

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, November 9, 2022

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Lori Pickett, Kathleen Plunkett, Tammy Hansen, Andrew Gray, Dan Reynolds, Austin & Kristin Davis, Abby Bell, Reb Hanson, Daniel George, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Keelin Baughman, Tamara Davis, Ted Eischeid, Tanner Brandt, Genevieve Mina (started on Zoom, then came to the meeting)

Meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm by President Kendra Kloster.

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement We are meeting on Dena'ina Land – grateful for their care and sharing the land with us.

2. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (Keith Bauguess) – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – Thanks for Senator Begich service. Expect we'll see him around. Elections over – potential Senate organization able to collaborate for the future. Big issue is education with two school potential closures in our area. Increase base student allocation, earlier education, forward funding for education. Hopeful to lead on many of these issues from the Senate.

Sen. Tom Begich – If interested in reading program contact his office. He spoke about some of the newly elected members in the Alaska Senate.

Rep. Geran Tarr - Poverty and Opportunity task force working on recommendations for the legislator. Restorative Justice seminar coming up. Celebrating work done at the end of the year. Will bring box tops to Wonder Park. May not make December meeting.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – (provided by Maya) – COVID related funding for fish processors and is being distributed in allotments. Legislative Budget & Audit have resulting finds of a lack of staffing as a primary issue. Still ballots that need to be counted and with rank choice voting, will not know final tallies.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each) – Assembly meeting tonight, so no report.

Pete Petersen / Forrest Dunbar

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Kelly Lessens – updated us with the flat funding, declining enrollment and inflation factors. They continue to review proposals on how to chip away at the \$68 million deficit. Some of these include close and demolish some elementary – two becoming preschool hubs, others charter schools within ASD. \$37 million bond moving forward. Town halls in the Eagle River area schools happened last week. The school board is interested in hearing people's stories, but even more in concrete suggestions. Monday, November 14 is the meeting at Nunaka Valley; Wonder Park, Tuesday, November 22. Space/Student allocation is a chart that shows base student funding (what it should be for inflation proofing). An additional \$850 per student is needed to maintain classes. Larger class sizes tend to lead to teacher burnout. Andrew asked about the proposed Nunaka Valley

Elementary use? Pre-school is the idea. Wonder Park students would be moved to Williwaw & Ptarmigan, but the pre-school programs would first have to be moved out for this to work. A concern of staffing is a factor. Those on the list for demolition is Abbot Loop Elementary School due to the age of the building and maintenance required to bring it up to code, given the enrollment decline, it's in the district financial benefit. Land is owned by MOA. Reb asked why isn't Inlet View on the list of closures? Criteria looked at boundaries, projections, school condition and age, future growth. Most proposals are about getting students access to better services. Where there are high levels of need (Title schools), the hope is they can better serve them. Building capacity vs utilization is another factor they looked at. October is the month ASD takes a count of school attendance.

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – ASD budget was a topic of FCC meeting discussion. They received a quick update from Tom Davis about Community Council boundaries. This is a 10-year review process. Assembly may be able to provide an update and more information at the next meeting.

6. Community Car Wash Project Presentation – Tanner Brandt (on Zoom), Austin Davis provided the presentation about this new business which needs a major site plan amendment. There is a general site plan overlay done in early 2000's for this site. This is a major site plan review because they would be demolishing the current car wash and rebuilding. 6-7 cars move through the wash. Sherry expressed concern of a traffic jam where cars are exiting the wash and those coming into the wash. Membership costs \$29.99 – 59.99 per month with unlimited car wash. They utilize cell phone apps and are member based. Tommy's family has been in business for 50 years. They try to be environmentally friendly. Some of the questions and/or concerns raised were: Has an application been submitted to Planning & Zoning? Traffic Improvement Analysis is also needed. People exiting Costco on that road by the car wash can cause a backup of traffic. Russian Jack Manor is a neighboring property and consideration of them is appreciated. There was a discussion of hours of operation and noise issues. Austin anticipates a timeline of around 7 ½ months from groundbreaking to opening day. They will have 16 employees, as well as a General Manager and plan to use local hire.

7. Renovations on Anchorage Memorial Park – Lori Pickett read the letter we received from Brianna Sullivan about this issue. Please see the recent Cemetery Resolution from the Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS).

The Cemetery Committee asks for the Russian Jack Community Council's support and sharing awareness. The Anchorage Assembly Members are in support of this concept and hearing the support from Community Councils is further beneficial. Renovations to the Anchorage Memorial Park, and Phase I of Eagle River /Chugiak Cemetery and Girdwood Cemetery will alleviate pressure on the Anchorage Memorial Park's limited remaining space for public burials. Cemeteries are basic infrastructure and thus a service provided by the MOA. It has been since 1915 that the Anchorage Memorial Park was established under a Federal Executive Order; planning into the future, for centuries, is critical. This would be an areawide bond for the MOA in April 2023 as a separate Parks & Recreation bond. This has been years in the making and Girdwood was anticipating Eagle River's plan in order to be on the same page in introducing our projects, together. The cost is an estimate, albeit currently outdated at \$10MIL for the 3 Cemeteries. Since Girdwood's estimate was \$4MIL in 2019, we wrote \$5MIL as a placeholder in this resolution, incase \$4MIL is inaccurate with the myriad changes that have occurred over the last four years. Anchorage Memorial was between \$2-3MIL in their 2017 study, and Eagle

River's estimate was \$3MIL in 2021. Cemeteries take years to be implemented - both Girdwood and Eagle River have Phased approaches with decades between each phase. The monies would be spread out over many years and the legal language for the bond will be written in the weeks ahead. The council would like to hear more about this from the Assembly.

8. Liquor and marijuana license applications – Daniel George made a motion to consider the licensees (for discussion purposes) and Kathleen Plunkett 2nd. The liquor is a renewal of the package store at Costco. The marijuana is a new business that seeks to be located at the old First National Bank near Value Village on Northern Lights. Ed stated that the further people have to drive to acquire these items, the more dangerous it is for others. Sherry objects to liquor and/or marijuana use, the costs associated from their use, and the problems that arise from abuse of these things. The new business may be in preliminary stages and there was some discussion whether or not the council should even take this up. Daniel spoke about the closure of the Brown Jug store work done by the Mt. View CC. Motion and 2nd were rescinded and Daniel made a new motion to non-objection of the renewal of the Costco package store. 2nd by Kathleen. The vote was taken with 10 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion carried. Reb Hanson made a motion that Catalyst Cannabis provides a presentation to the council, so we will have more information of their plans. Ed 2nd. There was no objection, so the motion carried.

9. Community Council Boundaries update - We would like to hear more about this from the Assembly at our next meeting. We spoke briefly about it during the FCC report, but need more information.

10. Capital Projects update for RJCC area –We realized there are a few edits needed on our current list. The Pine St/McCarrey St surface rehab – Mountain View Dr to DeBarr Road has been completed. The Bragaw St at Penland Pkwy Traffic safety crossing funding is most likely only enough to do a study of the issue. The listing of 6th Avenue at Boniface Pkwy separated east and west bound left turn lane (should be 4th Avenue). The pedestrian and bicycle access from Pine St to Russian Jack Springs park has been completed. Kendra will update the CIP and post on our Facebook page, and also on google docs, so people can comment. It was suggested that we use rank choice voting to come up with our priorities for the various projects (between now and our December meeting) where we will discuss it further.

11. Nominations for RJCC Officers – President – Kendra Kloster, Vice President – Lori Pickett, Secretary – Sherry Wright, Treasurer – Ed Leach, FCC Rep and Trustee – Kathleen Plunkett. All current officers are willing to continue to serve. Elections occur at the December meeting.

12. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Keelin Braughman provided an update on Mountain View Library - Closures on the 11th and 24th-25th. Tomorrow, at 3pm, Ukulele Workshop with Kanekoa, a ukulele rock band. Feel free to call or email if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, keelin.baughman@anchorageak.gov or 343-2904

Next meeting is scheduled for December 14th at 6:30 pm and will include our annual potluck.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary