

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, October 10, 2018

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Ed Leach, Fred McLeary, Tammy Hanson, Kathleen Plunkett, Nate Graham, Tristan Walsh, Forrest Dunbar, Lisa McGuire, Pete Peterson, Ivy Spohnholz, Geran Tarr, Renea Miller, James Smallwood and sons, Magdalena Oliveros, Joshua Spring, Jennifer Burkson, Colette Thibodeaux, Dan Wright, Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chair Ed Leach with a word about smart shopping for school supplies. Wonder Park has a lot of children in need.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Berta Gardner – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - Nate Graham spoke on his behalf – Scofflaw legislation for people that have outstanding traffic fines over \$1000. Top people on that list have over 70 unpaid traffic tickets. This has not been well implemented. There are over \$6,000,000 citations in the state. Suspended licenses for over a certain amount or lien on the vehicle title or some form of consequences are being considered to try and get people off the road until these fines are paid.

Sen. Tom Begich – no report

Rep. Geran Tarr provided a constituent report with visual aid regarding public safety issues and a timeline. First-time drug offenders had some changes and APD would prefer to go after more of the dealers. Online reporting, Green Dot training are some of the things that have been offered. The question is, “Why are we still facing challenges?” Six-year Sullivan administration there were few police academies and that directly coincides with the uptake of crime. After six academies with Berkowitz it will take till 2019 to get back to where we were when Begich left office crime-wise in Anchorage. There were budget cuts at the state level that included Department of Law, which left many cases unprosecuted. We can’t make the public safer by cutting public safety. On the state trooper side, many troopers will soon be retiring. Geran led a meeting figuring out youth programming in our area – House District 19. Ending gun violence is a top priority when the kids were asked. Geran will host a constituent meeting on October 13th at Yes Bistro from 9 am to 10 am. Added at the state level there isn’t much they can do, but nuisance properties is one area they are looking at, but only with due process. MOA response on code enforcement and violations. Each time there is a call, whether police or service type call, they may begin to add those up for nuisance properties so they will begin incurring fines sooner. There is some money going in for enforcement. Dan Wright commented that the slate is wiped clean every year, so that portion of the nuisance laws should be changed.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – Reduction in police was happening the same time the opioid crisis was rising. Health care price transparency legislation passed and will begin February 1, 2019. Offices will have to list their billing codes and prices with description of the services. It requires offices to provide an estimate of services at the time of service. Alaskans spend about 38% more in health care costs, and we are not seeing better outcomes. Often health care issues cause poverty or hardships among many people. Constituency meeting will be Saturday, October 13th 10 am to 11:30 am at Immanuel Presbyterian. They ask for people to bring canned goods for the food pantry in lieu of charging for the facility. Every 2nd Saturday.

Andy Josephson – Tristan Walsh presented on his behalf. Spoke about the positions Rep Josephson holds. He has an office at Wells Fargo LIO for anyone that would like to talk to him.

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – Sale for MLP in December and closing will take till some time next year. Public meeting for moving bus barn – 2 finalist locations – preferred site is MOA land next to APD. 125 officers will be moving to the old LIO office downtown, allowing better use of their time in appearing for court cases. Have heard from many that Assembly is doing nothing about the homeless. Picked up 217 tons of garbage left in camps from this summer. Ordinance regarding setbacks near a stream passed. 50-foot setback on hillside. New ordinance 25-foot riparian zone, and 25-foot set back. Riparian zone allows people to do yard work type things. People with sheds, etc already built would have grandfather rights or could get a variance, if needed. Ernie Turner treatment out in Eklutna (16 beds) had a facility tour today.

Forrest Dunbar – Building up to the edge of a stream increases the run-off into streams. Alleva property has been purchased and a question about homelessness plans was brought up. Most recent homeless population found to be 300 less than the same time last year. OMB at MOA has budget information. A series of work sessions and public meetings will be held. October 18th at 11 am Utility meeting on MLP and then at noon budget discussion downtown at City Hall. Forrest had a map of all the capital projects that will be on the municipal bonds. P4 is an upgrade to parking facility at Dave Rose Park that will make it ADA accessible. P10 is Russian Jack park safety updates. Reka Drive is going to be the largest single project in Anchorage for improvements. It is in a state of failure and they are repairing the drain. Jeff Robanus can provide more information. He is with MOA waterworks. MLP customers paid for Beluga River Utility and Kathleen wanted to know if there will be any compensation for that.

Lisa McGuire brought up the opportunity to serve on Municipality Boards & Commissions and vacancies are on the MOA web site. Lisa wondered what kind of interaction the Assembly has with the Boards & Commissions. Forrest offered several examples.

3. School board – no report

4. Principal report, Alana Haider, Wonder Park. Tammy Hanson provided a report. The new Russian Jack Community Council area map is now hanging in the library.

5. FCC report James Smallwood – James would like RJCC to consider changing their meeting date. Climate Change Action Plan asked for input and open house was yesterday. Spoke to Felix about homelessness and housing before they put out an action plan which came out this week. October 16th there is a meeting at Central Lutheran Church and copies of the action plan will be available there. James hopes we can consider changing our meeting date in January. Kathleen suggested requesting that the FCC considers better planning so we have time to respond as issues come up. Russian Jack Community Council is not the only council that meets after FCC meets.

Kathleen Plunkett has joined the NeighborWorks Board, who have done several improvement projects around Russian Jack area. They have done what is called a windshield survey – assessing the neighborhood for housing and other issues currently going on. A resolution to support Kathleen Plunkett as a liaison for Russian Jack Community Council to NeighborWorks was moved by Fred McLeary, 2nd by Dan Wright. Motion carried.

Ed Leach gave a closing speech encouraging us to get involved in our community whether in boards and commissions, with our representatives or other entities.

Lisa McGuire reminded us we can post things on the Russian Jack Community Council Facebook page. She has business cards that we can pass out to neighbors to raise awareness of our council meetings. She will bring them to the next meeting.

Renea Miller is President of Kiwanis in Anchorage. They work with children and team up with other organizations that support children.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright