

Call to order

The Spenard Community Council began its meeting shortly after 7:00 pm.

Agenda and Minutes

Tom McGrath made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Alan Thornhill, motion passed. The November minutes were moved by Tom McGrath, seconded by Bob Auth and also approved without objection.

Legislative Report- Senator French

- A) Capital Requests 2007: Senator French provide an update on the Capital Request process for 2007. Ideas should be directed to the SCC chair and he will compile them. The council should act on these prior to February or March and get them to staff in Juneau for inclusion in the capital budget request. The sooner the better for getting requests in.
- B) Coalition Majority: At this time, a coalition including the 9 Democratic senators and 5 Republicans has organized to control the Senate. Within this organization, bipartisan committee chairs have been identified including Sen. French for the Judiciary Committee.
- C) Allison Biastock from Sen. French's office provided a brief presentation and report on web-based tools for keeping up with what's happening in the legislature. Gavel-to-Gavel can be used to view floor sessions and committee hearings if you don't have cable TV. BASIS is the system used for tracking bills. POM's or public opinion messages can be easily sent to legislators using the web site. For more information go to www.legis.state.ak.us.

Peggy Auth asked about POM's. If a POM is longer than 50 words, you may email the message as an attachment to Allison and she will make sure it is delivered.

Assembly Report

Pamela Jennings began her Assembly report with a brief update on Dan Coffey's condition. Assemblyman Coffey recently had a heart attack, but is recovering and resting comfortably at this time. Debbie Ossiander and Anna Fairclough have introduced to an ordinance to eliminate tax charges for Eagle River/Chugiak residents who are served by volunteer EMS. The Ombudsman position, previously held by Greg Moyers, is now vacant. Members Coffey, Sullivan and Jennings are working to fill the position. The Anchorage School District has recently released a publication entitled the Ethnicity Report. The Ethnicity Report consists of a series of tables and graphs, which contain information about the ethnic composition of the Anchorage School District. The School District Budget Review Teams have presented their 5% cut proposal to the superintendent. December 7th will be the next meeting for the Downtown Comp. Plan. It will be at the Egan Center from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. The Delaney Park Master Plan is also being reviewed.

Community Leadership Institute project

Sharon Chamard, Debbie Bauer and Jason Bergerson re-introduced to the council the CLI project that was first discussed in October. The project is not directed solely at code enforcement issues. It is a broader effort to offer leadership training to residents interested in improving their community. A series of trainings will be offered in the spring. The plan along with the tentative schedule will be posted on the Spenard Community Council website as soon as possible. Sam O'Connor proposed a motion to support the new project. Multiple council members seconded the motion. No objection was presented.

APD Update - Sgt. Stanton

Sgt. Stanton reported that field training and the latest academy are almost complete. A citizen's academy is planned for January and there is still room to sign up. The deadline is December 29th. In the East and Dimond areas, APD is distributing information about gangs and their activities. The West area is not yet scheduled. From October 28 to November 27, calls for services overall were down from 1691 to 664. A major contributor

to this was severe cold weather. Decreased in calls occurred in the following areas: 210 fewer traffic stops, 99 less disturbances, 22 less accidents, 13 fewer assaults, 15 less burglaries, 42 fewer follow up cases, 51 fewer locates, 4 less misconducts involving a weapon, 45 less thefts, and 29 fewer vandalism calls. Only 2 detectives and 1 sergeant are available to work burglaries. Sexual Assaults, child abuse and other crimes against person have more staff available to them.

Questions were asked about break-ins in the area. Also, a request was made for the calls for service around the Spenard Rec. Center for the last year. Red light and stop sign runners were discussed. The 3-way stop on Van Buren is big problem according to neighbors. Tom Bichel asked if Spenard Road traffic has changed lately. The Traffic Dept. will need to be asked, since APD doesn't have those statistics. Peggy Auth asked about darkly tinted windows to follow up on last month's discussion. A concept that was discussed was tying problems like illegal mufflers and dark tinted windows to the regular IM inspection or the insurance requirements in the law. Sen. French said that he will also look into the problem.

Midtown Plan

Tom McGrath provided an update on the Midtown Plan. The Midtown Plan is underway for the first time. It is needed to plan for the needed infrastructure in the Midtown Business area. The plan area is basically from Fireweed to International (north to south), and Spenard/Minnesota to the Seward Highway (west to east). A signup sheet is available to get on the email list and receive notice of the lunch meetings. HDR is working on economics and funding issues. A Westside Plan is planned to begin next year and be integrated with the existing Downtown and Midtown work. It will be very important to participate in the process so that the work planned on Spenard Road doesn't turn into the debacle that we all saw on Arctic. The Business community is forming a Midtown Improvement District, similar to the one the Downtown businesses established. Tom McGrath is the interim President of the group and Tom Anderson was recently hired to help. The goals of the MID will include safe streets, clean streets and development of an identity for the area. Pamela Jennings will look into the issue of getting better coordination between PME and the contractors that are doing road work around local businesses.

Minnesota Skate Park

Brad Dunker went through a Powerpoint presentation covering the history of the skate park issue at Minnesota Park and the planning process to date related to the planned relocation of the skate park to the Spenard Rec. Center. At this time, Chester Creek has 3 pieces of skate park equipment, as does Taku Lake. Minnesota Park's equipment was removed this past fall. The Minnesota Park Advisory Task Force, that included SCC members, had raised a number of concerns about the use of the park and the skate equipment. The final recommendation of the group included removing the Minnesota Park skate equipment, moving the skate park to the Spenard Rec. Center, creating a safe zone for all park users, and closing the parking areas off at Minnesota Park. Everything has been completed except for the skate equipment relocation. The plan that precedes this relocation is to provide a "supported facility" versus the stand-alone skate park environment that was allowed at Minnesota Park. Security and video surveillance, a fenced site designed to minimize noise and visual impacts, access to the restrooms and a location on the bus route were all important pre-requisites for the relocation effort. The Spenard Rec. Center was the only site on the west side that potentially met these criteria. Members from the skateboarding community have been included in the planning of the new park location and its equipment layout. January to March is the remaining planning period. April is planned for site prep. June is the target month for opening the new skate park.

Several members of the public were present to comment. Don't put a pay phone at the skate park, it will draw the wrong kind of people. Will video be accessible on the web? It could be. Why is the park so close to the street? The skate park location is based on the available land on the Spenard Rec. Center property and takes into account future plans to expand the facility to the east. Many people complained about noise from traffic and car stereos. Some asked that the location be moved to Taku or Sand Lake. Many concerns were also expressed about the Spenard Rec. Center renting out space for parties that last until 2 or 3 in the morning. There are problems every night with 30-50 cars in the parking lot. There are also problems with tractor-trailers

too. The entire street says “no” to this plan. They want to park plan moved to Delaney or Cuddy Park. One resident said he had been assaulted in his driveway. Why can’t the skate park be put in Fairview, asked another person? The need to have an attendant at the skate park was also discussed. Much of the concern expressed by the neighbors related to general management of the Spenard Rec. Center, and didn’t specifically related to current skating/bicycling activity. Concerns also related to a need for greater police patrols in the area.

A resolution was proposed by the neighbors that live on 48th Avenue that the SCC should object to the relocation of the skate park to the Spenard Recreation Center unless several issues are addressed, specifically including: a) the traffic issues on 48th Avenue, b) the hours of operation being restricted to 10 pm or earlier, preferably 9 pm, c) facility management issues be resolved, d) a security system and plan be presented, and e) noise issues be addressed. Also, neighbors would like to revisit the issue of a police substation being located at the Spenard Rec. Center and they would like a traffic study done of the area surrounding the Spenard Rec. Center. The resolution was seconded and passed unanimously.

The resolution will be broadly distributed to Parks and Rec., the Assembly members and others.

35th and McRae status

Jeff Lewis from the group ‘35th & McRae Neighbors for a Safe Community’ reported that the working group had recently presented its alternative plan for the road project to the municipality. They expect a reply from the city in January and will report back to us at that time.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 9:45 pm.

Recap of resolutions passed at this meeting:

1. Resolution of support for the Community Leadership Institute project
2. Resolution objecting to placement of a skate park at the Spenard Rec. Center unless several conditions are met for the neighbors.