

Scenic Foothills Community Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Call to Order: President Alexander Monterrosa 7:00 p.m. December minutes approved. President introduced executive board.

Two public meetings coming up: Bartlett High School Turf in late January and Pioneer Drive Upgrade sometime in February.

Arnold L. Muldoon Park and Far North Bicentennial Park Improvements: Mark McCaffery, Park Planner, requested SFCC support for two Legislative Capital Improvement Project (CIP) requests from the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department and Anchorage Park Foundation.

- **Arnold L. Muldoon Park:** \$43,000 to replace fitness signs, fix and clean bollards, thin trees to improve visibility and minimize fire hazards, remove graffiti from benches, install lighting, repave bike path, install bear proof trash bins and remove weeds. Work to be completed by volunteer efforts and the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP). They aim to match this with a \$40,000 grant from the Rasmuson Foundation for a project total of \$83,000.
- **Far North Bicentennial Park:** \$500,000 for general improvements to the park; some improvements to be completed by the Youth Employment in Parks crews. General improvements include trail repairs to bridges, drainage, and surface material for hard trail areas. They also want to move a section of the Rover's Run trail onto the ridge to help avoid bears, increasing safety and reducing trail closures, with work to be done by YEP crews and contractor. They are asking for letters of support from the Council to help pursue legislative funding for park improvements in Arnold Muldoon Park and Far North Bicentennial Park.

Once funding is awarded, Parks & Recreation will engage the Community Council, and in the case of Arnold Muldoon, establish a volunteer committee to help channel the improvements identified in the 2011 Park Report Cards into an actual plan.

Harry Crawford asked for status update on Totem Fields; one field completed and has had grass for two years now; he wanted to know about plans for turning the completed field over to an organization like Boys & Girls Club for use and plans for completing the other two fields, which Scenic Foothills residents have been waiting for now for about 12 years. McCaffery said he hadn't been involved personally in that project but he believed someone in the Parks & Recreation office had and he would look into it.

Roger Shaw had a question about whether photovoltaic lighting would be economically feasible in Arnold L Muldoon Park. He also referenced very heavy damage by horses to Far North Bicentennial Park trails north of Basher Road that are not suitable for horses. He said recent destruction exceeded trail damage over the previous 20 years. Horses there are an issue to be addressed.

Michele Pamer reported that the light in the Chugach Foothills Park shelter (not the motion detector light) was not working.

Kathy Monterrosa asked about J.B. Gottstein Park land between Carr's Muldoon store and synagogue on Northern Lights Blvd.

Senator-elect Anna Fairclough: Sen.Anna.Fairclough@akleg.gov will be Vice Chairman of Alaska Senate Finance Committee, on Transportation and Resources committees and Chair of Legislative Budget and Audit Committee. Chief of staff Laura Pierra is on budget, Susan Wallen on the rest, Tally Teal is new constituent relations aide. Priorities: procurement bill; it didn't get voted on in Senate last time. Has been doing research on consumer protection issues, wants to know what is important to YOU. Anticipated revenue shortfall is \$300 Million, so capital improvement budget may be smaller. Capital budget has a surplus rolling forward.

Harry Crawford asked what the \$300 Million shortfall includes and whether there are offsets between operating and capital budgets. She will check. Fiscal matters will be challenging. Majority wants some changes in ACES tax structure to be competitive in global market. Very interested in affordable, sustainable energy. Gas pipeline discussion still has many variables. Roger Shaw said he would like to see energy discussions based on fully allocated costs, not subsidized cost, to prevent obfuscation by advocates. She said she could ask for it, but can't require it. Others must agree to it for the request to make a difference. For legislators to move mountains a lot of people have to get behind and push, she said. Government doesn't work if people aren't involved. Harry Crawford asked for real numbers on energy projects such as a Battle Creek diversion to put more water into Bradley Lake to power a third Bradley Lake unit to produce additional energy at a lower cost than a proposed Susitna Dam.

Assemblyman Paul Honeman said a placeholder to serve until the April Municipal Election would be appointed to fill Harriet Drummond's seat at the Tuesday Assembly meeting, as she has resigned to begin serving in the Alaska Legislature. The Assembly is working on First Quarter Budget Revisions. He is concerned that arson fires have spiked and they are months behind because there is only one overworked arson investigator where there used to be three. We've had five apartment fires in Muldoon in the past few months. Paul was able to add an item to the Municipality's Capital Improvement Projects list for \$3.2 Million to buy the frontage portion of the old Alaska Greenhouse property at Muldoon and DeBarr for a proposed Muldoon Town Square Park. The middle section is in limbo but he hopes to get the frontage purchased from the Municipality. There is windstorm damage from last fall's storms to the electrical grid and if the money doesn't come from somewhere it will come from the ratepayers. Disaster funding for ML&P cost is available from the state but the Municipality hasn't requested it. Chugach Electric is a co-op so it would not work like ML&P. There is a "spice" [illegal drug] problem again, with slightly reformulated drugs available for sale; they are calling it something else, but it's basically the same. The prosecutor who was working on this doesn't work for the Municipality of Anchorage anymore. Also, it's flu season and the Health Department is urging citizens to get immunized as soon as possible.

Michele Pamer asked how many police were on the street. By the end of the year we will be down due to retirement and other attrition. There is an early retirement incentive program that could mean anywhere from 18 to 60 officers would retire in the next year; 55 officers is an entire patrol shift. If retirements were toward the high end of the scale, we could be down a whole patrol shift, if we don't get on it. It could take two police academies just to catch up with where we are now. Honeman said you can't hire policemen on Friday and put them to work on Monday. It takes 5-6 months to get a policeman up to speed and 3-4 months for a fireman. And some trained candidates just don't last once they get in there and experience the reality of the job.

Roger Shaw on Capital Improvement Projects: Municipality of Anchorage hasn't sent out the next survey yet. We talk about needs for roads and parks, etc. and these requests go on the survey in the spring. The Municipality makes a capital budget and a capital plan and assigns projects to years over a six-year span. The last few months of the year the Assembly deals with it. With all the cuts in services, it is getting harder for us to get information, such as the budget survey and MOA response. We are also not getting feedback from Public Works. The survey will come to us in the next two or three months. It's time to start feeding information to Alex and Roger. These requests need to be available to the Municipality during the summer. The Municipality can increase a priority. Many things we've worked on over the years are now in the pipeline. The SFCC Executive Committee puts together CIP survey response from citizen input. Parks and roads were both prioritized and then the combined list was prioritized.

Anna Fairclough and Roger Shaw discussed ways of getting CIP survey information to more Scenic Foothills residents, especially those who do not have e-mail or web access, through legislative newsletters toward the end of the legislative session. Jerriane Lowther said SFCC has 500 e-mail addresses and 200 postal mail addresses and newsletter space could be used to help publicize a survey. Alex Monterrosa said the point of this is to be inclusive, to get CIP needs input from as many area residents as we can.

Lynda Billmyer, our Federation of Community Council (FCC) representative, is going off on a mission to help a family member. This is her last SFCC meeting for a few months. Mark Hill and Alex Monterrosa will fill in at FCC for her while she is away.

Kathleen Plunkett, our Anchorage School District (ASD) liaison, said that ASD is prepping for the budget, which is facing a \$20 Million shortfall. School Resource Officers [police officers] are "too important to go without but if you want them you will have to pay for them." Three priorities: restore PERS-TERS funding, general funding, reimbursement on bond funds and would like tax reimbursement, too. We have infrastructure we need to maintain and we have increasing costs for wage increases and benefits.

Kirk Huff, new JABER Community Planning Liaison, introduced himself and asked about issues involving the community and JABER. Past issues have included Fort Richardson fence and proposed artillery firing range into Snow Hawk Valley. East Anchorage District Plan has shown interest in putting a bicycle trail along the border between the military reservation and the community. Huff was encouraged to attend SFCC meetings and keep both sides informed, which has sometimes not happened in the past.

Pedro Kim, Bicycle Advocacy Intern for Alaska Center for Environment, Anchorage budget request for a Bike Skills Park and Pump Track for East Anchorage. He has a presentation on this. Alex Monterrosa asked for presentation at next month's SFCC meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:09 p.m.