

PORTAGE VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES 2/22/10

PRESENT:

Joanne Blackburn

Steve Mendive

Jennifer Mendive

Mark Butler FCC

John Quinley National Park Service (NPS)

Janet McCabe KM-TA NHA Corridor Communities Association
(Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Heritage Corridor Area)

APPROVAL OF ACTION PRIOR MEETING MINUTES –

Portage Valley Community Council (PVCC) President, Steve Mendive called the meeting to order.

Joanne Blackburn MOVED that the Minutes of 1/25/10 PVCC Meeting Minutes be accepted and approved. MOTION to APPROVE Minutes of PVCC Meeting as presented PASSED without objection.

Steve Mendive introduced the NPS and the KMTANHA representatives.

Janice McCabe reported that Congress created 49 Heritage areas to celebrate recreation opportunities. There are no designated land management controls authorized within these heritage areas. Limited technical engineering assistance may be allowed and there is money for restoration and preservation projects.

The federal money disbursement is 50/50. Fifty percent for federal contribution can be matched by in-kind, private, or local government.

Steve Mendive gave a brief historic overview of the PVCC area; that we are in the process of requesting comprehensive state assistances with our community problems. We have historically seen that the responsibility for maintaining historic areas has resided within the private sector exclusively. We are in the process of lifting the grey out of agency created problems like: where are the section lines actually located, are they the same locations as what are depicted on recorded surveys, dealing with legitimate needs post the 1964 earthquake destruction, including the properties, allegedly abandoned being returned to recorded owners by the state, needs for the community to have even primary access to residences recognized and supported by agencies; the loss of local control after being absorbed and abandoned by agencies who may not know the extent of the needs (drainage, access) that they adopted when they absorbed Portage Valley into the Municipality of Anchorage.

John Quinley presented a slide presentation on the Heritage Project.

He and Janet McCabe agreed this should be locally planned. The Park Service is in charge of this slice of the federal assistance because the USFS and the Park Service had similar mandates in this area and the Park Service was selected to handle this project. This project will NOT be acquiring property. The legislation was sponsored by US Senator, Lisa Murkowski. An initial first year budget for this is \$150,000 which can be matched by private, state, in-kind contributions. There is a great opportunity for the community. What has been considered a project before is a book, historic pavilions, highway signage, trails, biking, hiking etc.

There was a discussion of types of signage, interpretive, punctuation etc.

Joanne Blackburn stated she wanted to see a significant sign showing malemutes and that there need to be at least two signs and a kiosk. PVCC wants to control the content and style of any signage.

Janet McCabe said the project is in “scoping” right now.

Steve Mendive said he knows which cabins near the Seward Highway need to be safely reinforced for heritage.

John Quinley said the heritage management plan should be produced within three (3) years but heritage project funds are available prior (now) if matched. His office will be responsible for these funds. There ideally will

be a study of financial donors, feasible approved projects, ideas, commitments and groups.

The plan will be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Then projects can start.

There is an annual work plan.

Steve Mendive mentioned that DOT still hasn't approved the improvements for the Seward Highway from Ingram Creek to Girdwood. We are hoping to incorporate restroom facilities and other fundamental needs. We are working on the Turnagain Arm Plan for the Portage Valley with our needs, designs, priorities included. Joanne Blackburn stated that PVCC is working on the nuts and bolts while the Heritage federal plan is appears to be the frosting on a cake and we are still trying to get the ingredients to create a cake to frost.

Steve Mendive stated that Jennifer Johnston, Assemblyperson at the Municipality of Anchorage, is assisting in our smaller, doable engineering plans as a modest first step toward those goals.

John Quinley noted that the Heritage plan is not "a big infrastructure player" though he noted the federal piece has done a lot of waysides where they tell a story, a visitor center with help for enhancing such history story preservation. He concluded the slide presentation and noted there will be other opportunities to be included within the Heritage planning.

Janet McCabe handed out brochures and suggested that the PVCC design a work plan that accomplishes what PVCC wants. Prepare a list of desired potential projects, collect a list of personalities particularly knowledgeable of the history of Portage. Steve Mendive noted Mary Lou Redmond has some wonderful anecdotes that give an authentic, historic flavor of what life was like in Portage for decades pre- and post the earthquake.

Joanne Blackburn stated that she hoped the homesteaders would receive an interpretive sign annotation since their activities were real, historic, even federally allowed activities within this rural area.

Janet McCabe stated there will be a meeting in late winter.

PVCC members discussed potential projects: alder clearing (alder growth is new after the earthquake, there was none right after 1964), potential kite surfing demand is up, federal bird sanctuaries, and intense recreation which should include riding horses.

John Quinley stated the USFS pulled out of the Seward Ranger Heritage District so as to not duplicate NPS' effort.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve Mendive mentioned an article in the February 4, 2010 [Turnagain Times](#) about a snared coyote found eight feet from the brand new Blue Ice Trail which had died a very long and painful death found by a couple hiking with their dog. It was noted that this very expensive trail was not designed for this type of activity but was designed for people with young playful children walking with dogs who may also have been caught in such a snare as well. Jennifer Mendive said that people should not have to take a class in how to free their dogs from such snares before going for recreational walks. It was noted as an undesirable activity within our Municipality of Anchorage community council area. People live in Portage Valley and others should be aware that this is not an activity which is desired by most of the Portage Valley residents.

Joanne Blackburn moved a resolution to notify the trapping organization of this information. The resolution was APPROVED without objection. The Tony Knowles trail users would never tolerate this nor should they and neither should PVCC. The Blue Ice trail is wheel chair accessible. We should not have to carry wire cutters to free our children or our dogs from snares when we go for walks on these beautiful, expensive, federally funded improvements within our community. We will work toward our views being acknowledged by these agencies about this activity in Portage Valley Community Council. There should be places where you can go out without experiencing the grisly remains of such closely proximate trapping activity if you don't want to.

A resolution will be presented at the next PVCC meeting reiterating this. Joanne Blackburn also mentioned to Mark Butler that this is a public safety issue and she hoped he could mention this in that forum. Steve Mendive will write a responsive letter to the Turnagain Times. Further those who

have an interest in this activity whether for or against are invited to the next PVCC meeting.

Steve and Jennifer Mendive, and Joanne Blackburn discussed the needs of PVCC as follows:

- Highway Access
- Signage
- Residential needs
- Dealing with trapping and the shock of dealing with this carnage
- Horses
- Railroad Presentation of their plans for this Scenic Corridor
- Pollution
- [Hooligan fishing](#) at 82.2
- Identifying possible jobs created by implemented plans.

Next Portage Valley Community Meeting is set for March 22, Monday 2010 at the same location at 4:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Joanne Blackburn.