

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

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

I. Welcome

(Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm – quorum attained.)

II. Approval of Minutes for November 11, 2019

Linda Chase moved to adopt; Dave McCargo seconded. No objection.

III. Treasurer's Report

Ric Wilson reported there were no expenditures. The council account now contains \$188.68. Total interest paid for the year is 5 cents. President Janet Bidwell submitted a request to the Federation of Community Councils for \$75 to help support the RPCC Mid-Winter Community Event; the grant has not arrived yet.

IV. Guest Speakers

A. Property Assessment: Values and Exemptions

Municipal Assessor Jack Gadamus described the annual cycle of property assessment. His office focuses on property evaluation and exemptions. All taxable property must be assessed by January 1. Notices are sent to property owners by January 15, and a 30-day informal review period follows during which property owners can bring up issues without filing a formal appeal. The appeal deadline is February 12; supporting evidence must be submitted within 15 days after that deadline. Appeals are addressed from mid-January through June 1. Valuation analysis occurs from May through the end of year.

For 2019 total value in the municipality was \$46 billion. Of that amount, residential property is 56 percent of the total, commercial property is 23 percent, personal property is 6 percent, government exempt property is 9 percent, and non-government exempt property is 6 percent. Of the \$46 billion in total value, \$35 billion is taxable.

He indicated the market and new construction have been relatively stable the last 3-4 years and that he doesn't don't expect big changes in the next few years.

Mr. Gadamus encouraged property owners who have issues with their appraisal to come in for a discussion as soon as possible after receiving the valuation

notice. The number of appeals jumped during 2019; he attributed this to issues surrounding earthquake damage. Most appeals are resolved administratively: of 706 appeals last year, 592 were resolved without a hearing, 103 had a hearing but no change in value, and 11 hearings led to values being lowered.

B. Solar Panel Update

Ric Wilson reported on the 2019 project to educate about and support solar power in the neighborhood. Four community councils took part in the project this year. For RPCC, the needed threshold of interest was 50 homeowner signatures and about 100 were received. Four vendors responded to the RFP on the project and ABS Alaska was selected. The vendor made about 100 estimates for solar installations and 34 homeowners (plus three outside the council area) committed to the installations.

Asked for an appraisal of how well the project worked, Mr. Wilson offered his own experience. Ten solar panels were installed at his home at a cost of approximately \$8,000; he will receive a 30 percent credit on his federal taxes. The estimated “payback” period to recapture his cost in energy savings is 8.1 years. The tax credit also can apply to strengthening a roof to support the panels or to upgrading of electrical service related to the installation. The tax credit, however, will be reduced after December 31. He also indicated the vendor experienced significant frustrations dealing with ML&P and Chugach Electric. Asked about savings from doing the neighborhood project collectively, Mr. Wilson said his \$8,000 cost compared to an earlier, individual, bid of \$15,000.

V. Committee Reports

A. Crime and Safety Committee

Committee Chair Linda Chase mentioned a November 23 editorial in the Anchorage Daily News commending Meg Zaletel and other Assembly members for resourceful new ideas for dealing with homeless issues.

The Crime and Safety Committee volunteered to lead the February 10 Mid-Winter Community Event, to take place before the regular Council meeting. The event is to be participative, kid-friendly, and fun. She sought a show of hands of people aged 20 to 45, thereby demonstrating a need to recruit people from that age group. She asked for volunteers to accomplish that and help plan the event. It was suggested earlier meeting times might be more opportune for younger families. President Janet Bidwell proposed taking up the subject at the Mid-Winter Event with the goal of involving younger people in the discussion.

B. Midtown Congestion Relief Committee

Bob Butera of the committee and Steve Noble of DOWL Engineering updated the Council on the project. The committee has been attending meetings on the

project for two years. At a public meeting in November the draft conceptual proposal was unveiled. Personal comments on the proposal will be accepted until December 20 and formal comment from the Council until the end of January. This preliminary planning phase will be finalized at the end of February. The proposal document is 100-200 pages. The committee has asked various questions and received timely responses from DOWL.

The major outstanding issue is Ingra Street, where one row of houses would be taken or partly taken for right-of-way. Those neighbors have gotten together to ask questions, seeking more details of the proposal. The committee urges RPCC residents to bring questions that can be incorporated into a resolution for a vote at the January meeting.

The main comments received so far say the process has not provided sufficient detail about the right-of-way acquisition. Meg Zaletel, speaking as one of the affected property owners, said the neighbors have asked for a “pause” in the process to learn more details so owners can make their own best choices.

Steve Noble of DOWL said he will do everything he can to obtain the information requested, but also that some detail will not be available for another year or so into the design process. The next step is a federally required environmental phase in the process, where detailed geotechnical, engineering, and traffic studies, plus local surveys, will be undertaken. That environmental phase typically must be completed satisfactorily before the state would take the risk of acquiring right-of-way property. Upon questioning, he also said that, by law, a “no project” option must be considered in the environmental phase. The project depends on federal funding and with no federal funds currently identified, the spending plan is at least four years out. Mr. Noble said ultimate decisions on what is included in the project would be decided in the environmental phase.

All speakers urged community members to go online, read the proposal report, and send questions to President Janet Bidwell for forwarding to DOWL and for consideration of a RPCC resolution in January.

VI. Elected Representative Report(s)

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson (SD-1):

Sen. Gray-Jackson’s report is attached at the end of these minutes.

Representative Andy Josephson (HD-17):

Rep. Josephson described an array of topics from a month in the life of a state legislator: the Midtown Congestion Relief project (with a nod to Mr. Noble for his and DOWL’s responsiveness); meeting with municipal officials on capital projects, including Lake Otis north of Tudor; forums on progress of North Slope oil development; declines in state revenues and the corresponding increase in projected deficits; “water cooler talk” of a possible state sales tax; proposals to send Alaska prisoners Outside; meeting with the schools superintendent; drinking water

standards; his own HR12 proposing a Special Committee on Climate change; prescription drug monitoring; medical liability issues; and disputes about the rules governing brewers, bars, and distilleries. "You don't," he said, "want to get between a person and their favorite beer."

Assembly Member Meg Zaletel:

Assembly Member Zaletel mentioned the prospective \$82 million school bond package, of which \$42 million is related to earthquake repairs. She indicated the property tax increase due to the bond would be \$18 per \$100,000 of valuation. She also reported the municipal budget just approved by the Assembly would increase property taxes by \$6 per \$100,000 of valuation.

Assembly Member Felix Rivera:

Assembly Member Rivera said the Anchorage Assembly will seek all Community Council comments and then formally consider its own resolution on the Midtown Congestion Relief project. The Assembly shortened the time when studded tires are permitted on municipal roads; he said his own (decisive) vote in favor came after he received assurances from the state administration they would work for a statewide solution. There are continuing deliberations on tariffs for the Port of Anchorage. He authored a resolution condemning moving prison inmates out of state. He noted successful budget amendments to restore a bus route to Loussac Library, boost funding for shelter beds, and address adverse childhood experiences (ACES) as championed by Assembly Member Fred Dyson. Finally, he mentioned a high-energy meeting in Eagle River focusing on the question of consolidation of that community's two high schools and attended by some 500 people.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Further Information:

Rogers Park Community Council: <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/content/28.html>

Federation of Community Councils: <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/content/home.html>

Municipality of Anchorage: <http://www.muni.org/pages/default.aspx>

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

Governor's Budget

- On or before December 15th, the Governor is expected to release his proposed budget for the next fiscal year.
 - As you know, his proposed budget this past year irresponsibly slashed vital state services such as the University system, Medicaid, the Ferry system and more, without much say from the public. This year, we are hoping that the Administration listens to the hundreds of Alaskans that have expressed they want to see a different budget proposal. Many of us are more than prepared to fight for a responsible budget that reflects Alaskan's values.
 - During the next session, I hope to maintain my seats on the Labor and Workforce development, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) and the Health and Social Services (HSS) finance subcommittees.
 - HSS is the largest department and probably touches the lives of the most Alaskans, including the 1 in 3 that receive Medicaid. Unfortunately, Medicaid saw the bulk of the department cuts.
 - Last year, the Administration had a lot of big talk about slashing services without hurting everyday families. I don't believe this was the case because we heard from students, teachers, health professionals, Pioneers and more about how the proposed budget disrupted their livelihoods.
 - During this year's budget process, we will be thoroughly examining each department budget and making sure the Administration did their homework during the process.
 - After the Governor's budget is released on the 15th, I will send an e-news with details and breakdowns so be on the lookout and feel free to call us if you have questions.

Capital Budget

- The Capital Project Submission & Information System (CAPSIS) is now open until mid-February so I am encouraging my community councils to consider what projects they might want to submit for consideration.
- The Capital budget has been relatively thin the last few years due to the State's current fiscal climate, but it is important that projects are noted so that when the fiscal climate recovers, we can address the most pressing projects. The reality – even without current funding, listing needed projects serve as placeholders for the future.

Constituent Coffee

- On Saturday Dec. 7th, at Black Cup Coffee, 341 E. Benson Blvd., I hosted a constituent coffee from 12:00 – 1:30. Invites were on my Facebook page, latest E-news and were sent out by the Federation of Community Councils.
- I was happy to hear folk's views on the budget, Alaska hire, healthcare, the state of Alaska oil, trends in tourism and even moral amongst state employees.

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.Bauquess@akleg.gov.

Happy Holidays to you and your families!