

NECC

Northeast Community Council

General Meeting Minutes September 19, 2019

Call to order: 7:03

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of the Board

- **Board members present:** T'Shalla Baker, Rachel Boudreau, Charles England, Donna Mears, Selina Metoyer, Bob Reupke (FCC delegate), Liz Snyder
- **Board members absent:** Carla McConnell, Stu Grenier, Radhika Krishna

Approval of September meeting agenda: Approved

Executive report:

- Requesting new folks to join committees -- members are invited to the next executive committee meeting, Oct. 4
- The board is working to broaden participation by our council members

Community concerns:

- Community member: Concerned about the health of our community. Speaker's concern is about drug dealers in our communities, and the many places they can hang out. Today they are moving into homes right next door. The warning signs are in his neighborhood; windows blocked out; lots of traffic; the smell; foot traffic increasing. In his neighborhood they developed a neighborhood watch. Have installed 24 hour surveillance. His home has been vandalized, and trash is thrown in his yard. There are symptoms, and there are warning signs. He has reached his limit. How does he protect his family? He is here for ideas and solutions.
 - APD is present to speak in response. They will respond in full later on the agenda under Business.
 - Briefly: Keep calling, so a paper trail can be created. They are documenting the vehicles that are there. Once they identify the people that are there, they can contact them, and check on probation issues. Homeowner is doing the right thing.
 - Community member (Kyle Stevens): He's put up no trespassing signs.

Legislative reports:

- **Senator Bill Wielechowski:**

- What happened with crime is we saw a significant cut to our police force 7-8 years ago; also saw cuts to the courts and support services. This created a perfect storm. But this year, vehicle thefts are down 50%. Thank you to the APD.
 - As for the Pioneer Home: One thing they're trying to do is move API patients into the first floor -- but there are noise issues, and possibly safety issues. Working with DHSS to address these concerns. Also very concerned about the senior housing rate hikes. Working on addressing this. If some rates have to go up, it needs to happen at a rate that can be handled by the residents.
 - Other recent question: What's happening with the Senator Birch replacement? The Governor appointed Laddie Shaw. The vote today (by Senate Republicans) ended up with Shaw's appointment being rejected. Likely due to his support of a full PFD. Governor has 10 more days to make another nomination. They will be called back to session regarding the PFD very soon.
- **Senator Kathy Geissel:** Not present
 - **Representative Spohnholz:**
 - This is typically a slow time of year for us, so we use this time to work on new legislation.
 - Working on increasing access to telehealth in rural Alaska.
 - Working on an opioid risk disclosure bill. Pharmacies have manufactured an epidemic, and now want pharmacies and physicians to provide adequate info on risks and alternatives.
 - Also want to create a management board for API in law. Used to be a board, but it wasn't in law, and when it was disbanded the quality of care and management fell.
 - Those with dementia were being sent to API, but were receiving the care that they needed. Working to create a secure ward and provide high quality care.
 - There was a recent news report regarding the inadequate availability of public defenders in rural Alaska. We have a shortage in public defenders. Some have 200+ cases on their workload. The number one person should have for a 60 hour work week is 59 cases. To meet that standard, we'd need 75 more defenders in order to make sure those arrested are prosecuted in a timely manner. If we're serious about making Alaska a safer place, we need a functioning court system.
 - Question: Are there funds to hire them? Or are there not enough qualified people? Answer: We'd have the money if we got what we deserve through our oil wealth. We have to have the political will to get it done.
 - Question: When the AG was here, didn't he promise money to bush communities? Answer: The money went toward providing law enforcement in communities that don't have them.

- Additional questions can be asked in the conference room.
- **Representative Gabrielle LeDoux:**
 - Wants to clarify what's wrong with the state's handling of the Pioneer homes. It was originally said that no one would be turned out. But there was a catch. Turns out you have to be broke to qualify for aid to stay in the Pioneer Home. Couples seem to be at less risk. But when one person lives there because they need care, and another member is capable of living on their own, they are being told they have to be in financial distress to be able to stay there. Is hoping that the outcry over this is great enough that the legislation that has been drafted to keep this from happening is passed.
 - Also remains concerned about our crime rates.
 - Concerned about roads and driver safety. Her office called the municipal department regarding community concerns about speeding on 6th avenue. Her office is working with Spohnholz and Wielechowski, Peterson, Dunbar to get the political push to make sure our roads end up at the top of the list.
 - Question: So it's true that couples at the Pioneer Home have been told to get a divorce so they can avoid having to spend down their assets in order to stay there. But this has been a problem for a long time. Answer: Yes, but it's gotten worse as the rates have gone up.
 - Question: Has the CIP Committee passed a resolution regarding 6th avenue? Answer: No. What audience should we target? Community member: A resolution could be a great place to start. Rachel B: We do know that the fire department is not in favor of speed bumps or other traffic calming measures. Community member: Would encourage a resolution to be passed. LaDeaux: CIP list may not be a speedy way to address this. Dunbar: Which side of the street is the concern? LeDeux: The east side. But a child has been injured on the other side. Dunbar: Agree that a resolution is a good idea, and he and Peterson can bring this to the Assembly. LeDeux: What would the fire department support? Dunbar: A flashing light; but there are already is one. That road was built too straight. Unlikely that the road will be redesigned. Charles: Putting in chokers has been used before. Kyle: Yes, I will write the resolution.
 - Question: Lisa added that folks are concerned about the area in front of Muldoon Elementary. Pauline: It was scary several years ago, but it's greatly improved. Yet, racing up and down 6th remains a major concern, as well as drug dealing.
- **Representative Lance Pruitt:** Arrived late. Remained following meeting adjournment to discuss any concerns shared by community members.

Assembly report:

- **Assemblymen Peterson and Dunbar** (presenting together):

- The traffic department comes out with a list every year of streets that have been seeking speed humps. They use a scoring scheme to prioritize, and they will check in on this.
- Peterson: The plastic bag ban went into effect in an effort to protect the environment and our fish.
- Dunbar: Concerned about the Governor's veto of school bond debt reimbursement (this is old debt, not new debt). Now having to have a conversation about raising property taxes to pay for this. The school district is looking for other potential funds. Will share additional information as it becomes available. This is debt that we owe; this is not new debt.
- Peterson: We passed a cellphone ban in school zones. Children have been hit by people on their phones. During enforced hours (all day, except for some streets like Minnesota and A Street -- there only during the flashing lights hours), you can't use a handheld phone in a school zone; you can pull over to use your phone; and you can call 911.
- Dunbar: Has a proposal put forth to expand the Assembly to 12 members (currently 11 members). Right now, downtown only has one representative (while everyone else has two). This means they don't have a back up if their Assemblyman isn't available.
- Peterson: On Aug. 20 we passed a law to change the age to 21 to buy tobacco products in Anchorage. They'll also be looking at taxing vaping products. Folks used to be opposed to a tax, because it was viewed as a smoking cessation device. We now know that this is not true.
 - Community member: One vaping pod is worth one pack of cigarettes.
 - Spohnholz question: does the new law make vaping age minimum 21 years as well. Answer: Yes.
- Dunbar: We purchased a new APD headquarters, and several weeks ago we had our first grand opening for the public. From now on, if you need to speak with APD, you will go to the new location downtown. The old location is now being transitioned to evidence storage. The new place lets detectives walk right across the street to testify.
- Peterson: We're looking at whether we're going to start a stormwater utility.
- Community question: Is the 10 cent gas tax going to decreasing the property tax like it's supposed to? Or is it going to the general fund. Answer: Yes, it offsets property taxes.

Mayor's office: Not present

School Board:

- **Margo Belamy** (newest member of the school board):

- Has the great pleasure to be representing at the NECC and the FCC. Her contact info is 907-903-9820. Had a relatively smooth opening to the school year.
- They've moved their meetings to the first and third Tuesdays. Yes, it conflicts with the Assembly, because they switched, too. They will work on that.
- There are two future opps: 1. Working on strategic planning: Want to know from the community what they want educational delivery to look like over the next 5-10 years. 2. Working on the budget planning process. They need volunteers, so please let her know. They need volunteers for everything.
- Communicating with ASD is really easy -- you can text, tweet. Download the app (ASD app).
- In September they had lots to celebrate: it is attendance awareness month, and national preparedness month; soon they will have walk to school day.
 - Question (Bob R.): What is total attendance this year? Answer: about 40,000.
- PEAK scores come out tomorrow (9/20)

JBER Public Affairs (not Community Planning, as listed on the agenda):

- **Erin Russel** (represents Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force)
 - Safety of Life: Number one priority is to protect the life and safety of surrounding areas. (Displayed a map where live rounds and stray bullets can end up due to training activities.)
 - While public safety is a major priority, they also must consider lost man hours due to unauthorized people wandering into unauthorized areas.
 - JBER is still open: Public can access many areas of JBER. (Displayed a map showing where it is safe to recreate.) The online tool iSportsman can help people identify where they can and cannot recreate. Can also use the tool to sign up for a recreational access permit.

Muldoon Public Library:

- **Jim Curran**
 - Apologized for not attending meetings over the summer. It's been very busy over at the library. They have lost an intern; a library assistant got a promotion out in Eagle River. It was just him and one other for a while. But now have a new library assistant; she also speaks German. Also hired another staff person, who started as a Muldoon Library volunteer when he was 12.
 - 9/21: International Spin in Public Day: They will have spinners and weavers demonstrating at the library.
 - Storytimes return next month, along with other activities for teens and kids.
 - Will be hosting the DHSS flu clinic this Fall.

- All the public libraries are now doing passport services (Tuesdays 3-6 at Muldoon).
- The big news is that they renewed their lease. They will be in the same location for another 5 years. Doing some painting; re-keying some rooms; improving some doorways; some new entryway flooring to replace the worn carpet; adding electrical outlets.
- Today is Talk Like a Pirate Day. Pirate pub crawl is this Saturday (9/21).

FCC Report, Bob Reupke:

- 38 community councils; added Glenn Alps
- Mark Butler is working on getting liability insurance for all member community councils
- There will be public testimony this Friday on the 8th floor at the Mayor's Office
 - The Mayor is upset about the school debt reimbursement issue (see Assembly report above)
- Shared a fact sheet on cell phone use in school zones.
- You can have a porch with 3 sides.
- There is an ordinance regarding the protection of existing cottonwood trees
- Vision Zero work is ongoing; contact Bob for more information.
- Received information regarding the division of a lot at the intersection of 3rd Ave and Muldoon: They want to split the lot. William Schneider has asked to split the lot.

Business:

New Business:

- **APD Community Patrol (Officer Kendall and Officer Jackson -- from the Community Action Police (CAP))**
 - Re: new headquarters: Working to be more efficient and effective. If you needed to make a report, you had to wait for an officer to come out of the field. Now, there is a dedicated desk with a sworn officer to take your report.
 - At the beginning of the year, we realigned our Community Patrol beat to match up to the community councils; officers have 4 month rotations (swing shift, mid-shift, day-shift); we get 7 day coverage by two officers. The CAP team is focused on camp abatements, short term drug investigations, crime prevention, community councils.
 - In reference to the 6th avenue speeding issue: Officer Jackson will follow up with the municipality.
 - Re: NIXLE: It's how the APD shares community information; as well as social media platforms.
 - You can go to communitycrimemap.com to see what happens in your neighborhood over a 24 hour period.
 - Re: the homicide near Muldoon last week: They've recently posted a notification that the camps have to move. They have 10 days to move. Then Parks and Rec

will come in and clear out things that make it easy to hide, i.e. hydroaxing (Boston and Debarr). Hydroaxing involves removing brush, and combing the grass to collect needles and other material left behind.

- Re: community resident concern regarding drug activity in his neighborhood
 - No record of calls over the past year (individuals get 8 qualifying calls each year, before the person who is being reported starts getting fined).
 - Last year, there were 7 calls.
- Question: Who foots the bill for calls regarding gunshots? Answer: The person that is the subject of the call -- but only if they can be identified.
- Question: Does the qualifying call limit apply to 311 calls? Answer: No.
- Question: Who sets the limit of 8? Answer: It's in Anchorage Municipal Code
- With Fall coming, it's easier to see the location of homeless camps. You can report homeless camps online.
 - Question (Rachel B.): What if the camps just return? Answer: Have to report it again.
- Question: Can you expand on the homicide that occurred near Fred Meyer? Answer: No. Because it's an open investigation.
- Question (LeDeux): The reason why it's 10 days notification? -- a settlement with the ACLU. Any efforts by the Muni to get out of this rule? Dunbar: We got them down from 15 days. LeDeux: We've been interpreting the rule very liberally. Dunbar: We have to be able to store their property. We've been very aggressively abating the camps, and this has led to more people camping close to the road. The rule is being litigated in other states. At the moment we are actively trying to avoid getting into litigation with the ACLU. LeDeux: Concerned that we are not interpreting the 9th Circuit decision correctly. Dunbar: We had a homelessness committee meeting the other day, and attorneys disagree with interpretations. Even if we could abate all the camps in one day, I'm not sure we'd want to do that. They just move. Permanent supportive housing would help alleviate some of these concerns. But the Governor cut this funding. We could really use the alcohol tax. Donna M.: We have to look at the upstream causes. Officer Jackson: we do try to connect them with resources during abatement.
- Hunger Action Month (Liz): Highlighted the various activities happening around town in September. You can find information for how to get involved at foodbankofalaska.org
- Habitat for Humanity, Ms. Stevie Franks: Phase 1 on Dubin: Home dedication at 6pm. Phase 2 putting up some new structures in our community.
 - Recently moved their thrift store ReStore to the former REI space on Spenard. Expanded into home furniture and home goods. When you donate or shop at ReStore you are helping to build homes.
 - Here in particular to reach out for volunteers: Need volunteers at construction sites, at the store, and on their board. Need someone from the Eastside.
 - Question: If you volunteer, you can use your hours to donate to potential home owners who have to put in 500 hours of sweat equity? Answer: Yes

- Rachel: There is a list in the back of liquor license renewals. If you have any objections, we would need to write a resolution. Please let a board member know if you have an objection.

Old Business:

- Update regarding Russian Jack and other Parks-related actions (Liz, as relayed from Steve Rafuse via electronic communication):
 - Russian Jack master plan open house is next Saturday (9/28) from noon-3; will have staff giving greenhouse tours, guided walks to the springs with a naturalist, model railroad club demo, as well as master planning info and opportunities to provide feedback.
 - Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Phase 2: should have final permits to begin construction next week. Still working on a schedule for construction to see what is feasible for this season. May begin clearing trees this Fall. Also, they were able to coordinate a water connection for community garden as part of the AWWU water main project on Boston (that's going in now). More info will be shared as it becomes available.
 - Question (LeDeux): Can you find out what hydroaxing is? Answer: We have an email out to Steve.
 - Treehouse AK (new cannabis store): Requests that the council rescind their resolution against cannabis stores. But he also wants to be here for questions:
 - Question: Is it just retail? Answer: Yes, just retail at the store on Boniface.
 - Question: So the risk of smells is low. Answer: Yes
 - Question: Why did they pass the resolution in the first place? Answer: He can't speak to it, but thinks that perhaps it was due to the timing then -- it just being legalized. He'd like for the board to revisit it now that it's been five years, and the outlook has changed a bit.
 - Rachel B.: They objected to any establishments in the NECC area. But in looking on the FCC website, she couldn't find that documentation. We do have a neighborhood responsibility plan, which may be part of it. She was not present for the resolution or the plan.
 - Question: Where are you in your process? Answer: The only thing that they're finalizing is their parking plan. They have their license recommended for approval. Hoping to be operating by the end of the year. Both East High grads; raising families here. He lives near Boniface.
 - Question: Didn't you send us a community agreement some time ago, and we now have an MOU. Answer: Yes, I brought copies of the MOU.

- Question: Could you come to our next Alcohol and Marijuana Committee meeting? Answer: Yes.
- Donna: noted that tonight is the last chance to resolve the resolution issue before the permit is reviewed. Answer: He's hoping the council can take a vote regarding rescinding the resolution.
- Donna: Moved for the council to not have an objection to this particular business. Community member (Kyle) seconds it.
 - Discussion: Community member: At first felt like it was bringing a drug dealer into the community. But then started to think it was better to have it regulated. Then was concerned, though, that Treehouse moved forward with paperwork before coming to the council.
 - Treehouse: The process was a little confusing. The way it was supposed to work was the business owner was to come to the council once they had state approval -- which takes 9 months. Then the state notifies the community council and they have an opportunity to speak at an Assembly meeting. Prevents conversations too early on, and then it's 9 months later and people have forgotten. He's tried to be direct and communicative, and apologetic even though it wasn't his fault.
 - Rachel: Was there a specific resolution regarding the council position against marijuana shops? (Asked to other board members who were there.) Answer: Unsure.
 - Peterson: Community councils do not have veto power over marijuana licenses. Notes that Treehouse has been to Assembly and done what he's supposed to. The list of hoops is unbelievably long.
 - Treehouse: We've worked hard and dedicated ourself to this effort.
 - Repeat of the specific wording of the proposed resolution: "The NECC has no objection to the Treehouse marijuana operation."
 - Call to question: In favor: 12, Opposed: 2, Abstained: 5
 - Motion passes
- Question: Can we make a statement to say that we're working together on the MOU (i.e., the neighborhood responsibility plan)? Answer: It says they will attend quarterly council meetings.
- Question: What is the age limit? Will there be a sign? Are kids allowed inside? Answer: 21 and up. Yes, there will be a sign. Kids aren't allowed inside.
- Rachel B.: We have the MOU. Treehouse has made comments on the neighborhood plan. Are there any additional motions?

- Donna is concerned that we are not up to date on what the neighborhood responsibility plan says we need to do. Thus, it's uncomfortable to vote on this.
 - Dave makes a motion: "The NECC approves the neighborhood responsibility plan (MOU)."
 - Call to question: In favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstain: 4
 - Motion passes

Business between Board members and the Municipality: None

Approval of August minutes: Approved

Committee reports:

- **Bylaws:** No updates
 - **CIP:** Will discuss next meeting
 - **Parks:** No updates; they haven't happened; need to do better sending out notices
 - **Picnic:** No updates
 - **Trails:** Add Dave to trails committee. Parks and Rec are not interested in a trail from Cheney Lake to Patterson; Donna noted that official striping and signage could be done under the current configuration. Dave and Donna will get together to discuss.
 - **Community Patrol** (David Nelson): Paul couldn't be here tonight. Had a meeting last night. Noting that crime appears to be going down in the area.
 - Question: What are your plans for the winter? How will you adjust?
Answer: No different plans. Will stick with current assignments. Meetings are the third Fridays of the month.
- Representative Pruitt given the opp to present after arriving after legislative updates; declined in order to let folks go home. Available after adjourning for questions/discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.