

Airport Heights Community Council Minutes

April 17, 2008

Chair Jon Spring convened the meeting at 7:01. Ed Brewer moved to approve the minutes of the March 2008 AHCC meeting. The motion was seconded and approved. The agenda was approved as presented.

Mike Webb, Principal of Airport Heights Elementary School, reported on school related activities. He noted that the Campfire program will occupy the school the entire summer. Mr. Webb also announced that Airport Heights Elementary School is part of the safe schools grant project. Consequently, all school walking routes will be reviewed and re-evaluated.

Parks Committee member Elaine Pratt reported that the AHCC was awarded a \$14,685 2008 Challenge Grant for Nichols park improvements, which will include seeding, tree planting, securing the boundaries with bollards and natural rock, and removing the baseball field fence. The Chair also announced that a second 2008 Challenge Grant was awarded to the AHCC for the Gomez Ice Rink Improvements in the amount of \$40,000.

No report was made by the Traffic Committee. However, Kevin Apgar asked to bring up an issue regarding the 16th Ave. traffic calming improvements. He stated that the new median proposed to be constructed west of Adler will hinder his ability (as well as the ability of his neighbors on Kobuk Circle) to access their back yards. He has a gate located on 16th Ave. which he uses to access his backyard. He parks his car on 16th Ave. and uses this gate to off-load firewood and other yard supplies. The new 16th Ave. street design will narrow the lane to 9 feet which will inhibit him from using the backyard gate as he has in the past. Mr. Apgar asked why property owners along Kobuk Circle were not notified of the improvements which affected their property. The Chair explained the public process included the formation of a traffic calming advisory committee. The project was also extensively discussed and ultimately approved at the December 20, 2007 AHCC meeting. Barbara Karl offered to meet with Mr. Apgar to discuss this issue.

SaraEllen Hutchison from the Alaska Center for the Environment discussed the proposed curbside recycling program which will be considered by the Municipal Assembly in the near future. Parts of the Airport Heights Community Council are included in the initial startup of the new program which will include the following components:

- Curbside pickup of a 96-gallon container for plastic bottles and bags, steel and aluminum cans, paper and newspaper; collection shall be twice monthly, with service beginning Fall 2008 for roughly 1/3 of Solid Waste Services customers and expanding over the next couple years; single stream (one may throw recyclables into the container without pre-sorting them)
- Recyclables will initially be sorted and processed
- Pay-as-you-throw garbage rates for curbside customers with weekly pickup; customers choose a 96, 64, or 32 gallon trash receptacle in addition to their 96-gallon recyclables container; 32-

gallon trash rate will be \$14.35 per month, two dollars cheaper than the current SWS rate without recycling!

- Automated refuse collection vehicles, already approved by the Assembly, will streamline the process
- Every school in the Anchorage School District will recycle
- More drop-off locations to benefit the entire community: a new full-service recycling center in Muldoon, one in Huffman, and the Anchorage Regional Landfill in Eagle River will be expanded to a full-service drop-off site
- Recycling bins in municipal buildings and other public spaces such as convention centers, performing arts venues, and sports centers, with additional locations such as the airport, museum, and parks to be added later
- Composting will reopen Summer 2008 and accept horse manure, yard waste, and selected other organics
- Outreach and education targeting schools, community groups, and municipal employees
- Community-wide services shall be funded by an \$8 increase in the tipping fee

Members expressed concern that this program could be a burden on the elderly who may not be able to handle the 96 gallon containers. There was also some concern regarding where the containers would be picked up. Many residents have alley garbage pick-up and would have difficulty placing containers in front of their house if this was a requirement of the program.

Dwayne Adams, a consultant from Land Design North, discussed the Russian Jack Golf Course Improvement project. The project was originally initiated by the 1st Tee organization which provides the opportunity for low-income youth to get involved in golfing programs. In order to support the program, improvements to the existing golf course at Russian Jack Park are necessary. The original plan called for the creation of an advanced executive type course with irrigation and a driving range. This would have required the clearing of approximately 25 acres of existing trees. In response to objections to the tree clearing, a new plan has been created which scales back the golf course improvements and limits clearing to about 7.5 acres, 5.7 acres of which are for the new driving range to be located at the northwest corner of the park. Mr. Adams explained that the driving range is needed in order to help finance the operation of the 1st tee program.

Mr. Adams mentioned that he has met with the Nordic Ski Association to find out how the proposed project would affect the use of the park by cross-country skiers. He discovered that the improvements may have a beneficial effect in that the driving range would permit a more efficient and smoother start area than the one which is currently used.

Members asked about the impact on water quality particularly the impact on the springs in the park which gives it its name. Mr. Adams said that water quality will be monitored as a part of the project. The impact will be further limited due to the fact that only tees and greens will be watered thus reducing the amount of fertilizer run-off.

Members discussed the importance of the program to kids in the area and expressed appreciation that the proposed improvements could co-exists with the Nordic Ski Trails.

Jim White, Planning and Development Chief for the Anchorage Fire Department discussed improvements to the Fire Training Center located on the west side of Airport Heights Road between Debarr Road and Penland Parkway. The \$21 million project will include new classroom and training building, additional stories to the existing training tower, renovation of the existing office and classroom building. The site plan includes Alaska appropriate landscaping, a new sidewalk along Airport Heights Road, and access changes which will utilize Merrill Field Road instead of Airport Heights Road. No changes will be made in the hours of operation. Only clean burning natural gas and LP gas will be used in the training center. Site work is expected to start July or August 2008 and be completed by September 2009. Mr. White also mentioned that the replacement of the existing fire station (the oldest in town) is included in the State Capital budget.

Representative Cisna discussed the final days of the legislative session. An additional \$30,000 was added from state funding for the Gomez Ice Rink improvements. She also mentioned that she has organized a community meeting for Saturday April 18th to discuss UMED issues and concerns.

Under community concerns, members discussed issues related to Tikishla Park safety. Of particular concern are the reported drug dealing activity that occurs in the park. There were also reports that the gate is not being locked at night. It was pointed out that the gate locking relies on neighborhood volunteers and more volunteers are needed. Members discussed the feasibility of setting up a web based surveillance camera to monitor activity in the park. It was suggested that money from the community patrol grant could be used to fund the camera setup.

Mark Fish moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.