

Rogers Park Community Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Monday, 14 Dec 2020, 7:00pm – 8:46pm

Zoom meeting was called to order by Steve Lindbeck, President at 7:03pm.

Mark Foster, Secretary, confirmed by zoom attendance count, 23 RPCC members were in attendance. (Quorum requirement = 15 members).

President Steve Lindbeck proceeded with calling on committee reports.

Committee Reports

Federation of Community Councils – Jim Wright

- Mark Butler reported that each community council had a \$75/year allocation
- There would be no FCC meeting in December
- The FCC had thousands of cotton masks available if anyone was interested; please contact Mark Butler at 240-3868
- Assembly Chair Felix Rivera reported that the Assembly had:
 - Extended a Health Emergency Declaration
 - Approved a special tax levy to support police cameras and video recording subscription services that would go forward to be part of a Municipal Bond Package and paid for in the local property tax mill rate
- Margo Bellamy reported that the school district was moving forward with plans to reopen school buildings on January 19th

7:14pm, 27 RPCC members were in attendance.

Historic Preservation Commission - Information Item – Connor Scher, Bryce Klug

Mr. Scher and Mr. Klug announced that they were working on a draft ordinance to establish a local register of historic places highlighting places of local historic significance, including buildings, landscapes and neighborhoods. The geographic scope of the Anchorage Municipal register would include Eklutna. They had proposed being open to consideration of places 30 years or older, instead of the federal standard of 50 years or older in the local register. They expected to work through their draft in January with the goal of introducing an ordinance with the Assembly in March. For additional information, please e-mail Kristine.bunnell@anchorage.ak.gov, Senior Planner, Municipal Planning Department

Linda Chase asked, “how long had the Historic Preservation Commission been in existence?” Mr. Sher indicated it had been in existence for decades. Ms. Chase asked how were they funded. Mr. Sher indicated funding came from an interest on conservation easement sales.

Ron Alleva asked “how can we get designations for imports?” mentioning the example of a food cache in Kenai. Mr. Sher offered that they had a category for objects of historic significance and that might be a place where the food cache might fit. Mr. Klug offered that there were multiple criteria that were used to evaluate inclusion so Mr. Alleva may wish to review the list of criteria for whether the food cache might fit within the existing criteria.

7:24pm, 30 RPCC members were in attendance.

Ric Wilson asked “how about a neighborhood?” Mr. Scher offered they could be considered as a “historic district”.

Steve Lindbeck asked whether any neighborhoods in Anchorage had qualified as a “historic district”? Mr. Scher offered that a portion of Government Hill, block 13 between 10th and 11th at C Street with old houses had qualified.

Beautification Commission – Zach Zaletel

Steve Lindbeck introduced Zach with an expression of appreciation for Zach’s effort in putting together the holiday lights walking map of the neighborhood and for all of the households who put up lights.

Zach asked whether there was any interest in enhancing neighborhood entrances in preparation for submitting a request to the Municipal Assembly for a budget allocation.

Steve Noble offered that neighborhood entrance enhancements were included in traffic calming studies from roughly 20 years ago and those studies might be of interest to those looking for ideas.

Jim Wright offered that Representative Les Gara had supported an effort to enhance neighborhood entrances, similar to the La Touche entrance, in a study from about 10 years ago and it might be worth a fresh look at that work.

Representative Reports

Representative Andy Josephson (House District 17) highlighted:

- Happy Hannukah and Merry Christmas
- The Legislature was scheduled to resume on Tuesday, January 19 and he expected to prefile bills on:
 - Oil Spill Penalties & Fees which had not been updated in the 40 years
 - End of Fiscal Year Fiscal Administrative and Appropriations Procedures, e.g., “reverse sweep” and end of year management of budget reserve procedures
 - Defined Benefits Pension Plans for Police, Fire and State Troopers
 - Workers Compensation issues related to Permanent Partial Impairments, e.g., loss of a finger at work, which had not been updated since 2000
 - Disallowing discrimination in employment, housing or credit based on gender issues
 - Hate Crimes, responding to a knife attack in Stirling that may well have merited consideration as a hate crime
 - Workers Compensation issues related to what constitutes a presumptive illness
- There was an ongoing discussion in the Legislature around whether they could convene via Zoom or whether they needed to convene in Juneau in small “bubbles”, whether they should gavel in and then recess until it was safer to conduct business in close quarters in March. Meanwhile a mitigation plans were being developed and deployed.

- Discussions around the organization of the House were underway in light of the 20/20 “standoff” around organizing a majority/minority, designation of a speaker and committee chairs and assignments.
- Linda Chase asked “what is the plan for the House and the Senate to work together?”
- Rep. Josephson responded that he expected the Leg would work with the Governor on:
 - The Governor’s Bond Proposal, including Roads to Resources
 - Concerns about the Governor’s proposed budget cuts, including cuts to Medicaid
 - Since we don’t know who is going to be in charge of the Legislature, it was too early to gauge how that dialogue might evolve
 - Whether the Legislature needed to get permission from the voters for revenue issues (as proposed by the Governor)
 - Perennial discussions around the details of a State Government Spending Cap
 - An Annual Budget that was required by June 30th to enable operations to continue into the next fiscal year
- Linda Chase responded that:
 - It was about time we all work together
 - Tired of hearing all the political fighting
 - Wanted to see good intention and transparency
- Pete Mjos inquired about Oil Spill Penalties, especially in light of Hillcorp seismic work in the Lower Cook Inlet
- Representative Josephson indicated he was exploring the political feasibility of DNR permitting standards, spill clean-up contingency plans including for the trucking association who expressed concerns about regulation of spills

Representative Harriet Drummond (House District 18) highlighted:

- She was confident that “our experienced team of legislators” with only 2 new among the 20 would prevail over “their team with 11 new members with no experience” among their 20 and that she was optimistic that Representatives LeBon and Thompson from Fairbanks would likely join a coalition of experienced legislators.
- She was hopeful that, like last year, the experienced House coalition could get the budget done in 68 days like this past year working together; the subcommittee work went fast in part because the presence of COVID-19 limited the otherwise extensive lobbying that was typical of the budget development process
- She hoped to focus on the budget, COVID-19 relief and public safety issues in the upcoming session
- She thought it would be prudent to save other policy discussions for the next post COVID-19 vaccination session to enable good committee work. Committee work using remote video meetings was slow and difficult.
- The Legislative rules require in-person voting so it will take meeting for several days in person and minority support to enable them to reconvene and conduct votes remotely.
- The Governor was a little more reasonable this year on the Operating and Capital Budgets and Bond package.
- Ron Alleva asked about the prospects for the ~\$5000 Dividend that the Governor had proposed

- Representative Drummond responded that the Governor had proposed to overdraw the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve to fund his proposal and that she thought it more prudent to be conservative and keep some savings to be able to sustain Dividends in the future
- Ron Alleva asked “what about now – we’re in the middle of a pandemic and many households have lost jobs and income and the limited local, state and federal government supports were about to run out while the State’s investment funds were enjoying record earnings?”
- Representative Drummond agreed that we needed to help, but she cautioned against raiding fund balances like:
 - PCE, which were needed to help Rural Alaska
 - Higher Education Investment Fund
 - Because the Federal Government was in the best position to do more, they have helped provide support and could again do more

7:58pm, 34 RPCC members were in attendance.

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson (Senate District I) highlighted:

- Her priorities were:
 - A comprehensive and sustainable budget that supported Education and Medicaid
 - Making Juneteenth a Paid Holiday to help elevate the history of race in the U.S. and Alaska and to emphasize Freedom and Justice for All has not been applied equally across our history
 - Police Reform; working with Senator Tom Begich on a package of 9 bills to help reduce police violence; meeting with Law Enforcement representatives and hope to have a package to prefile
 - Thanking the Heroes and First Responders
- She wished a safe and healthy holiday for all
- Additional information is available via Elvi’s Updates, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/SenatorElviGrayJackson/>

School Board Member Margo Bellamy highlighted:

- The School Board expected the Superintendent to provide the District with a new school building reopening plan on December 15th
- The plan is expected to reopen preK-6 and SPED on January 19th for a 5.5 hour school day
- Middle School is expected to be phased in in small pods
- High School is expected to be phased in by March
- The Board Majority passes a resolution which precludes the Superintendent from slowing or cancelling the school reopening due to COVID-19 community transmission levels
- The Finance Committee is meeting and hearing concerns about the size of the budget deficit in view of large loss of enrollment this fall
- The District has a number of employment contracts up for renegotiation
- Jim Wright asked when could we expect teachers and school staff to get vaccinated in light of the woefully deficient supply?

- Ms. Bellamy indicated she expected teachers to be in the 1b tier, immediately following health care workers. The district had conducted a survey to gauge the level of need and health risk conditions. Nurses would be in the first round with first responders. She did not know a timetable.
- Pete Mjos asked what precautions had the Board taken at School Board Meetings.
- Ms. Bellamy recommended he check with Katy Grant, the Board Secretary for details.
- There was a question about Charter Schools.
- Ms. Bellamy indicated that most Charter Schools were set to follow the district's plan with the exception of the Eagle River Academy which was slated to follow their own plan.

Assembly Member Meg Zaletel highlighted:

- The State of Alaska had convened a Vaccine Priority Advisory Committee and was working through prioritization details that were expected to be finalized soon.
- The Assembly had released an "Assembly 101" video to help show the public how to advocate before the Assembly
- The Assembly was working on a quarterly newsletter to be distributed via internet channels, radio and TV
- She shared that it was School Board Member Margo Bellamy's birthday and thanked Ms. Bellamy for her public service
- She shared that Anna Henderson had been named Municipal Manager by the Acting Mayor. Ms. Henderson has been a manager at ML&P. As the Municipal Manager, Ms. Henderson would have an active role in administering Emergency Orders during the pandemic, including staff at the Emergency Operations Center, and accelerated procurement
- Ms. Zaletel wished everyone a happy holiday.

Assembly Chair Felix Rivera highlighted:

- He expected the vaccination schedule to follow:
 - 1a nurses
 - 1b school and education sector employees
 - 1c adults at high risk
- The Assembly reappropriated \$15 million to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on small businesses, especially those at risk in the hospitality sector and for rental and mortgage assistance, and gift cards to help provide food security for those in need
- The Assembly requested additional federal emergency relief funding to help mitigate pandemic challenges
- The Assembly had approved an Anchorage Police Department IT Package that included body cameras and a suite of IT needs, including software and hardware services. APD was a decade behind the "market" for cloud-based subscription services
 - The funding of the APD body cameras and IT support package would be a special tax levy that was working through the budget process
 - January 26th Assembly Meeting on the Municipal Bond Package
 - April Ballot would include the Municipal Bond Package and Special Levy

- The Municipal Web Site had all of the information on the Assembly Appropriations and Reappropriations
- Ron Alleva asked “Do you feel a disturbance in the force?” What plans does the Assembly have if you get recalled?
- Mr. Rivera responded “I’m not going to worry about that.”

New Business

1. RPCC Resolution in Support of the Acting Mayor Austin Quinn-Davidson’s Advocacy and Actions to Protect Public Health and Support Household Resilience During a Pandemic
2. RPCC Resolution in Support of the Assembly Member Zaletel’s Advocacy and Actions to Protect Public Health and Support Household Resilience During a Pandemic

Jim Wright moved, and Pete Mjos seconded the approval of the two resolutions as a package.

Pete Mjos was “firmly in support of the resolutions.”

Linda chase thought both of them were “great” and needed since there was still talk of the pandemic being a “hoax”

Ron Alleva asked “are we doing enough?”

Mark Foster responded, “No, we are not doing enough if we are serious about following the science and art of smart public health and smart economic policy. These resolutions were crafted with the aspirational goal of getting a substantial majority of community council support with the hope that our local elected officials would be more inclined toward future actions to help protect lives and livelihoods in Anchorage.”

Pete and Ron had a brief exchange.

Chat Box Vote Tally – the Vote on the Resolutions was Split to Allow for An Abstention

Resolution 1: Vote 14 yes, 3 no

Resolution 2: Vote 14 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain

3 voice votes not recorded in chat were recorded in favor of both resolutions (Pete, Karin and Linda)

Total for Resolution 1: 17 yes, 3 no

Total for Resolution 2: 17 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain

Steve Lindbeck mentioned that he had received the notice of a liquor license renewal at the Brown Jug in the College Mall and that while he had heard some concerns, those who shared the concerns did not elevate them to the level of requesting the Community Council to take action.

RPCC Member Questions and Comments:

- Ron Alleva reiterated concerns about the use of COVID funding for homeless services, cited concerns that the well intentioned restrictions placed on homeless/drug treatment service centers would eventually be eroded by variances and the local neighbors would be left with local problems

Without objection Steve Lindbeck adjourned the meeting at 8:46pm.