

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, May 11, 2022

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Dan & Sherry Wright, Kevin Edwards, Aaron Stiasny, Benjamin Otis, Christian Lacalale, George Martinez, Lindsey Hadjuk

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Lori Pickett, Ted Eischeid, Keelin Baughman, W James, Drew Cason, Stephanie Taylor

Meeting was called to order at 6:42 pm by President Kendra Kloster (started late due to technical issues).

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

2. Anchorage Police/Fire Station Report – no report

3. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (Keith Bauguess) – submitted her report electronically (attached).

Sen. Bill Wielechowski -- Budgets finished yesterday – includes PFD, federal funding for infrastructure among other things. They are waiting for the house to gavel in to finalize the budget. Expecting they will go into conference committee.

Sen. Tom Begich - Spoke about the homeless funding. The house hasn't taken up the budget yet and adjourned today's session. Concurrence on the budget has only happened twice in 40 years. SB111 (Education Bill) would have put early education (preK) but didn't pass. There was concurrence on the VPSO bill.

Rep. Geran Tarr (provided by David Song) HB 357 – Bridge Naming in honor of Insook Baik passed; HB 54, HB 92, extends HB 312 – Companion Crown act – hair discrimination/regalia issue; SB 7 – GPS policies online

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (provided by Meagan Holland) Rush to get legislation through so it doesn't die at the end of the session. Telehealth bill to keep pandemic flexibilities passed.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

4. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen - 2 new Assembly members were sworn in. Passed 1st quarter budget but Mayor vetoed so will be going over. Additional funding was provided for Navigation Center. Spruce bark beetle killed trees removal funding was added – will be a start to help alleviate some of the fire danger in Anchorage. Confirmed a youth member to the Assembly (from Eagle River – Sarah Price will be serving 2 months and then headed to Air Force academy). ARPA funding available, applications due by May 20.

Ted asked about library personnel and library board. Sunday hours at the library are going away due to shortage of staff. Suggested exit survey to find out why staff is leaving. Has heard the atmosphere is becoming toxic.

Forrest Dunbar – no report.

5. School board report (3 minutes each) – Dora Wilson - next School board meeting is May 17. Dora provided a list of the new board officers. Attended Bartlett graduation at AK Airlines center. There is a process for anyone coming from out of state to teach in Alaska. There will be an overlap for the superintendent transition.

6. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett - Reminder that she won't be at May FCC meeting due to a prior commitment. Next month voting on new FCC positions. April report – special election discussion that includes half of Russian Jack. Ranked Choice voting information will be brought to all councils. Accessory dwelling units (mother-in-law apartments) – zoning issues were discussed.

7. Report from JBER Public Affairs – no report

8. Eden Management Group & Uncle Herb's Presentation on modification for retail space – Aaron Stiasny - active business for 2 years. Requested they move a couple doors down from their current location. Remaining at the same address but into a larger space. They provide employment for 30 people. Two of the staff are residents of Russian Jack Community Council. Liberty Dialysis was their neighbor. Police calls have only been alarms going off due to power outages. They have not had any hold ups. There is no need for our council to vote on this.

Kathleen toured the store when it first opened and appeared to be all in good order.

Ted was a Muni Planner and they noted the industry actually improved the neighborhood in terms of more secure establishments.

9. Wildfire hazard mapping presentation - Jennifer Schmidt, Asst Professor of Natural Resource Mgmt & Policy, UAA, Institute for Social & Economic Research. Hazards considered are fuels (what could burn). What is not calculated in wildfire hazard are the houses, pipelines or other valuable assets that may be in the path of a wildfire. They use an exposure method to assess wildfire hazard that reflects the potential for wildfire activity. Embers cause most of the structure fires in a wildfire event. Purpose of the assessment is for a planning tool to help communities identify where potential fire hazards may be and take mitigating efforts. Defensible space, clean gutters and keep flammable materials away from your house, prune spruce trees. Other ideas were shared.

10. NeighborWorks – Lindsey Hadjuk – less than a month away from Paint the Town event where sponsors and volunteers work to paint homes. There are 3 homes within Russian Jack and work will begin June 7th. A local artist provided artwork for this project. A community wide event later that week will plant the plants that were purchased last year for Polar Bear Park enhancement. Working on finalizing the date and coordinating with Parks & Rec maintenance

crew. Happy to participate in the RJSP clean up. There is still some funding from Neighbor Works for a Russian Jack project.

11. Neighborhood/Community Announcements

We did not get the Challenge grant for parks. Kendra will keep working on that.

Keelin Braughman – Mountain View Library update – Summer reading program will be starting soon. This is for children and adults and begins Saturday. Reading Rondevous will be at Loussac Library to kick this off. 12 – 4 pm. Dora participated in the Mountain View Library wellness program.

Lindsay Hadjuk – Anchorage Folk Festival has an outdoor event this year from noon to 10 pm at Loussac May 14th.

Dimond Boulevard Baptist has a Community Garage Sale / Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm May 14th.

Reminder to provide Nonperishable foods this Saturday for Food Bank via US Postal Service.

May 12 is deadline to update registration for special election. June 11 deadline for primary for US House.

AK Literacy Program- Vaccine Clinic hosted at ALP May 19th from 4-7 pm. Summer classes start June 6th. Cradle to Career Anchorage is having a kick off event with free food, activities and live performances on Sunday, May 22 from 2 to 5 pm at Begich Middle School. Focused on digital literacy. Public health outreach at Fairview Rec Center.

Thanks for those that cleaned up the park.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 8th at 6:30 pm. July/August will be no meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary

My Senate Bills on the Move

SB 7 State Trooper Policies: Public Access. Was heard in H-JUD on 4/25/22. Bill will now go to the House floor for a vote.

SB 80 Public Schools: Mental health Education. Passed House Finance on a vote of 7-4. Bill will now go to the House floor for a vote.

SB 222 Extend Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Board. Passed the House floor on a vote of 37-1 and is now waiting for the governor's signature.

Other bills on the move

On April 12, the Alaska State Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 111 "Alaska Reads Act".

This bill seeks to expand universal, voluntary Pre-K and other early learning services, establishes a statewide K-3rd grade reading intervention program, and codifies support for virtual education.

Budget

Both the Operating and Capital budget are currently in the Senate, some of the amendments that were adopted so far are the following.

Amendment #2: Adds an additional \$1300 to the 2021 PFD.

Amendment #6: Includes the following projects among others:

- Food aid to Ukraine
- Alaska Black Caucus- Construction of the Equity Center
- Anchorage – Northeast Areawide Pedestrian and Safety Traffic Calming
- Anchorage – Northern Lights Sound Barrier Fence Phase III and Median Landscaping
- Anchorage – Russian Jack Area School Pedestrian and Safety Upgrade

Community events:

We were invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Alaskan Veterans Museum. The event marked its grand re-opening. If you have not had the chance to visit the museum, I highly suggest that you do. The museum is in the Sunshine Mall at 411 West 4th Ave.

I also attended the open house for Alaska Adoption Services. During the event, I was able to learn more about the mission and work of Alaska Adoption Services and how we all can help support families in need.

Email: Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov, Ludmila.Diaz@akleg.gov or Besse.Odom@akleg.gov

Always representing your interests!

