintenance. They want the Borough to have to say “yes you can” or “no you can’t” in the face of these issues. The point of this memo addressing use designations is to not misconstrue those designations to prohibit maintenance types across to entire Trail Plan. Authorization would occur on a case-by-case basis, and thus force the Borough to accept responsibility for trail management. Commissioner Orth pointed out line 33 and that use designations are meant to address recreational uses, not maintenance methods. If this were misconstrued, we would have to use hand saws to clear windblown or fallen trees which is unreasonable. Commissioner Morack spoke again to his suggestion for specificity, particularly the need for a trail volunteer to have written authorization from the Borough they could show
someone. The issue is contentious enough that it ought to be a little more formal. Commissioner Adams said that "authorization" would need to be defined, and that this would take some long discussions. He disagreed that it would be important for individuals to have written permission. He thought individuals would be working through an organization that has formal authorization. Commissioner Orth thought it should be up to the Borough, Parks and Rec and the Trails Office to internally determine this process. He agreed there should be a process that ends in formal written authorization and he thought opposition to any proposed work should go through the TAC. But he preferred not limiting the Borough or TAC by tying them to such a process now with this recommendation.

MOTION: Commissioner Lefgren moved to approve the draft amendment to the trails plan by vote and Commissioner Adams seconded the motion.

Discussion and Objections:
MOTION TO AMEND: Commissioner Morack moved to amend the previous motion to include changes to lines 35-37 that he prepared. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion.

Discussion on Amendment: (TAC took a short recess to type the proposed change so it was visible on the projector for discussion.) Commissioner Accola said this change suggests there should be a grievance procedure but doesn't describe how and still doesn't say who exactly at the Borough would authorize this and thought the memo should address this. Commissioner Morack suggested they just specify "Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department." Commissioner Orth suggested leaving it flexible. Commissioner Adams agreed that getting more specific at this point wouldn't be helpful as this is just going to the mayor as a suggestion. This will ultimately be decided internally at FNSB if the mayor chooses to even take this on. Commissioner Carrick also thought the addition was not necessary. He thought keeping it vague and letting FNSB come up with the process would maximize the likelihood of staff buy-in. Commissioner Hansen understood this sentiment, but noted that the memo still doesn't say that there should be a process. She wanted to see this somewhere. Commissioners Morack and Accola liked the idea of adding the need for an approval process in the cover letter. Chair Kaynor called for a vote on the motion to amend the memo as written.

Vote: All opposed except Commissioner Morack.
MOTION TO AMEND DENIED.

Continued Discussion: Commissioner Hansen and Commissioner Morack suggested adding the word "authorized" on line 86 for consistency.

Vote: Unanimously in favor.
MOTION ADOPTED.

MOTION: Commissioner Orth moved to discuss the memorandum letter for approval and Commissioner Lefgren seconded the motion. There were no objections.

MOTION ADOPTED.

Discussion: Commissioner Morack suggested adding a paragraph to the letter that said the TAC wished to see a grievance procedure and some procedure for maintenance authorization. Commissioner Adams didn't think this was necessary. Chair Kaynor and Commissioner Accola suggested some concise wording to "recommend that the Mayor develop a formal process for authorizing trail work including an appeal process."
MOTION: Commissioner Adams moved to adopt the memorandum letter as amended and Commissioner Orth seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimously in favor.

MOTION ADOPTED.

H. Informational Items

1. Trail Management Objectives and Trail Classification Matrix for Borough Trails—Geoff Orth

Discussion: Commissioner Orth would like to see a memo requesting that the Fairbanks North Star Borough develop Trail Management Objectives and adopt the Alaska State Parks Trail Management Handbook be pushed through, but noted he would be gone after this meeting. Commissioner Morack felt the State Parks Trail Management Handbook, proposed for adoption for FNSB trails, did not provide specific guidance on seasonal uses given that there are so many trails that are only suitable for winter traffic. He wanted to also see policies that allowed the Borough to close trails when conditions warrant it necessary, and used the Van Trail on Skyline Ridge as an example. Commissioner Adams also mentioned the need to address use designations more specifically when it came to vehicle weight classes or type of vehicle, rather than just “motorized” and “non-motorized.” Commissioner Orth assured the TAC that the Trail Management Objectives (TMO) framework allowed such flexibility to address managed use types and showed specific examples of how this framework could address fine details of a variety of trail types, management procedures, etc. He added that the Borough, if treating trails like other facilities, can indeed close them as necessary. He offered to go into more details when he returns in the spring and had emailed a webpage to the TAC for reference.

Commissioner Orth added that a Trail Use Classification Matrix would help prioritize trails for maintenance and management. Commissioner Adams, asking about trail use levels, asked if any local trails (besides Birch Hill) would be considered “high use” (>100 visits/day) according to the TMO framework. Commissioner Orth suggested that the Ester Dome Singletrack might. He also recorded visits with a trail counter on the Equinox Trail near Henderson Road, counting around 23 people per day. Mr. Wright also suggested that levels of use for Fairbanks might be unique relative to other communities, and a TMO or Trail Classification framework could be adjusted to what’s locally acceptable. Commissioner Adams noted we are almost used to thinking it’s crowded if we see anyone on the trail. Commissioner Orth added that an intern could be hired from the university to help develop the TMOs. Commissioner Lefgren asked whether the TAC wanted to consider making this an action item, or tabling it for prolonged discussion. Commissioner Adams thought it could wait. Commissioner Orth suggested it fit in context with other memos about Borough trail management and should thus be submitted promptly so the Mayor could see there was a plan for trail management. Chair Kaynor agreed, reminding that the Mayor had suggested the TAC come up with specific goals and ideas and tools to meet them. Commissioner Adams then agreed it would be good to make the recommendation sooner and show preparedness. He suggested putting it on the agenda for next meeting and Commissioner Lefgren agreed.

2. Steps Toward Establishing a Trails Foundation—Helen Lefgren

Discussion: Commissioner Lefgren talked to representatives of the MatSu Trails Foundation [MatSu Trails & Parks Foundation] to glean some suggestions to help start a foundation in Fairbanks. She found they used nine people to get the Foundation started
and that it took a lot of time. She suggested the TAC would not create the foundation, but could maybe have some members work together to help find and support individuals who could lead the effort. She also mentioned it would help to have some seed money and that the MatSu trail foundation received a starting donation from the hospital foundation. She suggested Fairbanks also work with health providers because of the obvious connection between trails, exercise and health. She also mentioned getting in touch with local clubs for input. **Commissioner Adams** asked what the main goal of a trails foundation would be? He suggested a foundation could provide insurance coverage that could be bought into by local qualifying organizations in order to complete trail projects. **Commissioner Lefgren** said the goal was broader, to raise and allocate funds for local trail work, and that yes, that could include insurance coverage, easement purchases or trail maintenance. **Commissioner Adams** asked if the difficulty in starting a foundation was due to legal complications. **Commissioner Lefgren** said that founders would need a lot of resources, grant-writing expertise, and knowledge of legal process on starting a nonprofit. **Commissioner Orth** offered that he has worked for lots of foundations and nonprofits and is familiar with the Anchorage and MatSu foundations that work very closely with their boroughs. He noted that seed money is critical. He has encountered someone who has helped fund recreation projects locally, but is looking for new directions for donation. He is working with other trail users and a potential benefactor to get together with a lot of trail users to discuss something like a trails foundation. He said others might be working on something like an Arts and Parks Foundation but to his knowledge this didn’t include trails. He added he was very familiar with the process of starting a foundation and establishing bylaws, etc. **Commissioner Lefgren** agreed it would be great to get a variety of user groups represented in this process. **Commissioner Adams** wondered if the first step would be looking for seed money rather than outreach and recruitment. He mentioned Rasmuson Foundation as a potential donor. **Commissioner Accola** asked if and how TAC should be connected to this effort. **Commissioner Lefgren** offered to be a party to a trails foundation effort and report back to the TAC if that would be helpful. **Chair Kaynor** suggested that **Commissioners Lefgren and Orth** were now in touch on this topic and that this seemed like the right outcome. **Commissioner Orth** added a few more details about the status of the MatSu trail foundation, which has a trail plan, two employees, and hopes to be self-sufficient in a few years. **Commissioner Lefgren** closed by saying she thought Fairbanks should have something like this.

I. Committee Reports: - None

J. Commissioner's Comments:
- **Commissioner Lefgren**: Was glad to see some things getting done.
- **Commissioner Carrick**: No comment.
- **Commissioner Accola**: Felt like we’re moving toward a more substantive guide for trails. He hopes to see a nice system in place so they can stay ahead of problems rather than just do damage control. He noted the Skarland Trail has singularly pushed the TAC to try and establish a process to deal with these larger issues. He understands it may be long and frustrating for some of the stakeholders, but without a process, there’s no way to figure out what to do.
- **Commissioner Morack**: Gave kudos to Mr. Wright for the things he’s done with the program, the organization of volunteers on the Van Trail, and for helping edit the memos at the meeting.
- **Commissioner Hansen**: Had good things to say about the Summer Trails Challenge and hopes to participate in the Winter Challenge.
- **Commissioner Orth**: Was pleased at the amount of volunteers that the event at Skyline Ridge brought in and said Mr. Wright did a good job with the event.
Commissioner Adams: Thanked members of the public for attending and providing comment.
Chair Kaynor: Thanked the TAC members and the members of the public for participating.

K. Agenda Setting for the December 12, 2017 Meeting:
   • Presentations: Badger-Salcha Subarea Plan Background & Trail Needs—Melissa Kellner, Planner, FNSB Community Planning
   • Communications from the Borough
   • Action Items:
     1. Trail Management Objectives and Trail Classification Matrix for Borough Trails—Geoff Orth
   • Informational Items:
     1. Recommendations to Mayor for Trails-Related Local and Legislative Priorities—TAC Members
   • Committee Meetings: None.

L. Adjournment: Chair Kaynor adjoined the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by,

R. Bryant Wright, Trails Coordinator
FNSB Parks & Recreation
MEMORANDUM

TO: Karl Kassel, Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough

THROUGH: Bryant Wright, Trails Coordinator, Parks and Recreation

FROM: Carol Kaynor, Chair, Trails Advisory Commission

DATE: December 12, 2017

SUBJECT: Trails Advisory Commission Project Funding Recommendations to Assembly

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) Trails Advisory Commission (TAC) has identified several recreational trail projects and actions for funding in order to sustain a viable recreational trail system within the Borough. A large segment of the community as well as visitors use recreational trails that includes those described the Boroughs Comprehensive Recreational Trails Plan. The TAC feels that the projects and actions are important quality of life issues for trail users, as well as an economic issue to the many businesses that cater to outdoor activities for such uses as hiking, skiing, dogsledding, biking, snowmobiling, ATVing, running, and horseback riding, to name a few. The TAC urges you to incorporate the following projects and actions in the Borough budget and in requests to the Governor and State Legislature for Legislative funding:

- **Legal Protection**: Fund a non-lapsing capital project to survey and establish trail easements and rights-of-way trails. Many important trails are not currently protected and are subject to closure.
- **Mapping**: Provide maps of the trail system that identify location, legal status and use designations and make the maps widely available to the general public on the internet. This will help guide users to legal trails and reduce trespass issues.
- **Signing**: Erect trail signs so that legal trails and trail use designations are more easily identified in the field. This will also help guide trail users to legal trails and also help reduce user conflicts.
- **Education**: Educate the public on legal trail use to mitigate potential user conflicts and activities that result in trail damage and misuse of private property.
- **Trail Improvements**: Fund trail improvements to encourage appropriate trail use by constructing reroutes where needed to avoid private property and to repair trail damage and mitigate erosion.

Specific Project Attachments:

- FNSB Trail Mapping, Signing, and Education Program
- 100-Mile Loop Trail: Rosie Creek Area: Acquire, Survey, Realign, Construction, and Signage
- Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail Hardening Project
- Skyline Ridge Trail Hardening, Access Control, and Signage
- Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail Hardening, Drainage Control, Bridge Installation, and Signage
- Farmer’s Mine Trail Extension: Acquire, Survey, Realign, Construction, and Signage
- K2 Bridge: Acquisition and Installation across Goldstream Creek near Ballaine Road

Sincerely,

Carol Kaynor, Chair
Trails Advisory Commission
Fairbanks North Star Borough
FNSB Trail Mapping, Signing, and Education Program

Project Cost Estimate: $150,000

Project Need Statement:
Within the Fairbanks North Star Borough there is a complex network of trails that cross over a multitude of properties. These properties are owned by various entities, including Borough Lands, individual property owners (both large and small), federal lands (including military lands and BLM lands), DNR lands, University Lands, Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands, mining claims and so on. These lands all have different management restrictions and are subject to various rights of ways and easements. It is very difficult for trails users to be knowledgeable of all the different rules, regulations and protocols for trail use. In addition to the general lack of knowledge about property permissions and restrictions, it is often very difficult to discern where jurisdictions change, because property boundaries are often not marked and a general trail mapping system showing this is not available. Added to this are issues involving responsibilities for trail damages, and liabilities for both trail users and property owners.

Project Description:

Phase I:
Initiate a comprehensive effort to map existing trails. While some may argue that mapping trails that are not legally established is ill advised, we adhere to the counter argument that the public is better served if they are informed which of the physically existing trails have legal public access and which do not. We proposed that the mapping effort be funded at $50 thousand per year until all trails are mapped.

Phase II:
We propose a program to mark existing public trails, and to mark property boundaries where trails cease to be public. This effort should be funded at a level of $50 thousand per year.

Phase III:
Initiate a public education effort to make the public aware of trail issues and sources of information so trail users and property owners know their rights and responsibilities. It is proposed that this be done through a series of public service media announcements and development of printed materials to be made widely available on the internet and in print. We are seeking an initial $50 thousand grant to initiate this project phase.
100-Mile Loop Trail-Cripple Creek / Rosie Creek Portion
Acquisition, Surveying, Realignment, Construction, and Signage

Project Cost Estimate: $150,000

Project Description:
This project includes portions of the trail along an 8-mile segment between the Parks Highway and the Tanana River near the Cripple Creek and Rosie Creek Subdivisions. It includes trail right-of-way acquisition, surveying, and trail re-alignment by constructing new trail to sustainable standards, and install trail signage.
Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail Hardening and Signage

Project Cost Estimate: $150,000

Project Description:

The Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail is a RS2477 Public R-O-W (aka RST#278). The project would consist of constructing a hardened trail on portions of the trail to sustainable trail standards in two phases, and include trail signage. Phase 1 is approximately 4-miles in length and would begin at the intersection with the Little Chena River, then continuing easterly to a point where it intersects with the Chena Lake Trail (aka RST#1598). Phase II is approximately 2.5-miles in length and would begin at the end of Phase I, then continue in an easterly direction to a point on a section line easement at Section 3, T15S, R3E, F.M.
Skyline Ridge Trail Hardening, Access Control, and Signage

Project Cost Estimate: $150,000

Project Description:
 Portions of the Skyline Ridge Trail within Skyline Ridge Park have deteriorated to an unsafe and unsustainable level due to a tremendous increase in ATV and highway vehicle use. This project would include rehabilitating damaged sections of the trail by hardening the trail to sustainable trail standards, controlling the main access points at the park boundaries to eliminate highway vehicle access, and install trail signage.
Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail Hardening, Drainage Control, New Bridge Installation, & Signage

Project Cost Estimate: $150,000

Project Description:
The Big Eldorado Creek Loop Trail is an RS2477 Public R-O-W (aka RST#1596). The project would concentrate on portions of 1,500-foot section of the trail located north of Goldstream Road, through an unnamed drainage. The trail has deteriorated to an unsafe and unsustainable level due to a tremendous increase in ATV use. This project would include rehabilitating damaged sections of the trail by hardening the trail to sustainable trail standards that would also include drainage control features, install a new bridge crossing, and install trail signage.
**Farmer's Mine Trail Extension**

*Acquisition, Surveying, Realignment, Construction, and Signage*

**Project Cost Estimate:** $60,000

**Project Description:** This project addresses a 1.4-mile trail segment, marked in green, between the Equinox Marathon Trail and the Tri-Con Road below Ester Dome. The project would reroute trail users around the Alder Chute, which is steep, eroded and closed to public access by at least one landowner. It includes trail right-of-way acquisition, surveying, and trail re-alignment by constructing new trail to sustainable standards, and installing trail signage.
**Project Cost Estimate:** $80,000

**Project Description:**
For several years the Big Eldorado Creek Trail and the old Tanana Valley Railroad Trail near Ballaine Road were connected by a neighborhood-built wooden bridge over Goldstream Creek. This project would install a new bridge across Goldstream Creek to reconnect the two trails. The project would include a low-maintenance, fabricated fiberglass bridge plus plywood approach ramps on either side.