

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, June 12, 2019

At the Redemption Church

Present: Kathleen Plunkett, Fred McLeary, Tammy Hanson, Kathi-Jo and Bob Skaats, Ed Leach, Kendra Kloster, Ted Madsen, Stephanie Andrew, Lisa McGuire, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chair Ed Leach.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - Voted for operating budget which has 170 million in cuts. Capital budget was in the house today, constitutional reserve vote failed. Crime bill passed with significant roll back of SB 91. Substance abuse and mental health are significant pieces that need to be dealt with. Session ends Friday. There will be another special session with the Governor determining when and where that will be.

Sen. Tom Begich (Loki Tobin) – first council meeting and she has been on the job for a month. Focus was to pass the operating budget. PFD is the second priority and protect the dividend constitutionally.

Rep. Geran Tarr - High priority for substance abuse funding. Allowing prisoner's to be sent out of state ends up bringing gangs to Alaska that weren't here previously. Geran Tarr has been hands on while she has been in office regarding the homeless camps, starting with Davis Park. Resident was not getting any response although had been calling. Remaining homeless were choosing not to be housed due to substance abuse or distribution of stolen goods. They spent time mapping homeless camps – took out over 80 bags of trash, used needles. This is what opened her eyes to the problem. Park cleanups have been effective to cut down on the amount of trash to clean up. There is no jurisdiction at the state level on municipal parks. API is functioning at capacity, so that is part of the problem. Formal communications from officials begin a process, but usually isn't sent to the media which ends up controversial. Preference is collaboration rather than confrontation. Geran signed the letter but would not have if she knew what was going to happen with it. Request to remove camps in a timely manner. The conversation changes dramatically if a child steps on a used needle. There have been confrontations of a person wielding a machete to protect stolen goods in a camp. Prefer productive communications. Criminals shouldn't have more rights to use the parks than tax paying citizens. Concern of citizens put into dangerous situations trying to do clean up in the parks.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz - House finished with capital budget. Few things of interest to Anchorage \$50,000 for community patrols; tough on crime bill that will cost over \$50 million per year without addressing any of the root causes. Over 80% of prisoners in AK have a substance abuse problem. Addiction treatment must be addressed. Put 10 million to be distributed statewide to match local and private contributions for substance abuse treatment. There is still a fiscal gap and will use constitutional savings reserve to pay for the gap. Probably a restructuring of the PFD split / calculations will be addressed in the next special session. Looking into AHFC for

funding for homeless housing. Karluk Manor is an example of a place that people don't have to get sober to have housing. United Way also has a project to scatter housing throughout the city. On site social services are necessary – job counseling, etc.

Kathleen asked about the homeless issue – it is getting a lot worse in our area. There was a letter requesting the MOA to address the issue. Ivy didn't sign it because of the tone of the letter. Bill responded to the question as he signed it. There are some people in our parks that are criminals and sex offenders, others will need to be addressed with substance abuse treatment and housing. Bill is working with someone and the problem is all over Anchorage.

Lisa McGuire – asked about when the session ends and when the next session begins. There are logistical challenges to having a special session outside of Juneau, even though there is discussion about it.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – coaching little league.

Forrest Dunbar - at a wedding out of state.

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

4. Principal report – Tammy Hanson – 50th Anniversary of Wonder Park next year and a school-wide enrichment program will be added. School will begin August 22nd.

5. FCC report - James Smallwood – no report

6. Uncle Herbs (pot shop at 360 Boniface Parkway) – Lloyd & Aaron Stiassny. He has a goal of opening a store in Homer and has another store in Anchorage on Arctic Spur Road. This is a very well-regulated industry. He said there are a lot of customers at their Arctic shop from the Russian Jack area and they deserve a local shop. This will provide 15-20 jobs to the community. Security is one of the issues Lloyd checked out when looking into this industry. He said this will provide revenue to the state. Hours for the shop are 9 am to 11 pm at Arctic Spur Road. They haven't decided on hours at the Boniface location. Would like to have the shop open this fall. He brought an MOU and they held a community meeting. Sherry Wright moved to adopt the MOU for Uncle Herbs for the purpose of a vote. Fred McLeary 2nd. Discussion on the motion included examples of good and bad knowledge of users. 8 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstain. Motion carried.

Geran Tarr offered a suggestion that a shop in Mountain View shares their tips with the Boys & Girls Club and doing something like that may go a long way to building community support.

7. Hi-Greenery (pot shop at 1410 Rudakof Drive) – withdrew their application.

8. Summer picnic will begin at the park at 9 am to 1 pm. Will meet at Polar Bear Park and Anchorage Parks Foundation will bring bags, gloves and food for those that volunteer and help.

Sherry will send an email to Van to send out a reminder to the RJ Planning Committee about the park clean up. Sen Bill Wiechowski will pick up drinks and cookies. Bring leather gloves.

Next meeting will be in September at Wonder Park.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright