

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, November 14, 2018

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Fred McLeary, Tammy Hanson, Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Kathy and Bob Skaats, Cris Eichenlaub, Renea Miller, James Smallwood, Magdalena Oliveros, Pete Peterson, Forrest Dunbar, Anne Ooms, Bernice Nisbett, Al Milspaugh, Joshua Spring, Nate Graham, Dan Wright, Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Chair Ed Leach.

1. Legislative reports

Sen. Berta Gardner – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - Nate Graham – organizational meetings underway. Legislation addressing scofflaw issues (unpaid traffic fines). Ideas to preserve PFD and focus on education, public safety, affordable health care.

Sen. Tom Begich – Joshua Spring - big issue seeing how the legislature shakes out. Future legislation – universal pre-pay education, updates on psychology, Black Angus Inn complaints are a local issue that needs to be addressed – liquor license may not be renewed through Fairview Community Council.

Rep. Geran Tarr – Magdalena Oliveros said that Geran is on her way from Homer and will provide her report when she arrives. Geran expressed that she is thankful for the support to serve another 2 years. She is excited to be seeing things implemented that they have been working on. Geran was in Homer for an Invasive Species event. They are formalizing the structure and jurisdiction for more rapid response actions. Kenai Resilience Coalition met and she was able to see those bills put into action. Third annual Restorative Justice summit will be coming up with school principals getting training for school district to implement Anchorage schools wide. Safer schools have a direct correlation with more successful students. November 30th is a public event at Mountain View library at 6 pm. She is looking for project ideas. December 15 is when the new budget comes out to see the priorities of the new administration. On the treatment side of the opioid crisis – hoping to do more to address that.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – Bernice Nisbett – there will be a constituent coffee at Immanuel Presbyterian this Saturday at 10 am. Task Force for Dyslexia, SB105 price transparency bill passed and goes into effect January 2019. Sherry Wright made a request to find out about lab work and various names that lab companies use for billing, as she had an issue with that. Hopefully the transparency laws will help with this also.

Rep. Andy Josephson – Asked how many present tonight live off Reka or E 20th and one precinct that overlays Russian Jack. Things he is working on currently: Audit requests; ensuring that retiree benefits / health care benefits are not diminished. Resources Committee- NPRAK growth in Willow area. Mental Health Trust called out for handling its own real estate – it is supposed to go through PFD. Main thing that is unclear if he will be in majority or minority. Could still be a coalition formed between Dems and Reps.

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – AK Municipal League meeting earlier tonight. There are 165 communities in AK in the league and they had 162 present for the convention.

Forrest Dunbar – working on budget amendments with possible passage November 20th. Restore Fire Dept. Tender 14 that supplies back-up water for East Anchorage. Many testified about more funding for homeless services and camp abatement. Mayor has proposed a 5% alcohol tax that will go directly to homeless abatement and drug treatment facilities. MLP sale still in works with no show for the first opportunity for public testimony.

Kathleen had 3 people contact her about break-ins in Russian Jack area. Other than reporting it, not sure what can be done. Russian Jack is part of three neighborhoods for one police beat. Forrest urges people to use the police report – that drives the recovering. There is another APD class graduating soon, which will mean additional cars for patrolling. Use of non-police accountability methods like the red-light cameras was mentioned. There was a lot of public outcry over this when they had it previously. It was suggested that having violator's face posted publicly might be more effective than fines. Capturing pictures of those violations might prove useful in civil court case. A question if there is an 8 million shortfall in retirement and question about retiree health care was asked. Will have to check with Finance on that issue. They are trying to find ways to minimize health care costs. Everyone was encouraged to take pictures of personal items, take videos, write down serial numbers, and if crime happens, report it!

Kathleen asked about IT and Security, stating that zip drives provide an easy way to introduce viruses into an organization.

3. School board report - Alisha Hilde -no report

4. Principal report Tammy Hanson – Wonder Park has an attendance problem (lowest in school district). Children who attend are within walking distance of the school. Believe sickness is the biggest current problem. Family school services do try to contact families to find out what is going on. After 10 days they are supposed to drop them from the rolls of the school. PTA President of Williwaw has done a “walking bus” in their area to organize pods of people walking. These are neighbors that can stop by and walk with other children in the neighborhood to school together. Another way to create community and keep kids safe.

5. FCC report - James Smallwood had the conversation about information coming in late and sending a letter to Assembly to provide time for responses and receive information in a timely manner. He was encouraged with that effort that is underway.

James also spoke on behalf of the Assembly – 430 police officers. We are supposed to have 600 police officers. Their presence has been pretty good, but not so great in Russian Jack neighborhood. Mountain View has 2 different police beats. The issue of responding cuts into patrolling. Number of shootings is up with 5-6 police cars responding. Would be great to have the police chief come to our next council meeting (CAP). Prior APD officer spoke about what happens when we have an increase of officers – you also have more reports, more records, and a need for evidence people to provide support to the work of the officers. On community patrol they are working toward returning those efforts so that they get to know one another. The public has to keep an eye out and report in order to get anything done. Mayor also brought up budget about sale of MLP not being part of the budget. Assembly had a review about APD Headquarters moving downtown. ASD Bond package for next year.

6. NeighborWorks Alaska Community Development – Jay Stange (also Spenard Community Council President) mostly got involved because of speeders on his street. Got shot down at his first meeting, so returned with reinforcements. Goal is a neighborhood with less crime, affordable housing, more of a neighborhood feel. There's a lot of diversity in Spenard and yet there's a sense that they have each other's back. He was a school teacher for many years. Is Community Development Director and is working with several community councils. Transitioning into homes from homelessness. Partnered with Saint Anthony's Park, working with Williwaw Elementary to create a community garden to help make the neighborhood more resilient. Kathleen Plunkett is also our liaison with NeighborWorks. International Night is tomorrow night from 5 – 7 p m at Williwaw Elementary (1200 San Antonio) - he is here to help make our dreams come true and eliminate our nightmares. Paint the Town has been very successful in Russian Jack.

Housing for low income – Sunset/Totem trailer park is an example. Much of that park is empty. Can NeighborWorks help low income buy trailers to move into there? Crime tends to go down with more people present. For many it is the most affordable housing available. Creative financing, low interest bonds are some of the things needed to help people get into housing. Small homes built within subdivided lots is another idea. R-3 with business on the bottom and residential built up top is another method. Mixed use is another term for that type of building.

Discussion of what day we have our meetings – will be discussed in January.

7. Nominations for 2019 officers

President – Ed Leach

Vice President – Fred McLeary

Secretary – Sherry Wright

Treasurer – Kendra Kloster

FCC Delegate – James Smallwood

Trustee – Kathleen Plunkett

8. December meeting is potluck to send off legislators – please bring something to share.

Ed closed with a short history of American Medical insurance. 90% of the medical care we receive today wasn't available in 1950. Up until the late 1800s there was 149 hospitals in the US. You went there to die. If you were sick, the doctor came to your house, but because of increased medical care people are surviving. Hospitals were sponsored by churches, primarily so they could administer end of life counseling. There is a cost to running hospitals, so you need to keep the beds occupied to keep them running. Insurance plans originally were pre-paid. In the 1930s Blue Shield came into place with a policy to see the doctor so many times per year. During WWII, 8 million men went to war. Wage and price controls meant companies couldn't recruit, so they began to offer benefits (health insurance). This continued through the 1950s. The trouble with the advances is they become more expensive. Another thing that drives up costs is instead of working through common colds, many use their health care, increasing costs for everyone. Should do away with coverage for everything. For example, your car insurance doesn't pay for an oil change. Pharmaceuticals, doctors, insurance, etc all drive up the prices.

Publishing prices is a start, so we can be better informed consumers of services. We also need to get a handle on malpractice (in some states, it's 25% of health care costs).

Al Milspaugh, FCC Outreach Coordinator, offered assistance with Russian Jack outreach efforts. One of the efforts is getting youth involved. His phone number 333-6996 or email prideplace@aol.com.

Check with Renea if you are interested in being a Fur Rondy Keystone cop.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright