

Minutes: Scenic Foothills Community Council – December 8, 2016

Call to Order: President Roger Shaw. November Minutes approved as presented.

Legislative updates were postponed to the next meeting.

New Legislative Information Office is in old Wells Fargo building on corner of Benson and Minnesota. Phone numbers for Senator Cathy Giessel and Representative Lance Pruitt are unchanged.

Assemblyman Pete Petersen:

Municipal budget passed; all department budgets reduced except police and IT. People Mover route changes in progress. Choice is now between two plans: 100% plan and 80% plan. Buses will run more frequently but riders will have further to walk. Sales tax on April ballot under consideration. Working on new taxi permit system.

Assemblyman Forrest Dunbar:

New police academy graduated 26 new officers; will be over 400 officers for the first time in a long time. Another academy starting. Municipal Light & Power is changing about 4,000 streetlights to LED; they will pay for themselves within a few years and will significantly reduce light pollution. We already have some along 36th Avenue. New lights are on a smart grid so we can dim or increase brightness, as needed. Not connected to Internet or power plant, so even if the smart grid was hacked, about all they could do is dim the lights.

Anchorage Police Department: Lt. Carson; 62 area responses to survey; takes 18 months to get officers trained and able to work. What you will see in next year is crime statistics will go up as enforcement increases, then it will come down as people are arrested or become afraid to commit crimes. When enforcement goes down, actual crime goes up but statistics go the other way. As enforcement increases, more will get caught and the statistics will go up before they go down. Officer initiated calls will go up and neighborhoods will become safer as they get the perpetrators off the street. The survey said we want more officers on the street late at night, foot patrols on trails, etc. Over 2,000 responses community wide. Our community really wants to get involved.

Officer Nora Morse said APD is working on tracking how the Police Department is responding to survey results. With new police academies, even with retirements, we will be getting close to the 448 that we should have for a city the size of Anchorage in 2017. Some Trail Watch program revitalization is also planned for 2017.

Homeless camp reporting has been revamped and is much easier to use; it will map the camps, can even use smartphone to “drop a pin” right on the campsite area on the map. Homeless shelters fill up so they are trying to get them into housing. Many of the camps have actually been abandoned; need to remove those camps before they get re-occupied. CAP team is getting homeless connected with services. Reporting: Home page at muni.org, or Anchorage Works on that home page, or get to it through the Anchorage Police Department page.

Muldoon Branch Library Branch Manager Jim Curran: renewed lease in Muldoon Mall, expanded hours.

Wayland Baptist University, Dr. Eric Ash: Came to Anchorage 1985; mission: to provide education for Alaskans. Main campus in Texas has been around 100 years; first school to integrate students. Private university on par with state-supported schools; highly accredited, non-profit, great community support. Works with Bean’s Cafe. We’re about people, not about numbers, mostly adult, non-traditional students. WBU is not a Bible college or seminary; it’s a private university. About half of our students would not be professing Christians. All kinds of classes. We have four churches that meet here on Sundays. Also houses a charter school, Anchorage STReAM Academy. Average enrollment 450; active students 1,000 in Anchorage but not all taking classes all the time.

Meeting adjourned; Holiday Social with cookies and cider afterwards. February 2 is our next SFCC meeting.