

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, April 10, 2019

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Fred McLeary, Kendra & Kaia Kloster, Pete Peterson, James Smallwood, Tom Begich, Lisa & Frank McGuire, Michelle Scaman, Curt Beach, Tammy Hanson, Forrest Dunbar, Renea Miller, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Vice President Fred McLeary.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski (David) – just had a family emergency come up. Finance committee is in charge of reviewing the budget. Had an important meeting about Medicaid funding cuts, 150 million in cuts (as opposed to 700 million) but what they want to cut is troubling. Had public testimony about therapeutic courts, the great work they are doing and helping rehabilitate drug and alcohol addicts.

James Smallwood – cuts to dental prevention – does that include Denali Kids Care also? David didn't know the answer and will research and get back to him.

Sen. Tom Begich – house is still on the floor with about 85 amendments to the budget. Budget subcommittee is still working on closeouts. Both bodies pretty much rejected the Governor's budget and are working from last year's budget. SB 32 and SB35 are some of the crime bills moving forward. 1.6 billion in cuts is tough. Modifying the per barrel tax credits could create some new revenues, but there doesn't seem to be interest in that. We have to work from a place of respect. Senate H&SS committee proposed eliminating senior benefit program. An analysis of how these cuts will affect people is needed. Otherwise, you are just creating another problem. Reducing government support programs ends up costing the state more money in the long run. He predicts by mid-May both bodies will come to some agreement on budget that the governor may veto. Insurance companies may cut you off from home insurance if you have been robbed more than once – Tom is working on a bill that would address that injustice. Looking at ways to inflation proof the permanent fund.

James Smallwood – Asked if the Medicare information office would also be cut? Medicare funding would most likely still be retained as it is federally funded. Pretty sure the elimination of senior benefit funding went into the foot locker.

Lisa McGuire stated that the MIO office is staffed by state employees, but Tom responded that it may be funded by federal receipts.

Pete Peterson asked about the SB 32 and SB 35 for more information. Tom responded that they are repealing some parts of SB 91 and elements that were poorly thought out.

Rep. Geran Tarr - Glad to briefly call in – they are working on amendment 64 on operating budget right now. Trying to have a reasonable budget. Rejected the cut David just spoke about. Proposed dental cuts only affects adults, not children. Removing preventive leaves only for the more expensive emergency treatments. They are working hard to have accountability for state

services and have a realistic budget. Try to check the facts as there is much rhetoric out there. Thanks to Dan for a report on legislators in New York working on federal funding to process rape kits.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (Ted Madsen) - 200 million in cuts from last year's budget are likely. Ivy is working on a couple of bills 1) Disclosure of the danger of opioids addiction bill and 2) Sharks 3 – that deals with private sector loans for medical payments.

Fred McLeary – needs the teleconference number. Ted didn't realize it wasn't on there and remedied the situation.

Rep. Andy Josephson – no report

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – Had cataract surgery in both eyes a week ago, so that's the reason for the shades. Looking for volunteers for the Board of Equalization – they help with property tax assessment appeals. Twice as many are appealing this year because of the November earthquake. A month to 6 weeks is the time frame needed for volunteers. Last night an ordinance to deregulate taxicabs in Anchorage was postponed indefinitely. We need to be able to inspect taxis, do background checks, insurance, etc. Network companies are pretty free reign, and we need some control on this type of transportation. Legislation dealing with smoking to raise from 19 to 21 age and law to ban smoking in public parks near playgrounds (20 feet away rule). Smoking at 21 would end up laying off many younger people as they wouldn't be able to sell cigarettes either. FEMA extended the deadline 1-855-445-7131. Not many people are coming in, may be closing some of those offices. Since the snow is melting people are finding damage that they didn't know they had. Plastic bag ban won't go into effect until mid-September. New estimate of cost to modernize the Anchorage port 1.9 billion (double the original number). Trying to find ways to lower that – as passing on those costs will increase the prices of everything significantly and may reduce things being shipped through Anchorage. Assembly is spending \$100,000 to hire a consultant to find out how to reduce costs. There has been quite a bit of money wasted on port costs and building – legal fees are part of that. Damages are in the hundreds of millions, so the city is fighting that. The Alcohol tax failed but was closer to passing than it has been in the past. Ordinance to ban flame retardant materials that affect children and firefighters (cancer rates are through the roof) passed. Ordinance that would not allow trapping within 75 yards of established trails in Anchorage has been introduced. Pete sees it as a public safety issue.

Sherry Wright asked how much trapping goes on in the Municipality of Anchorage. Pete and Forrest responded that Chugach State Park, Girdwood and Eagle River are all included in MOA. Sherry asked about public use trails and what will qualify. They are still trying to figure out a definition for public use trail.

Kendra asked about Vet Village – Ric Davidge projects. Ric may have property that will work that may help address some of the homeless vets – last winter out of 1000 homeless there were only about 6 homeless vets. There are other funds that would keep this operational, but finding the right location seems to be the hurdle. Freeing up space from vets will allow others the option of using facilities.

Anne Ooms – spoke about the amount of pot being smoked at a home near the elementary schools which seems to be growing. In apartments it can come up through the registers. She raised the question about how much is too much. Wondered if there can be some limit by a house that may be producing a Cheech and Chong smokey problem. There is an on-sight consumption discussion taking place tomorrow with CEDC. Discussion of edibles may be what is on the agenda for tomorrow. Can't consume anywhere as a tourist, which the MOA is concerned about affecting Anchorage tourism.

Lisa McGuire - Roundabouts recently put in make a really, tight turn in the winter. If a person wanted to plant something in that roundabout – what is the process? There are not any known regulations on this.

Renea Miller – at a roundabout near one of her friends, there was a sign explaining how to maneuver a round about. Anne Oom said that we may just need some of the small yellow diamond directional signs. Another roundabout on Klevin has a fence that obstructs vision as you go around it. Renea asked if there were rounded mirrors that could be put on the fence.

Forrest Dunbar – there is already a 10-foot smoking ban, so the assembly just extended that to 20 feet. There were several of the bonds that did pass. Proposition 11 did pass. Will help the Assembly avoid the excessive costs on leasing property or lease to own properties.

Frank – asked about allocation of bonds – are those bonds limited to the language on the ballot? Forrest said there is a bit of wiggle room if a road project for example comes in under and another one higher – it has to be within the bounds of the bond. Like a road project would go for another road project.

3. School board report – Elisa Snelling (snelling_elisa@asdk12.org) or Alisha Hilde (hilde_alisha@asdk12.org) – no report

4. Principal report - Alana Haider, Wonder Park – provided by Tammy Hanson – additional Special Education pre-school coming to Wonder Park. They are for 3 to 5 year olds. Kindergarten round up is this Thursday. Multi-cultural night will be held April 24th 5:30 – 7:30. Several dance groups will be presenting. Anne Ooms spoke about the Ad hoc recess committee – extension of school day or pull from various other activities to allow a more relaxed lunch and/or recess time for children.

5. FCC report - James Smallwood – Airport runway renewal started April 1. They are going to use engine thrust techniques to try and reduce some of the noise.

6. Little Free Libraries Project – Amie Collins There is one on 6th and Lane. Amie wasn't in attendance, so Fred read parts of the email that was sent. Best Beginnings would love our community support. Best Beginnings plans to implement Little Free Libraries in over 50 parks, four of which are in the Russian Jack area. Dave Rose, Kanchee, San Antonio, and Russian Jack Springs parks have been listed as new homes to a little free library in the summer of 2020. They have asked for our support. There is already one on Williwaw that would be within blocks of San Antonio. They are geared for children under the age of five. Frank McGuire made a motion to support as proposed. James Smallwood 2nd. All were in favor.

7. JBER Report – Curt Beach reported that the Boniface in-bound traffic gate will be closed in May and June – inbound traffic will share the outgoing lanes during construction, so be prepared for slower entry time. Muldoon gate will be closed July – September for construction. Updates will be provided on the JBER Facebook page. 551-8996 is Curt’s number if anyone has questions.

Fred McLeary asked about the north/south runway expansion on JBER. Curt didn’t have information on that but can send Fred an email.

8. Community Council Picnic – Kendra suggested we do a park clean up again this year and partner with Anchorage Park Foundation (they provided food last year). Kendra will follow up with Beth again. We will tap into the groups that have been helping in the Russian Jack Springs Park planning meetings. Kendra will get ahold of Beth to discuss a weekend in June. We also talked about participating in the Spring Clean up that occurs April 27 – May 4th. It was suggested that we use the Facebook page to publicize and recruit volunteers.

9. Disaster kits are still available and ready for sale. A suggestion to let other Community Councils know they are available was made that might generate some interest. Another idea was to have a table at the Muldoon market to sell them. Kendra will check on a free table for Fred. Items making up the kits are available for sale and the extra \$\$ in the kit’s price is to raise funds for Russian Jack Community Council.

10. Lisa McGuire said there are some rowdy homeless camps in Russian Jack Springs Park. As you are using the park, please get the GPS and report these camps on the Muni.org web page.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright