

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes

7 PM Monday, March 8, 2021, via Zoom

Board Members:

Steve Lindbeck, President
Linda Chase, Vice-President
Secretary (position vacant)
Ric Wilson, Treasurer
Jim Wright, FCC Representative (acting Secretary)

I. WELCOME.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. The log-in process identified 49 participants at the outset. A quorum was apparent, with more than 20 members attending.

II. COMMUNITY COUNCIL BUSINESS:

A. Minutes: Minutes from the February meeting were reviewed. Dave McCargo moved to approve them. Marilyn Pillifant seconded. Approved.

B. FCC Report. Given the crowded agenda, FCC representative Jim Wright relied on his written report, attached via link to the Agenda, in lieu of a standing presentation.

C. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Ric Wilson reports that RPCC funds total \$763.77.

III. PRESENTATION:

State DHSS on Covid 19 Vaccinations. Dr. Jessica Olp, Ph.D in Pharmacy, presented. She explained how Covid 19 vaccines work, basically, in two ways. On the one hand, mRNA vaccines, like Pfizer and Moderna, imitate the spike protein in order to trigger and build up an immune response. Our immune system then remembers and more readily repeats this response when the virus appears. These vaccines require two shots, several weeks apart (Pfizer 3 weeks; Moderna 4 weeks).

By contrast, the Johnson & Johnson/Jantzen product uses a modified version of a traditional vaccine model. It is a viral vector vaccine that, instead of using the Covid-19 virus, uses a modified version of a different, harmless vaccine. It creates

a harmless piece of spike protein to trigger and build up an immune response. The efficacy of this vaccine results with a single shot.

The vaccine protects the person inoculated, but also protects those who aren't vaccinated by reducing the spread of the virus to other community members. Its benefits include creating an immune response, preventing infection, and preventing serious illness in the event the vaccinated person is nonetheless infected. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are estimated to be 94-95% effective after two shots. The one-shot J&J is estimated to be ~60-70% effective to prevent infection, and ~85% effective to prevent severe illness if one becomes infected.

There are differences in stability of these products during shipment to the distribution point. Pfizer and Moderna require very low temperatures during shipment in order to preserve the vaccines. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is more tolerant of a wider range of temperatures, so it is the better choice where the supply chain is problematic for temperature control.

Once vaccinated, the degree of protection against transmission is yet unknown, so it is important to keep using preventative measures, including wear a mask properly, social distancing (typically 6 feet among adults), keep gatherings small, and do regular thorough handwashing.

Q&A. Dave McCargo asked why we have varied responses? Is the reaction reflecting the person's immune response? Dr. Olp explained that if you had it before, then you likely will have increased side-effects. The first-time results in extra blood flow that might show a rash. The second-time will likely have increased side effects with your immune system in overdrive. Very rarely, we might see a severe allergic reaction.

Pete Mjos asked whether there are any indications if the vaccine might modify long-hauler disease sequelae? Dr. Olp said she has seen no studies regarding whether we're less inclined to see long-hauler symptoms, so that is an unknown.

Nathaniel Grabman asked how long immunity due to the vaccine is expected to last? Will we need an annual booster? Dr. Olp indicated that 2-3 years is the expected immunity from the vaccine, and that boosters may be needed, especially due to the emerging variants.

Jim Wright asked about long-hauler symptoms – do they tend to be a continuation of symptoms from the acute phase, or do new symptoms pop up later? Dr. Olp said that both are true. Pop-up symptoms shown include cardiac issues, fatigue, and loss of taste/smell.

Dave Morgan represented that he is a health expert/economist for 36 years, that 60% of the population has had it or been vaccinated so they won't get it. Accordingly, aren't we at a point where we have herd immunity and the pandemic is over? Dr. Olp cautioned not to drop our guard prematurely. That happened last year with spring break congregations that resulted in increased Covid-19 infections. Dave Morgan debated the point, noting that the Dakotas and some other states never locked down or otherwise avoided precautions. Dr. Olp said she is proud of Alaska's performance and relatively low death rate, and praised the native health service contributions.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Garden & Beautification Committee presentation by Zack Zalatel, Chair. Zack presented a written report of the committee's February 17 meeting. They are focused on improvements around Fireweed & LaTouche, with help from DOWL. It was noted that Ron Alleva got about 35 planters, available to those who reach out to get one. The committee has no projects planned for the College Village neighborhood yet, but will turn their attention in that direction at a later date.

b. Midtown Traffic Congestion Relief.

Bob Butera was expected to present, but was absent, so Dave Evans was asked to present. Dave deferred to Katie Conway of DOWL. Katie advised that there will be an open house to address the status of plans, over Zoom on March 16, with two sessions: one at midday and another at 5 p.m. She directed the members' attention to the project website entitled 36thinterchange.com.

Q&A: Pete Mjos asked about progress and process regarding the Midtown Community Building Initiative Work Group, tasked with mapping to identify cultural and historic features in the area of the highway project. Katie indicated that there will be a strategy lab in April, on a date yet to be determined. This will be addressed on the website.

c. Accessory Dwelling Units, presented by Dan Rosenberg, Chair.

By way of background, the Municipal Assembly passed an ordinance allowing for detached accessory dwelling units in R1 neighborhoods. This was rather controversial. Design and dimensional standards could be imposing on neighbors, shading gardens and creating unwanted shadows that block the sun and may impede solar collection panels. So, in February 2020 a committee was formed to address this concern. Covid-19 stalled committee progress, but lately we've picked it back up.

Dan Rosenberg is preparing a report to present the background and history of the measure, comparing the ordinance with other communities, focusing on northern and western locales. Some places have stopped such measures. The target is to develop a resolution to amend the ordinance. Dan advises to expect a long

process. He notes that there is room to modify it with better siting and design standards, and to better define “owner/occupant” in the ordinance.

d. Public Safety (Crime & Safety), presented by Linda Chase.

Linda notes that in the past administration (of Mayor Berkowitz) lots of information did not get out to the public (i.e., meaningful advance notice and opportunity for response). Planning & Zoning is currently considering provision for homeless and transient shelters in B3 districts. There was a motion to table the measure in order to get more information out to the public prior to consideration. It was said that B3 districts don’t require public input, and that any decision by Planning & Zoning would probably take about 3 months to get on the Assembly Agenda. Linda said the chair did an excellent job, but the vote was 5-3 to approve the proposal. She is concerned and wants to know what happens next so that the public can be informed and provide input.

Q&A: Michael Savitt said he attended the Planning & Zoning meeting and in his opinion the outcome was ordained ahead of time. He said public input was not taken seriously. This, he said, is a rewrite of a prior proposed ordinance. The municipal representatives said they were willing to present to the community councils but waited for an invite.

Ron Alleva said he, too, attended. He denounced the process as just propaganda. He disagreed with Linda that the chair did a good job. He strongly opposes conditional use permits. In his opinion the Brother Francis experience will be duplicated throughout town. He was 40 years next to the Brother Francis Shelter, and Planning & Zoning would not allow him to keep talking at their meetings.

Linda Chase responded. She didn’t like what Planning & Zoning decided either, but we need to explore compromise, to adopt a workable attitude and to work with the process.

e. Nominating Committee.

Linda Chase and Pete Mjos are working together on the nominating committee. They would like to know who would like to run. Linda will not be running for election this time. They would like names of candidates by April, and in May we expect to vote for the 2021-2022 executive board of Rogers Park Community Council.

V. LEGISLATIVE REPORTS.

Nathaniel appeared for Representative Andy Josephson. He explained that one representative brought covid-19 to the chamber, which prompted protective measures. The legislators are now being vaccinated. Andy is on the Law, Courts, and Health & Social Services subcommittees. We should expect deficits again this year, but the degree depends on the size of the PFD. 1 to 1.25 billion is expected for Alaska state and local government under the new federal Covid

Relief Act. At present Andy is working on a number of bills, including: HB30, to modify the definition of permanent partial impairment in the worker's compensation setting; HB45, providing for a presumption that covid is employment related, also in the worker's compensation setting; HB55, providing defined benefits for public safety officers. HB104 would update the motor vehicle tax, and HB57 is a reverse sweep bill.

Q&A. Linda Chase commented that the legislature got off to a slow start due to polarization. She encourages increased cooperation and compromise in the public interest. Jim Wright agreed. Dave McCargo had a question about identifying big ticket items in the Capital budget. Nathaniel noted that money is tight. Jim Wright noted that our legislative representatives previously indicated that things could not get done during covid because the law required legislators to be physically present at the Capitol in order to vote, and that was difficult during covid. Among other things, this gave rise to a lapse in the state emergency declaration. It was said that the law could not be amended to allow for voting without physical presence and congregation until the legislators were physically present at the Capitol to vote. Now that the legislators are back at the Capitol, has there been any effort to amend the law or the rules to allow voting without physical presence in the same room? Nathaniel declined to respond, referring the question to Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson.

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson did not directly answer the question. She explained that protective measures were in place and that legislators are now being vaccinated. Her report was as follows:

Finance/Budget Subcommittees

- *Labor- Near Closeout.*
- *Health and Social Services. We are still meeting twice a week reviewing the largest department budget. Medicaid funding is intact for 2022, but there are concerns with 2023 funding. There are also concerns from the Alaska Food Coalition regarding cuts to the Division of Public Assistance staffing which is interfering with SNAP benefits.*
- *Commerce, Community and Economic Development – We are near Closeout but I have concerns with cuts to Alaska Legal Services (legal assistance to those without money). The Agency received a one-time grant for \$150,000 specifically for Bethel, but its funding is cut over \$300,000. I'm working on getting that reinstated. The services this Agency provides to our most vulnerable citizens is critical.*

Zoom Constituent Meetings.

No one other than legislators, staff and the media are allowed in the Capitol, but we are having many Zoom meetings with constituents which is working out great. If you are interested in meeting with me while in Juneau, please contact Delaney in my office to schedule a Zoom meeting.

March is Women's History Month

- *Women's History Month is an annual declared month that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society, corresponding with International Women's Day on March 8th.*
- *On Monday, March 1st, I gave a floor speech recognizing Women's History Month. You can see and hear the speech on Gavel to Gavel. The theme for 2021 is: "A challenged world is an alert world. Individually, we are all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day."*

Committee Hearing

- *Senate Bill 7, "An act requiring the Department of Public Safety to publish certain policies and procedures on the department's internet website" is scheduled to be heard in the State Affairs Committee on Thursday March 4th at 3:30. You can visit the AKleg.gov website or reach out to the Anchorage LIO Office at 269-0111 to receive information on testifying.*

Capital Projects

- *If there are any projects that the community council would like us to submit for entry into CAPSIS (Capital Project Submission & Information System), please let us. We have until the March 15th deadline.*

How to Stay Informed

- *During the session, you can tune into the Capitol happenings by watching Gavel to Gavel, my Senator Elvi Facebook and Twitter pages and, of course, by reviewing my monthly newsletters.*

If you are not receiving Elvi's monthly newsletter, please let her know. **Session: 907-465-4930//Email: Keith.Bauguess@akleg.gov or Besse.Odom@akleg.gov**

Q&A. Kirk Curry asked that the legislature give early priority to capital budget items as they are subject to 90% matching funds. We should not rely on general obligation bonds if we can help it, because they put us deeper in debt.

VI. SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT.

The Anchorage School Board report was submitted by Margo Bellamy. ASD is presently working on its budget and capital projects requests. Next meeting is Mar. 16, to address: 1) governance; 2) communications; and 3) public meetings. On Mar. 25, ASB will address anti-racism policy.

Margo explained that, except for opt-out students, all students will be back in face-to-face classrooms after one year's absence. ASD is confident that its mitigation measures will keep students and staff safe. The public was invited to do virtual visits of our schools, although that process is largely over. Two schools remain

closed due to earthquake damage sustained in November 2018. Gruening is expected to reopen next year. ASD plans a robust summer school program to make up for lost time and learning opportunity.

Q&A. Pete Mjos noted that the ASD60 program provided for 60 minutes of exercise per day. There was a pilot program of 26 schools, but Covid-19 disrupted this. Margo said it was a successful program. But for covid, it would have expanded to 46 schools. She expects ASD to renew this program. Margo can be reached at bellamy_margo@asdk12.org

VII. ASSEMBLY REPORT.

Meg Zalatel noted that Mar. 18 is Transit Appreciation Day. The Assembly expects the federal government to allocate funds for local projects (think AMATS), but the amount is as yet unknown. Some projects will be in or near Rogers Park Community Council. She hopes for school bond debt reimbursement. The State agreed to pay ~\$35 million, but that debt reimbursement is in jeopardy, making it a local taxpayer concern.

Beth Abisoror asked why MOA proceeded to buy the Golden Lion Hotel but not the other three proposed properties? Meg explained that the individual transaction was okay if due diligence didn't support the others.

Jamilia George voiced disapproval of the procedure, contending that notice to community councils was not equal. She favored instead acquiring a property in the Mat-Su Borough, available with 26 beds as a turnkey operation for \$1.6 million.

Kirk Curry noted that the Assembly discarded 3 of 4 properties at issue. He asked what properties are being looked at now? Meg and Felix responded that they don't know of any new properties at this time.

Michael Savitt argued that Alaska is to be audited for misuse of CARES Act funds, especially by Anchorage. Meg and Felix responded that all 50 states are to be audited. There was argument against a pending proposal to house homeless in B3 districts. Felix responded that the public process was followed, but public outreach was not as robust as he would have preferred. The next step is for the B3 issue to go to the Assembly, probably in late May or early June, where he expects a more robust public process. He will look into the issue of better notice to the community councils.

Felix noted that he hopes to see \$98 million come to the Municipality from the recent Covid Relief Act.

Michael Savitt argued that public process at the 11th hour before a vote by the Assembly is not adequate. It should come earlier. Felix said the Rules Committee will address this concern in an upcoming meeting. Jamilya George added that better notice should occur, that she is only getting it through the community councils.

Ron Alleva argued that 400 properties are affected, so better notice is needed. He said he is upset that labor unions endorsed Meg and Felix, saying they shouldn't have a vote because of this. Felix explained the process, particularly as to the SAP issue. Alleva was warned by the President that he may pose questions but not engage in invective.

Lauri Savitt argued against Planning & Zoning (P&Z) action on the B3 issue. The President explained that the community council has no control over P&Z, and the appropriate forum for her concerns is at the P&Z Commission. Felix agreed that her concerns are best brought in the appropriate forum.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

President Steve Lindbeck noted that there are two proposed resolutions pertaining to the Golden Lion, tabled at the last meeting, which he expects will be taken up at our April 12 meeting. Beth Abisor noted that the Tudor Community Council also has her proposed resolution under consideration. Steve indicated that the proposed resolutions will be published to email subscribers before April 12.

Carl Jacobs introduced himself as a candidate for Anchorage School Board Seat G. Among other things, he'd like to see education create more career opportunities for students, improve the financial position of ASD, and address gaps in academic achievement. For further information see his website at carl4anchorage.com.

Pat Higgins introduced himself as a candidate for Anchorage School Board Seat E. Pat previously served on the Anchorage School Board from 2008-2017. He's running again due to disappointment with the current board. For further information his website is pathigginsforschoolboard.com.

The meeting was then adjourned.