

Spenard Community Council
 Wednesday, April 7, 2021, 6:30pm-9:00pm



Agenda

| | Topic |
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| 6:30 pm | Zoom Happy Hour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meg Mielke and Irene Persson-Gamble welcomed council members and guests. |
| 7:00 pm | 1. Welcome/Call to Order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hajduk led an orientation to Zoom. ● Consent Agenda (Minutes from previous meeting on 03/03/2021, agenda for current meeting.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion: Paul Berger moved to approve, Irene Persson-Gamble seconded. Consent agenda passes. ● Hajduk Introduced executive board. ● Persson-Gamble introduced self as vice-chair and parliamentarian, role is to encourage Robert's Rules of Order. Reminded folks to avoid separate conversations and utilize chat to send relevant messages to hosts. |
| 7:08pm | 2. State Legislator reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Representative Chris Tuck: Prioritized major obligations as passing operations budget as well as to confirm Governor's appointments. Noted that operational budget meetings will begin taking public testimony soon. Estimates that the budget will not be passed until middle of May; noted that they will likely take the maximum of 120 day session. Shared expected funds from American Rescue funds. Shared hope to pass a separate appropriations bill to fund education. Shared introduction of election reform bill (allowing for continual vote by mail until you miss an election.) ● Representative Harriet Drummond: Encouraged public testimony for budget. Shared information about the testimony process and noted that both verbal/written testimony are heard the same. Cited concerns about diminished tourism season (and impacts on local communities from lack of cruise season). |
| 7:24 pm | 3. Brief reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assembly Report, Judy Jessen (staff to Kameron Perez-Verdia): Advertised upcoming town hall to get feedback on the municipality's use of American Rescue Funds. Noted that the best way to get vaccine updates is through the Anchorage Office of Emergency Management facebook page; noted that there are election updates daily. Reminded folks that only the Pfizer shot is available to those that are 16 or 17. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link to Anchorage OEM Facebook ● Anchorage Police Department, Officer Reid: Noted that focus in the last 2 months has been vehicle break-ins and drug concerns. Noted that there have been complaints of speeding on Spenard; have been trying to have more officers there. Noted that there are issues of petty thefts of small businesses. Officer Reid noted that he is attempting to go into those businesses as much as possible to increase presence. Shared statistics (January 2021), that showed the top calls for services are hotels on the west side of Spenard (around 4360 Spenard); most often disturbances, traffic stops, or trespassing. Encouraged |

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| | <p>people to call in suspicious vehicles (4th most common for calls) as that can lead to investigation of larger issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seccareccia: Cited concern about drug issues at American Best Value Inn and Chelsea Inn and inquired about police response to long-standing issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reid: There exists community action policing teams, “CAP 1” and “CAP 2” teams; noted that CAP 1 handles most drug cases; noted that they have undercover vehicles (set up with a vice team) to find lower level drug dealers. Noted that hotels typically do not house the larger drug operations but can lead to drug houses. Prefer to talk to hotel managers to ask about problem rooms that will lead to more information. ○ Hajduk shared a question from chat about status of mobile crisis intervention teams (CIT). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reid: They have CIT rated officers on staff; noted that if they hear a call that involves a mental health crisis, that officer gets attached to call to assist. Goal is to roll out platforms more and more in order to allow mental health professionals to take calls; noted concern from a police perspective is to not put that professional in a dangerous situation. Hope to have more social workers with police in vehicles. ○ George Ascott: Inquired about petty thefts at marijuana shops, noted that shoppers need to see IDs to get into marijuana shops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reid: Noted that more petty thefts are going to be at Brown Jugs; noted that marijuana shops have had pretty good success rates. Shared that he heard one issue was someone attempted to grab a tip jar while the worker was preoccupied. ○ Jerrod Dunbar: Asked about CIT, if the plan is for trained mental health professionals to accompany police or if police will be phased out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reid: It is a pilot program right now, unsure if the long-term plan; noted that they are attempting to find a balance. |
| 7:40 pm | <p>4. Education Topic: COVID-19 Vaccine presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Lisa Rabinowitz, emergency physician at Providence: Shared information about safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Shared specific information about safety for those who are pregnant or breastfeeding. There are people who cannot get vaccines (those with medical conditions and those under 16) and by getting the vaccine, individuals are part of the move toward herd immunity which will protect those unable to get the vaccine. ● Amber Glasser: Asked to confirm that vaccines are under emergency authorization only; noted that because of that, a lot of the long-term studies have not been completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Confirmed that vaccines are under FDA emergency use authorization; noted that they have not been around long enough to have long-term data yet, but that after millions of doses given, we have not seen new concerns. ● Tahnee Seccareccia: Inquired about navigating interactions with vaccinated and unvaccinated people, and the risk factors involved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: The vaccines are great (~95% effective), but there are 5% of people who could still get COVID. They are still gathering data regarding the ability to transmit COVID after vaccination; noted that everyone is going to have to weigh those risks in these situations. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hajduk: Shared question from chat about getting shot in dominant versus non-dominant arm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Shared personal (non-scientific) experience of getting doses in different arms. ● Hajduk: Shared question from chat about vaccines protecting against variants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Responded that they are still gathering data, all vaccines are protective against variants. Noted that against South Africa Variant, vaccines see decreased efficacy which is why the State is testing status of variants more closely. ● Sarah Preskitt: Inquired about availability of presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tony Spiroski, Blue Print Alaska: Noted that he will share a copy of powerpoint and additional resources with the SCC president. Also encouraged folks to reach out if they want to coordinate a similar presentation to communities or workplaces. ● Peggy Auth: Inquired about the number of variants appearing in Alaska; and where they are appearing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Noted belief that there are 42 or so (up from 28 a few weeks ago). There's concern that as cases rises; cases are related and that they are occurring in areas with higher populations. ● Berger: Asked about the difference between Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and Moderna vaccines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Asked to think of it as the "front half" of how we get the "recipe" into the cells is different between the two groups; "back-half" is the same. For mRNA vaccines, they take a little piece of messenger RNA (like a "recipe") enclosed in a lipid/fat bubble to go into the cell, then goes into the ribosomes to make the proteins and that prompts the immune system. For Johnson & Johnson, it is a viral vector; take a common cold virus (change it, as it cannot replicate or make you sick) and that is how they put the sequence in that and how that goes into your body. Noted that none of this changes your DNA. ● Mielke: Shared question form chat about when we might expect booster shots. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Noted they do not know; Pfizer and Moderna have put out statements noting that after 6 months, immunity is still strong. Noted that boosters may be needed because of immunity waning or variants (all 3 companies producing boosters.) Provided her personal guess that after 1 year or 1.5 year out, may need boosters. ● Dunbar: Asked about the difference between previous COVID infection and vaccine in terms of protection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rabinowitz: Noted that vaccines are preferable because they have longer protection and higher immune response (studies have shown larger immune boost after vaccine versus natural infection.) Once people are done with their isolation periods, they can safely get the vaccines. Noted that protection may last 90 days after infection but length of time is uncertain. ● Persson-Gamble: Shared that she uses recipe analogy in biology classes and it is effective. |
| 8:00 pm | <p>5. Decision Topic: Capital Improvement Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hajduk encouraged attendees to fill out a survey by Friday, April 30th and noted that priorities will be adopted at May SCC meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link to survey |

8:10 pm

6. **Decision Topic:** Draft resolution in Opposition to Amendments to Anchorage Municipal Code 21.050.040

- Hajduk shared that proposed Title 21 changes would allow homeless and transient shelters within the General Business (B-3) Zoning District as a conditional use. Conditional uses must meet criteria to obtain a permit prior to operating. The criteria for conditional uses include compatibility with uses on adjacent properties and mitigation for potential impacts of the use. Topic was presented by the Planning Department at SCC meeting on 12/3/20
 - [Link to Municipality's Proposed Title 21 Changes](#)
- Berger: Introduced resolution. Shared concern as a business owner about the community; noted that there are a lot of people on the street now and resolution will put more people on corners and increase dangers for both those experiencing homelessness and drivers. Voiced concern about increased crime and belief that downtown is trying to push their problems into other neighborhoods.
 - [Link to draft resolution Opposed to AMC 12.050.040](#)
- Russell Biggs: Introduced self as vice president of Tudor Area CC. Noted that this will impact around 3,900 B3-zoned properties in the city. Noted that homeless shelters downtown historically have been a source of a lot of problems in the community (cited high volume of police calls). The ability to put shelters in any zoned district is already available through the rezoning process which requires a higher level of public outreach. Voiced concern about lack of recent public outreach.
- **Motion:** Berger moved to approve, Dunbar seconded to allow discussion.
- **Discussion:**
 - Seccareccia: Shared work with Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness but noted that she is speaking as a private citizen. Cited inaccuracies in resolution. Noted that much of PLI properties are already dedicated parklands, and it is quite limited where the city can put shelters now. Homelessness is an issue throughout Anchorage and it is beneficial for homeless shelters to be near businesses; and noted that she opposes the resolution and supports the zoning amendment since it will make the city better for everyone.
 - Matt Duncan: Voiced opposition to resolution, noted that language used in explanation was offensive; noted that folks this resolution speaks to are our housing insecure neighbors who are already in our neighborhood. Many experiencing homelessness are experiencing addiction and mental health struggles; noted that we all need to come together to respond to this epidemic.
 - Ted Madsen: Introduced self, noted that he has never been to a SCC meeting but has lived in the neighborhood since 2015. Want to echo comments of Seccareccia and Duncan. Posed question if you would rather people sleep in shelters (near services) or on streets. Cited Christian faith and noted that readily accessible shelters should exist throughout the city. Cited experience with east-side community councils, noted that this will not turn all 3,900 properties into shelters but does allow some.
 - Dunbar: Noted shared belief that everyone cares about homelessness. Inquired about the need for change and if title 21 currently allows this.
 - Hajduk: Shared that the purpose of amendment is to think about different ways to approach homelessness; a response to the negative feedback from limited public outreach over purchase and rezone properties.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dunbar: Noted belief that homelessness has increased and if current homeless shelters are not working; inquired if adding more shelters will fix that. ○ Berger: Encouraged Biggs to answer question. ○ Biggs: Noted that the current process protects property owners. ○ Hajduk: Noted that she wanted to prioritize Spenard residents in discussion. ○ Michelle Wilber: Introduced self as Spenard resident and multiplex owner; shared concern of proposal speaking to “Not in my Backyard” sentiments; voiced opposition to resolution. ○ Glasser: Shared history of homelessness, noted her belief in increasing treatment facilities and more one-on-one conversations; believes that zoning is the wrong solution to the problem. ○ Grant Kinney: Noted belief that individuals experiencing homelessness need to travel downtown once per day; does not understand why downtown cannot be the one-stop-shop for folks getting back on their feet. ○ Phil Isley: Shared belief that the things that they have in place should work fine; support resolution as they do not think there should be a change to streamline it. Noted belief that giving things to people for free is “enabling;” and noted that this costs lives. ○ Peggy Auth: Noted that Brother Francis is not serving meals, they are prepping and delivering meals elsewhere (to counter “one stop shop” idea.) Asked residents to think about how Downtown or Fairview residents may feel that they are being asked to absorb most of the issue; asked for compassion for all of those in Anchorage; voiced opposition as it is not fair to put all problems in one area of town. ○ Jessen: Shared that she is speaking from personal perspective; shared history of homelessness. Noted that she had four jobs and still experienced homelessness. Shared that she was invited to live with a family (without restrictions on activities) noted how big of a difference it was to get that help that may not be “deserved” and it turned everything around. Encouraged people to think if we need to hold the penalty of death above folks that are already struggling. ○ Berger: Commented on areas of consensus among council members. Noted that resolution is about having the public look at both sides of the issues; and cited belief that with Title 21 changes, the level of scrutiny that we are entitled to will not be allowed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motion Vote: 16 in favor, 7 opposed; resolution fails. |
| 8:40 pm | <p>7. Neighborhood & Community Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Michelle Wilber: Introduced co-worker Erin Whitney who is running for Chugach Electric Board and endorsed her candidacy. ● Whitney: Shared that she was raised in Anchorage and works in energy research at the University of Alaska Anchorage; encouraged everyone to vote in upcoming online elections for Chugach Board of Directors. Asked for feedback from residents in terms of issues of concern. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link to Chugach Elections Information ● Sarah Preskitt: Noted that all five branches of Anchorage libraries are now open for browsing services. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jedediah Smith: Introduced self as board member of Friends of Fish Creek; noted that on CIP survey there is an option for a feasibility study for daylighting fish creek. Shared that May is clean-up month and there are some upcoming clean-ups, encouraged members to start their own clean-up teams. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link to facebook event for Connors Bog "Scoop the Poop" ○ Link to Anchorage Chamber's Citywide Clean Up ● Phi Isley: Noted that he leads guided hypnotic meditations every Thursday at 6pm throughout April at A.T.O.M. Center (6000 C Street), invited residents to join. ● Hajduk: Thanked the Spenard volunteers for the hours it took to plan and host the West Anchorage candidates forums: Tahnee (moderator), Meg (timekeeper, candidate outreach), Pamela Raygor, Amber Glasser, Julie Leonard, and Peggy Auth for all the support planning and selecting questions. Noted that there is discussion about a run-off forum. Shared work with Neighborworks Alaska's "Paint the Town" event; asked for nominations to paint or do minor repairs; especially looking to support veterans. Noted that the Habitat Restore is hosting an event celebrating the opening of the "Make It" Classroom on April 22 from 5pm to 7pm located at 1200 W. Northern Lights Blvd. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link to Paint the Town ● Meredith Havens: Shared that she has been rescuing feral cats in the neighborhood; noted that she is not trying to trap pets (asked people to check to make sure pets have collars). Noted that she is working with shelters to find homes for cats. |
| 8:55 pm | <p>8. "Door Prize": Spenard business gift card giveaway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SCC request: Confirm use of \$510 for door prizes to local businesses and potential mail to deliver them. Consent motion passes. ● Persson-Gamble: Noted that she supports the plan but asked for treasurer's report on how much is left in bank. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arina Filippenko: Noted that there is roughly \$26,000 left in account; noted that these funds will help the community. ● Jerry Sparkman and Matt Duncan both win \$25 gift cards to the Writer's Block. ● Seccareccia: Inquired if there was a rule that someone cannot win within the past 3 months. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Filippenko: Noted that to win someone has to be a member, be present to win, and can only win once every 6 months. |
| 9:00 pm | <p>9. Adjourn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 5th ● Motion: Peggy Auth moved to adjourn, Persson-Gamble seconded. |