

Spenard Community Council Minutes  
December 1, 2004

**Call to Order**

The Spenard Community Council began its December meeting with approval of the minutes from the November meeting and an amendment to the original agenda, changing the order of business to accommodate invited speakers and an announcement.

**Announcements**

Ed O'Neil from Brown Jug announced that the store near Spenard & Northern Lights will soon be abandoned. The present store is near Chilkoot Charlie's. A plan is being developed with the owners of the Bear Tooth to acquire and share the building formerly occupied by the Space Station. A new 5-6,000 square foot retail liquor store would occupy a portion of the building and the Bear Tooth plans expansion of its theater in the remainder of the building. The old Williams buildings will most likely be demolished and parking lot improvements are planned. The old Brown Jug location will also likely be demolished as part of the development plan. Mr. O'Neil stated that the liquor license would be retained for use at another location. Sometime in January or February the new owners plan to provide the SCC a more detailed update of their plans.

**Assembly Reports**

Dan Sullivan presented the Assembly report for this month. Not much to report this month besides the Assembly approving the City operating and capital budgets. For the second year in a row, according to Mr. Sullivan, the City budget will increase by \$21 million. The total budget will be roughly \$330 million for FY05. Wage and benefits increases were approved and a modest capital budget of \$34 million is planned. Some items will still need to be visited in February in preparation for the April election. The Anchorage School

District budget is proposed to increase from \$500 million to \$570 million. December 10<sup>th</sup> is the date set for a joint meeting with the ASD to review their budget request.

Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> is planned for a work session on the Convention Center. The revenue package relies on increasing the bed tax for the new Convention Center. The entire package will be on the April ballot.

A question and answer period followed. Some members discussed the Assembly trip to Indianapolis and questioned its value. The Bear Tooth parking lot work was mentioned and is nearly complete. The Cops in School program federal grant is about to run out. Some discussions are underway with the ASD regarding sharing the funding in the future and not leaving to be wholly supported by just the MOA. The Capital budget still includes the Harding upgrades that were on the SCC priority list. One member expressed concerns about the beer & wine license for Noble's Diner in Mt. View as sending the wrong message about community development. We also heard details about the conditional

funding of the Federation of Community Councils. Basically, an agreement must be established between the FCC and the municipality relating to use of existing staff and facilities to accomplish the FCC mission. If this doesn't happen, the funding will not be made available.

### **35<sup>th</sup> & McRae Improvement Project**

CRW, the firm that has the contract for this project, has requested SCC's input under the general heading of "What do we want from the project?" Frank McCrary was invited to the address the council on responding to such questions and what issues we should keep in mind when addressing collector street development. Frank is a member of the Anchorage Roads Coalition (ARC) and has been very involved in educating the community councils about Context Sensitive Design (CSD). Questions about the ARC can be addressed to Frank at 243-2999.

Frank recommended a series of questions and issues for the SCC to address before responding to CRW question. Collector street standards have been modified recently and now include a new minimum width of 31 feet, set-backs of 5'8" on one side of the street, and a 2' set-back and 5' sidewalk on the other side of the street. He cautioned us that wide, straight streets encourage faster driving.

Council member questions and comments included the following:

Cut McRae off midway and don't over-design the project; barricade the road at Fish Creek. Some concern was raised that the Fire Dept. couldn't respond to calls in the neighborhood if the road is dead-ended. An alternative of redirecting McRae in a T-intersection with Turnagain Blvd East at the Fish Creek crossing was proposed.

How many cars really travel from Spenard to Wisconsin? National Standards state that collectors should not be built to connect two major arterials. This would encourage cut-through traffic and a further need to design traffic calming into the project. Can this be pointed out to the planners?

Several members expressed reservations about the price tag, \$10 million, for this project. Most also stated that the speed should not be increased beyond 25 mph on any part of McRae. Limiting the ROW width was also a concern issue.

Other recommendations included a bike path being more useful than a sidewalk; maintaining the general shape of the road with its variable elevation and qualities would be the best way to preserve the "old neighborhood" feeling of the area.

### **Anchorage Museum Expansion**

Pat Wolf from the Anchorage Museum provided us an overview of the Museum expansion plan. Cumin & Associates and David Chipperfield are working with the Museum staff on the development of the expansion plan. Currently, the project is estimated to require \$100 million. The municipality has \$75 million of the total already in hand and plans to ask the

State of Alaska for \$15 million and raise the remaining \$10 million from private sources. The largest single contribution to the project has come in the form of a \$50 million gift from the Rasmuson Foundation. The Museum is planning on adding science to their mission. The plan includes working with the Imaginarium and including space for them into the new expansion. A parking garage is also planned, through a separate project, for C & 7<sup>th</sup> that will be shared with the Federal Building.

More information about this project and the Anchorage Museum's program is available at their website, [www.anchoragemuseum.org](http://www.anchoragemuseum.org).

### **Chelsea Inn Update**

Last month several concerns were raised about prostitution in the area surrounding the Chelsea Inn. The SCC invited the owner, Mr. Su, to come and speak with the members. Mr. Su wasn't available for our December meeting but he did send a member of his staff, Chuck, to hear our concerns.

Chuck described for us how Mr. Su has recently spent a lot of money on the Chelsea Inn. \$15,000 was spent on a new key system and \$20,000 was invested in a surveillance system for inside the hotel. He further related to us that Mr. Su is a very religious man, owns a church, and is not a person that supports illegal activities.

Several members of the council expressed concerns. Specific concerns related to prostitutes frequently being seen immediately in front of the Chelsea Inn, often moving inside the establishment when the Westside Patrol or APD drives by investigation complaints. A black van has been reported on the property behind the Chelsea Inn and appears to be the source of both drug traffic and prostitution. We also found out that Mr. Su owns the duplex property that the van has been parked on. The council asked Chuck to pass on our concerns to the owner. Chuck committed to placing a notice on the van and having it removed from Mr. Su's property. We asked that Mr. Su consider policing his own property; specifically dedicating some of the surveillance cameras to the exterior of the Chelsea Inn, so as to allow the desk staff to call in their own complaints related to prostitutes and drug traffic without requiring them to leave the Inn.

### **Federation Update**

A few weeks ago the Assembly agreed to conditional funding for the Federation of Community Councils in the amount of \$108,000. As mentioned above in the Assembly Reports, the funding would be contingent on a workable plan being developed between the FCC and MOA. As more information becomes available we will be appraised.

### **Airport Stakeholders Meeting**

The Stakeholder meetings are planned to occur quarterly. SCC Chair Bob Auth reported

that the last meeting included an update on plans for the south taxiway and cargo area expansions that are expected to begin next year.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Westside Patrol Report: Sam O'Connor

Sam reported that 3007 Arctic, the Trailer Park, was the topic of a meeting with the Mary Magdalenists and Assembly member Coffey. The goal was to identify potential temporary fixes to reduce the prostitution and drug traffic that is prevalent in the area. Dan Coffey is planning to talk with the municipal prosecutor and the judges about very weak sentencing related to such activities. A Mr. Hung in space #39 has been dealt with, but all of the rest of the frequently complained about properties have not been. Multiple felony warrants have been served on some of the locations but remain to be pursued. Sam further reported that some improvements have been made around another problem location, 3506 Wyoming.

#### Planning & Zoning Report: Peggy Auth

The Heritage Land Bank has a piece of property it is thinking of selling in the Arctic/Spennard area between Benson and Northern Lights. Peggy seeks input from the SCC related to the wishes of the council regarding the future of this property. The general sense seemed to be that a "mixed use" designation would be compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and Anchorage 2020.

Peggy also discussed the "Nuisance Law". This is a law that is already on the books and needs to be used more, or enforced more, related to the kinds of problems that we have been dealing with at the SCC.

### **Old/New Business**

Elections for Officers will be held at the February meeting. Sam O'Connor is appointed chair of a nominating committee and is charge with identifying candidates for the full slate of Board positions before the January meeting.

### **Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

The next scheduled meeting will be January 5th at 7pm.

PAGE