

Rogers Park Community Council
Meeting Minutes
7 PM Monday, September 9, 2019
****BP Energy Center****

Board members present: Janet Bidwell (President), Linda Chase (Vice President), Steve Lindbeck (Secretary), Ric Wilson (Treasurer), and Jim Wright (Immediate Past President).

I. Welcome

(Called to order at 7:06 pm – quorum attained.)

II. Approval of Minutes for May 13, 2019

Linda Chase moved to adopt, and Marilyn Pillifant seconded. Minutes approved without objection.

III. Introduction of New Board Members

Officers for the 2019-2020 year are President Janet Bidwell, Vice President Linda Chase, Secretary Steve Lindbeck, and Treasurer Ric Wilson.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Ric Wilson reported the council account contains \$188.67. There are no anticipated income or expenses at this time. There was discussion of applying for an annual \$75 stipend from the FCC. The board will develop the purpose statement required to apply for the funds. Past President Jim Wright indicated the funding amount has increased; he also invited Julie Bleier to serve as an alternate representative to the FCC and she agreed.

V. Appointment of FCC Representative(s)

Jim Wright, Steve Lindbeck, and Julie Bleier (alternate) were appointed to represent the Rogers Park Community Council at Federation of Community Councils meetings.

VI. Assembly and School Board Report(s)

Assembly Member Meg Zaletel:

The Assembly is recognizing the efforts this summer of fire first responders. A \$42 million contract has been approved for a new cement terminal at the Port of Anchorage; this is key to port modernization and Zaletel said it resets the tone of the conversation on the port project, which she said will be less expensive than previously projected. A consultant's report is due in the next week. The municipality's plastic bag ban goes into effect Sunday, September 15. An Assembly committee on homeless meets in late September.

A town hall meeting on University of Alaska system reorganization included faculty, staff, students, UA President Jim Johnson (by video), and UAA leadership. Zalatel said most speakers favored a consortium model with local control over a central consolidation model. She noted UAA has open enrollment for all qualified students, while UAF and UAS have competitive admissions – a key difference in the character of the institutions.

Assembly Member Felix Rivera:

Town hall meetings on state budget cuts have been held in West Anchorage and South Anchorage. Ballot propositions are emerging 1) to allow for on-site marijuana inhalation (Forrest Dunbar and Chris Constant) and 2) to create six two-member Assembly districts (Dunbar, Constant, and John Weddleton). Rivera invited residents to bring forward questions and concerns regarding the renewal process for liquor and marijuana licenses. An effort is being revived to create a midtown district to impose additional conditions on alcohol sales in that district. The Assembly has approved the concept of creating a stormwater utility and is looking at a contract to study the structure and benefits of such a utility.

School Board Member Dave Donley:

Recent student test scores were disappointing, though still above projections from a few years ago. The board has approved a new middle school model providing additional planning time for teachers; class sizes will increase by about three per class. A pilot program in 21 schools lengthens lunch period times from 55 to 60 minutes and feedback has been very positive. Now in the third year of a phonics-based curriculum with positive indications; the curriculum is challenging to teach and requires special training. The school board anticipates a \$10 million funding shortfall for next school year.

VI. Anchorage Police Officers

Sgt. Mitchell spoke of an effort to align police service areas with community council boundaries, and to assign officers as much as possible to particular areas. Officer Streff often covers Area 11, corresponding to the Rogers Park, Airport Heights, and Tudor Community Council boundaries. Officers will try to attend community council meetings whenever possible, though the meetings often conflict on the calendar and sometimes handling service calls must take priority. Officer Streff has been with the department for 2½ years and working Area 11 for about six months. He said generally Rogers Park experiences fewer service calls than other areas, though traffic cutting through the neighborhood between thoroughfares, theft issues near Fred Meyer, and homeless camps and related issues are obvious problems.

Rogers Park area residents challenged both officers regarding homeless camps, theft, and the risk of fire in the area. Sgt. Mitchell noted patrol officers

are not released to undertake the abatement process for camps. Acknowledging the frustration of both residents and officers, he indicated there are more homeless people than places for them and that with recent budget cuts the situation is likely to get worse. He encouraged residents to watch their surroundings, to call if something doesn't look right, and to file reports with police. When people press charges (and prevail) the court record makes it easier to take action in any future case involving the same individual. With about 30 officers working on a given shift, covering the area from Portage to the Knik River, they are forced to prioritize service calls; homeless camps are a lower priority. The officers encouraged residents to take part in Neighborhood Watch, ride-along opportunities, and Citizens Academy.

VII. Legislative Report(s)

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson (SD-1):

Jacob Tatum of Sen. Gray-Jackson's staff reviewed highlights from a written report included at the end of these minutes. He discussed the state capital budget, the "reverse sweep" to fund various accounts, senior benefits, costs of a crime measure, and university funding. Asked whether another effort to override gubernatorial vetoes might arise this year, he deferred to Rep. Harriet Drummond.

Representative Harriet Drummond (HD-18)

Rep. Drummond mentioned a rumor that the governor may call a third special legislative session to address the amount of the Permanent Fund Dividend. She predicted the legislature would add veto overrides to the agenda if the governor did so. Rep. Drummond discussed the back-and-forth battles of the summer regarding budgets, vetoes, restored funding, restored vetoes, and public messages about all these matters. Among the concerns she highlighted: permanent fund dividend amounts, capital budgets, drug treatment and rehabilitation beds, homeless assistance, senior benefits, and Pioneer Home rate increases. She also raised the possibility of changing the formula for calculating permanent fund payouts and of developing broad-based new revenue measures.

Representative Andy Josephson (HD-17):

Staff member Tom Atkinson spoke on behalf of Rep. Josephson, who'd had a medical procedure earlier that day. He discussed Midtown Congestion Relief and shared a letter from six Downtown/Midtown legislators to Transportation & Public Facilities Commissioner John MacKinnon regarding district priorities on the project. He also noted concerns about university funding and models for university consolidation or consortium.

There was discussion on whether legislative reports at the community council should be purely informational or also reflective of legislators' policy and political judgments.

VIII. Presentations and Discussion:

A. Crime and Safety Committee

Committee Chair Linda Chase shared a written report (included at the end of these minutes) of several committees and initiatives examining crime and homeless matters: Assembly Homeless Committee, Anchored Home, H.A.R.T., Citizen Coalition to Protect Our Public Spaces, the RPCC Crime and Safety Committee, and efforts to clear brush and trim trees in greenbelts. She highlighted safety issues and fire danger, noting a recent newspaper story about vandalism and other problems at the library. She related the difficulty and importance of distinguishing between those homeless camp residents who actually want help and those who want to avoid all authority. One neighborhood resident described how land his family had donated for a greenbelt has been taken over by a camp.

B. Midtown Congestion Relief

Steve Noble of DOWL Engineering reported the Midtown Congestion Relief advisory group efforts are getting back into motion after the summer. A draft report now under internal review will be released soon for public review and comment. A meeting is scheduled for October 21, at the library to discuss the public draft. Five or six proposals will emerge from the plan after review and comment; Noble will present again to the community council as the process continues. Citizen, business, and advisory groups are being consolidated into one steering committee.

C. Suggestions for Future Speakers

President Janet Bidwell asked for suggestions on speakers and subjects for future council meetings. Two emerged:

- Spruce bark beetle infestations and mitigating fire danger
- This year's Capital Improvement Project survey results

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

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Roger's Park Community Council – Senator Gray-Jackson's Report September 9, 2019

Second Special Session was July 7th to August 7th

- Capital Budget SB 2002
 - About \$34.7 million in vetoes
 - Vetoes predominately to homeless services and addiction treatment
 - Secured about \$750 million in federal transportation funds
 - Funds the recent crime bill (HB 49)
 - Reverse sweep sustains
 - Preserves WWAMI, UA Scholarship Fund, PCE and other accounts
- Veto Restoration bill (SB 2001)
 - (See latest E-News Letter for more specifics)
 - Senior Benefits will be restored
 - UA System - \$110 of \$130 million vetoed amount will remain
 - UA will have a 3-year step down approach of about \$20 - 25 reductions each year, totaling about \$70 million over the 3 years
 - Board of Regents to make decisions on single accreditation or consortium model in the next few months. Stay tuned.
 - Pre- K programs will be restored, including Head Start, Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers
- Operating budget basics
 - Over \$500 million in reductions
 - Smallest operating budget since 2004

Million PFD is currently at \$1600

- There are many ideas about changes to the formula
- I hope you are enjoying my monthly E-newsletter. If you're not receiving them, please send your email address to my staff at Keith.Bauguess@akleg.gov.

ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CRIME & SAFETY

September 9, 2019 BP Energy Center

Thought you might be interested in what we, members of the RPCC Crime and Safety Committee have been doing over the last three plus years. Listed below are the outside meetings dealing directly with homeless that we, at least 3-5 members, usually attend.

MUNI Assembly Homeless Committee - Presently, Chaired by Meg Zaletel & Kameron Perez-Verdia
3rd Wednesday of month, 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM, Mayor's Conference Room;
Nancy Burke has been lead for Mayor yet, seems to be moving more in the background.
Meg and Kameron are a breath of fresh air on the Assembly.

Anchored Home -Jasmine Boles; funded by Rasmussen; composed non-profits; works closely with the city but, is changing and leading more than before. Jasmine is, I believe, the hope of the city.
We have attended their quarterly meetings.

H.A.R.T. - Kenny Peterson; been involved for over 10 years; open to anyone, or anyone who would like to share or suggest ideas; usually has a speaker; Kenny is

an excellent leader of meetings. 1st Tuesday of month, 6:00 PM to 8:00, at All Nations Church whose attendees are mostly homeless.

Citizen Coalition to Protect Our Public Spaces - Made up of people from all over the city and various CC's. I am Chair and Gretchen Cuddy is Secretary. We attend various meetings and keep well informed regarding any and all aspects of homeless. We helped develop and share a 12 Point plan regarding camp abatements etc. We shared this information in all media, NextDoor and contacts with Assembly members, Non-profits, etc. Usually the 3rd Wednesday of month, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, 1577 C St., 3rd floor conference.

We have visited many encampments and spoken to those living there.

We also attend and speak at Assembly meetings, some work sessions and we meet with people directly involved in homeless issues, projects etc.

RPCC Crime and Safety Committee - Over the 3 years of being involved in RPCCS, your Crime & Safety Committee, better known as Take Back Our Community, has met on Thursdays before the RPCC, meeting, 6:30 - 8:00 PM; usually at my home. We had a speaker at each meeting; worked with Parks & Rec. and other CC's on bike trails during the

summers, clearing brush and trimming trees; had a coffee social on trails in February; made presentations to other CC's with resolutions; met several times with local businesses to see how we could work together; helped to keep our community informed about issues of homeless. And, we have advocated for several of our community members regarding encampments to be abated.

We always had a report for RPCC meetings. We attended the above listed meetings and never hesitated to join in the discussions. We haven't met since May, 2019 but, will meet soon to discuss what we see for the future and how best to serve RPCC. We need additional members.

It has been quite a journey for RPCC Crime and Safety Committee. And, it seems that our efforts have contributed to increase interest and participation of various members of RPCC.

The move by RPCC to BP Energy Center was a giant leap for many people yet, it has been a much needed and appreciated move. We are so fortunate to have this space in our Council area and all of the amenities it provides. It is always clean, quiet and safe.