

# Minutes

Northeast Community Council (NECC)

November 17, 2022, | 7pm

Centennial Village- Multipurpose Room

9131 Centennial Circle, Anchorage, AK 99504

\*NECC minutes are always taken by a volunteer board member

## Board Members

**George Martinez**, President | **Lyn Franks**, Treasurer | **Ron Meehan**, Secretary | **Bob Reupke**, FCC Delegate | **Selina Metoyer**, Member | **Stu Grenier**, Member | **Murray Crookes**, Member | **Donna Mears**, Member

## George Martinez Calls Meeting to Order at 7:02 PM

39 people were present virtually or in the room.

## Pledge of Allegiance

## Board Roll Call

## Minutes Approval: [October](#)

**Bob Reupke** motions, **Murray Crookes** seconds

## Treasurer's Update

Lyn Franks reports \$1919.68 in the bank account.

## FCC Report

**Bob Reupke:** The FCC met yesterday for two and a half hours. Something that was not on the agenda was the honor flights that go from Anchorage to Washington DC for about a week. It gives the veterans time to walk around Washington, DC. They've had the flight since 2013. They transport about 349 vets and the next one is April 23 and it's full. Margo Bellamy gave a report on the school district and they're going to have a lot of town halls and budget meetings and hopefully they're going to make some sort of decision by December 10 as to the extent of the cut. There's going to have to be a lot of cuts because they're \$68 million in the hole. Tom O'Malley spoke on the Girdwood cemetery. These are sites they're looking for to start cemeteries in Girdwood and Eagle River and Chugiak. The Assembly is in favor of this. It will cost about \$11 million about \$9-12 a year. We have a resolution in support for areawide proposals for cemeteries and I have a copy of that I will pass around. Suzanne LaFrance was there, she's in favor of the cemeteries. The next budget meeting is going to be on November 22, this coming Tuesday. They will go over the election codes and change to title 21. Hans Thompson from South Addition is bringing forth a noise amendment. Some of the pick up trucks are really, really loud. I asked if this was going to go up to these boom boomboxes and he said it was strictly for the cars. There will be no FCC meeting in December. The FCC budget is \$90,000 and they have purchased insurance to the tune of \$4950 to cover all of the liability for the community councils. So if we change locations we need to let the FCC know. There's another issue on 92nd St underpass under the Seward highway, there's a lot of consternation on this. It's to the tune of \$112 million and to me it looks like kind of a waste of money. There is a meeting I guess tonight, is that right Pete?

**Pete Peterson:** Amass meeting this afternoon.

**Bob Reupke:** They said the freeway does not need a six way between O'Malley and Dimond. This is going to be a very expensive deal and the DOT wants to go through with it. I think there's a lot of people that are not in favor of it.

**Stu Grenier:** Bob, was there any discussion about homeless folks still tenting it?

**Bob Reupke:** No, there was no discussion. I asked Suzanne LaFrance about the navigation center, she said that's still up in the air. She would like to see it built but it's probably not going to go until next year, until they get a tap on what this thing is going to cost. This navigation center is located near the cop shop on Tudor road. They have cleared the land but they've stopped working on it.

### **Community Concerns and Activities (opportunity for community members to share concerns, requests for the council, and upcoming needs/activities, 2 min each)**

**Jude Metoyer:** I just wanted to reintroduce myself, you may have seen me or at least heard me at the last meeting. I'm Selina Metoyer's son. I just returned home and just want to help out. I spent the last few years working predominantly on charitable giving and community focused projects and events all over the United States. I'm looking to bring those skills back home and help out in our own community. It's nice to be back, nice to meet everybody. My first name is Jude like the song.

**Stu Grenier:** I'm trails and parks chair for the Northeast Community Council. I invited the folks living under the tree about 300 yards over here to this meeting, that's why I was late. I brought a pizza and I told them we've got pizza. I'm not sure what they look like but they're homeless and they've been under that tree for three weeks. I called the Mayor, I talked to Steve with Parks and Rec, emailed twice, and I reported the tent on Anchorage #works. Which is, usually this gets things done. So my question for everybody here tonight is: what is the role of the council when the government fails? I have a problem with sitting in my living room- I don't even know what race these people are, I'm not sure what they're going to look like if they do come. I talked to them through the side of a tent and they said they had a dog and there's a woman in there too. Anyhow, I'm here on top of the hill and they said ya we're coming. Somebody dropped the ball and I was told by someone who I'm not going to name that this was not going to happen and I just went to Russian Jack and it was so comfortable there. I'm just saying guys we could open it up in there from 10PM to 8AM and run it like a military operation. It's got clean hot water, running restrooms, let them set their tents up, pay one security guard, let them watch TV all night or whatever. Then get them all out of there by 8AM and then let the skiers and hikers and dog walkers use it. They just need a warm place to sleep. What they do in a day, I don't know but having people under the trees where we have to look at them. I was out at 4AM walking my dog at weird hours and I could see their candle. This is 50 yards behind my dumpster. Nobody cares, I don't know what else to do. If they come, I told them they don't have to say anything.

### **Legislative Reports (limit 3 min. each, including questions)**

**Maya Narang, Rep Spohnholz:** Since we last met we have sent a letter with our Co-Chair of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce Representative Fields to the FTC about the Albertsons-Kroger merger. Albertsons and Kroger are currently trying to merge. In Alaska, in our five largest districts they are the primary competitors for groceries and we have some of the highest costs of groceries in the nation. We have sent a letter to the FTC to intervene and block this merger on behalf of our legislature. Also since we last met, the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee has continued to meet. We released a sunset audit of the state medical board. They continue to find in all of our audits that we've had come out recently that the biggest issue in our government right now for why we're having all of these discrepancies with our agencies is a shortage of workers. The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee also approved an RPL of \$10 million of COVID relief funding for fish processors. There are some more RPLs that will be also related to processors that are currently being evaluated whether they'll pass either in December or go to the next legislature to pass. Just a note there are town halls for the school closures coming up. There's a bunch of them at the end of November. Abbott Loop, Klatt, and Wonder Park will all have town halls at their schools coming up and then there are online town halls for all six of the elementary schools that are being proposed to be closed on the 30th, the 29th, and December 1st. Those are at 6PM and you can access them on the ASD website, Facebook, or Twitter.

**Bill Wielechowski:** Thank you for your support in the last election or if I didn't have your support I look forward to representing you anyway. The big issue in the last few weeks, in the last couple months, has been the school closures. I've been to many meetings, I was just at a School District meeting yesterday. I will be at the Nunaka Valley one next week. What we've learned is that the closure of the Nunaka Valley school, according to the documents that we've been seeing, will save about \$245,000 out of the \$68 million deficit. That is the heart of that community in Nunaka Valley. I've got my staff working, trying to figure out ways to slow that down, stop that. I've been having a lot of conversations with school board members. One of the interesting and concerning things is that the school district has tens of millions of dollars in COVID

funds remaining. They could use that to fill this budget gap but instead what they are planning on doing- or what they are talking about doing is using \$34 million to rebuild a brand new school in Inlet View, which is a wealthy area. We have five title one schools on the chopping block. Title one schools are low income schools. I think it looks terrible and it's maybe not the greatest policy when you have one school in a wealthy area and politically connected school and you want to close lower income schools. I think optics look terrible and it would be a big mistake for the school board to do that. So I'm working on a letter to the school board to say that. Otherwise, after the elections we are working on organizing. The House and the Senate are both trying to organize. Basically what that means is that whoever gets to 11 first is in the majority and being in the majority means you control gavels, committees, and things like that. So I've been very active in having discussions in that regard along with Forrest Dunbar. We've been having a lot of meetings and I think you can expect an announcement in a week or so. Nothing guaranteed, it could completely fall apart but I feel pretty good at this point.

**Ari Wiggin, Rep. Liz Snyder:** My notes have been addressed by the previous speaker but I wanted to emphasize joining us at the town halls that are listed on ASD's website for the school closures. If you haven't been able to make it to a town hall, if the timing hasn't worked for you please send your notes to us at [Representative.liz.snyder@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.liz.snyder@akleg.gov) so we can communicate those to the school district. Otherwise I would emphasize joining Kristi Woods' efforts in petitioning to keep the Nunaka Valley School open. If you have any other questions I will be around.

**Bud Simms:** What are they going to do with the kids when they close the school. Where are they going to go?

**Ari Wiggin, Rep. Liz Snyder:** They're going to split them up. We've been in communication with the school district but the information that we've been given is they're going to split them up in other nearby schools. I believe Nunaka is going to Chester Valley and Russian Jack.

**Bud Simms:** They're thinking about closing five schools, how many kids does that curtail?

**Ari Wiggin, Rep. Liz Snyder:** I don't have those numbers off the top of my head. I'd love to take your questions down and if any of them remain unanswered our office can bring them to the administration as well.

### **Assembly Reports (limit 3 min. each, including questions)**

**Forrest Dunbar:** On behalf of Dan and Chris, they are currently at South Addition Community Council. I was just at the Airport Heights Community Council, Campbell Park Community Council also meets at this exact day and time so it can be a little bit complicated.

**Pete Peterson:** If anyone is interested, we have got the 2023 budget on our agenda for next Tuesday. I'm not sure we're going to be passing that, we have a bunch of amendments that we went over earlier. I'm expecting if we don't pass it we will be discussing it for several hours. It's a continuation budget, it's approximately \$20 million larger than last year's budget and most of those increases are because we have contracts increasing with the personnel that we have to pay.

**Forrest Dunbar:** I'll say it's the largest budget in Anchorage's history and the Assembly hasn't even touched it yet. It's just that the Mayor has proposed a \$583 million budget. It's not going to increase services but there have been these inflationary costs and it's not just one budget it's four or five budgets. It's the operating budget, the capital budget, the utility, I think that's all. We'll be working on all of those on the 22nd, if we don't pass one or more of those it will go to the next meeting- the first meeting of December. We've already had a number of work sessions on the budget, we've had two public hearings. I'm the Budget and Finance Committee Co-Chair. Myself and the other Co-Chair will be bringing forward an omnibus amendment that will propose a lot of the changes that the Assembly is asking for. I'll say that those are relatively small. I think our omnibus amendment is now about \$3 million out of again \$583 million. A majority of the budget will probably stay the same. The largest single program that the Assembly will probably ask that the Mayor change is what's called the mobile crisis team, the mental health first responders program which the Mayor cut last year. We restored it and then he vetoed us and we overrode him. This year he took it out of the Fire Department and absorbed it into a different program in the Police Department called the mobile intervention team which is a similar but different thing. We believe the solution is probably to restore the mobile crisis team but also keep the Mayor's increased investment in the police force. They are complementary and we can have sort of a hybrid model that my colleague Meg Zaletel is working on and we have enough surplus funds to do that. One of the interesting stories about the municipality is that despite the budget shortfall with the school district and some of the problems we can see on the horizon with the state, the city's finances are in pretty good health and they have been for a number of years because we sold LMP and put that money in a trust. Because we passed an alcohol tax and a fuel tax. We have increased and diversified revenue and because of that we have a surplus. We also just recently got

\$23 million in SMT funds from the federal government that we weren't expecting. Medicaid reimbursement for prior services rendered through our ambulance service and this is \$23 million that we can decide what to do with. Last meeting we decided to purchase a number of fire apparatuses with those: two engines, two ladder trucks. That was about \$6 million I think and we are still discussing what to do with the remaining \$17 million.

**Pete Peterson:** Since our last meeting a month ago they did an inspection of the Golden Lion Hotel and came up with a list of the areas that need to be repaired or have improvements made. They're in the process of going through the hotel and making those repairs. When they finish those they will do another fire inspection and if that passes then it's possible we will be getting close to allowing people to occupy that facility. It's also been designated as a rooming house since it's been designated as that, we will be able to use that to put individuals, some of which may be currently staying at the Sullivan Arena.

**Forrest Dunbar:** That's similar to the designation for the Guest House downtown which has been another successful project to house people experiencing homelessness. We also heard from the Rasmusson Foundation that they are closing on two hotels, one they'll close before the other with 85 units of housing in Spenard. Some of those can be double units too. We're hoping that if we turn that hotel on and the Golden Lion and there's an additional facility with 45 beds- all of this is money we have already set aside under the ARPA program- we can hopefully get folks out of the Sullivan Arena. That is what everyone wants to do. Unfortunately, we also have the issue of the Aviator hotel hanging over us so we'll have to find additional housing for those folks once that hotel, they want to end their relationship with the city and return to being a regular hotel and there's about 200 individuals in that space.

**Pete Peterson:** We have a new librarian, we haven't had an official librarian in about a year and a half or so. Virginia McClure started on October 17 and the library employees that I have spoken to have all spoken glowingly of her and are very happy with the choice. She has the required experience and education. Hopefully we have reached the end of that controversy.

**Forrest Dunbar:** We also at the last meeting confirmed a new head for the Municipal Airport. Richard Sewell who lives in East Anchorage actually. He comes to us from the State Department of Transportation where he worked in statewide aviation. So he came highly recommended and he passed unanimously. I had a good conversation with him. He has a vision for what the municipal airport can be as an economic generator going forward. Particularly to me he highlighted that there's a lot of federal funds out there for drone businesses and drone research and Merrill Field might be a good place to house some of those businesses.

**Stu Grenier:** Well I heard all about the housing which I hope will help the people we have to look at in the woods and I'm sure you're going to make sure that happens. I thought we weren't going to have to deal with this. I thought it would be taken care of but I hope something can be done. They can hear us if you shout out the front door here.

**Forrest Dunbar:** You're saying there's an encampment near here?

**Stu Grenier:** Yes and it's on Anchorage #works and I called the Mayor. I think you got emailed too but then I also sent it also to Steve.

**Forrest Dunbar:** I don't know that I got that one but I appreciate you still being on top of that. We don't abate camps if there isn't room but I think there is room in the Sullivan Arena right now so hopefully Parks and Rec can go out there.

**Stu Grenier:** I think there's a dog out there too. It's very frustrating and I am afraid something is going to happen and we're all going to feel very bad.

**Forrest Dunbar:** I agree. I will say this, I've done the point in time count where you go out in the early morning and you speak to individuals experiencing homelessness. What some of them will tell you is that I don't want to go to Brother Francis or the Sullivan Arena where it's hot and crowded and dangerous and someone who assaulted me is there. But I am willing to go to housing even if it's a very small room and that's what we're standing up in the next few months. Hundreds of units of new housing. If the Mayor allows us to turn on the Golden Lion and the Rasmusson Foundation is able to use our money to purchase and close on these hotels which they expect to. If that's the case, then we can have folks contact those people and hopefully get them into housing.

**Bob Reupke:** What are your thoughts on the navigation center? It's going to cost way too much.

**Forrest Dunbar:** I think it is unlikely to move forward. The Assembly voted 9-3 against it. Pete and I have been opposed to it since last year or I guess early this year. I don't need to go into all the details but basically there was a scandal where they went forward and spent about \$3.5 million without Assembly approval. Dug a big hole in the ground, put some rebar in it and then ran out of approved money. The cost had really bloomed- it was up to \$15 million. For \$15 million, for example we're about to buy two hotels for

\$12 million, and so it was just getting dramatically more expensive and it's way more expensive to operate. That's something else that's really important. Those housing units and those hotels, you can get certain kinds of federal operating dollars to run those kinds of housing units, they go with the person that's housed. So they get very close to breaking even and we can supplement them with alcohol tax money and they can be pretty self sustaining. Shelter isn't like that. You can't get federal funds for shelter in the same way. So it would be dramatically more expensive to operate that facility. That facility failed 3-9. We still own the big tent, it's sitting in the lower 48. Maybe they can find a way to use it. They spent \$2 million on that thing and maybe they can find some use for it as a storage facility or something. Maybe someday something like that can go forward. I will say this though, it was a shelter. They kept using the term navigation center. There's a navigation center in the Sullivan Arena, there's a navigation center planned for 3rd Avenue. They kept calling it a navigation center, if there is no housing or treatment to navigate to it's just a shelter. It was a euphemism.

**Brian Burke:** Concerning the homelessness in Anchorage, is there anything being looked at other than providing housing?

**Pete Peterson:** There's an entire home for good program that was created probably four years I believe. There are a number of programs that are available, but you have to find the individual and figure out which program they qualify for or what they're interested in or what they're physically able to do. It actually takes a lot of coordination and that's why they have navigation centers in other communities around the country. It's to navigate some of the homeless to some of the programs so they can get job training or whatever it is to try to get them off the street.

**Forrest Dunbar:** There's more than one kind of housing. So you have what's called extremely low income housing. I think people will be surprised by how many folks experiencing homelessness work. It's actually a surprisingly large percentage even at the Sullivan Arena. So some of these folks will work but it will pay much lower than market rates. We also have a treatment facility that we tried to stand up at the Golden Lion but now it will probably move to a different location. We did stand up something at Fireweed called the Sockeye Inn which is complex medical care for people that have medical needs and they can get medicaid funding. It's mostly elders. So there are a variety of programs but the general policy and best practice- that I think there is actually pretty good uniform, the mayor, coalition to end homeless, and the Assembly believe is that the solution to end homelessness is housing. It really is the single best way to get somebody off the street, stabilized, and where they can hopefully turn around or remain. Housing is our primary focus.

**Brian Burke:** Do you project other programs, or is it just we're going to house folks and see what happens?

**Forrest Dunbar:** Well we've never, in the history of the city, stood up as many housing units as we are standing up now. I think it's going to make an appreciable difference.

**Pete Peterson:** 332 this year.

**Forrest Dunbar:** We got a report from the coalition and we've just never had these kinds of resources before. After the alcohol tax came online and some of the federal funds that we received we just have much more resources to finally address some of these issues. So I'm cautiously optimistic that what has worked in other parts of the country will also work here. I'm being a little bit simplistic. If you talk to the coalition to end homelessness they will tell you about a million programs that they run. But for us, it's primarily treatment and housing. I will be here if we have a special meeting to pass the Nunaka Valley Resolution, which I hope we did. I share my colleagues' sentiment about saving Nunaka Valley Elementary School. This will be my last regular meeting of the Northeast Community Council. I have been coming to these meetings for six and a half years but I've been elected to the State Senate and my new district is further to the west. You have two great Senators with Löki Tobin and Bill Wielechowski, and so I just want to say thank you so much. I will always have a special place in my heart for this part of town and if you ever have anything please send me an email or give me a call.

**Community Leadership Updates as available (3 min each)** [JBER](#), [Mayor's Office](#), [Police Department](#), [Fire Department](#), [Parks & Recreation](#), [Muldoon Public Library](#), [School Board](#), [Community Patrol](#), [others](#).

**Joy, JBER:** Just a couple of quick updates for you. On November 25 at about 8AM if you look up toward Arctic Valley you'll see that the star is going to be turned on. So please keep your eyes peeled for that. I posted some information in the chat for your records. There's also a good article that our public affairs team put out. This year instead of going the old Griswold thing like that with the plugs the engineers are actually going to be able to press a button and turn the lights on from way down here on base. The other thing that I want to let you know about is that the office of local defense community cooperation- every year they put out a report regarding military activities by state- that will tell you the number of military people, whether it's active duty, reserves, contractors, civilians, by service as well and also the economic impact. The OLDCC is

the name of this organization, they put out their report for FY 21. I realize that that information is now over a year old but it's still interesting and it's out there if you are curious about it. There's a link in the chat There's the State of Alaska report and you can also check out the reports for all other 49 states.

**Stephen D. Ward:** Earlier today there was a loud explosion, whether that be the engineers testing out the mortars or munitions, playing with danger buddy, but it did rattle our buildings a little. Is there a way we could actually get an update of when they're going to do that so I can tell my community hey there's no danger, you don't need to go run into your fort. Keep wondering where things are coming from because not only did I go but about ten or 15 others were like where did that come from and finally it clicked that they are doing mortar or explosive training.

**Joy, JBER:** Thank you, I think it was also tracked on Alaska Twitter. Other folks noticed it, thank you for pointing that out. Our public affairs folks do send out an update to the FCC. If you're on the FCC mailing list you'll get that update every month. In that posting for this month they did identify there is an exercise this week. I didn't say it because it's basically over now but that's what that was. It was just an exercise on base, just local to us. There were loud noises, emergency vehicles, sirens, and loud giant voids from speaker systems but thank you for asking, that's a good question.

**Aaron, Nunaka Valley Patrol:** For folks who don't know me, my name is Aaron Pascal. I have lived in Nunaka Valley for the past 48 years. About 27 years ago I opened up Nunaka Valley Community Patrol, so I've been doing that for quite awhile. The continuation of that needs to be kept going because I figure hopefully I can retire from it in about three years. We're doing a pretty good job, we have what I call a want to be a cop car. It looks like a cop car, it's a marked car, it has headlights on top and all this in Nunaka Valley and it does help. The other patrols that don't have marked cars, they use their own cars but we make sure they have signs on their cars because if they're driving around slow, someone is going to call the cops on them. So if someone is driving around slow we make sure they have identification. We have pretty much the same problem as everybody else with the homeless. Campsites are up in different places and whatnot. Our biggest fight again is the Nunaka Valley school closing. I have three generations that went to that school and sure don't want to see it close down. So we're fighting like heck and Kristi, thank you for all the work you're doing on that. It takes a lot of coordination but I think I got up and spoke and I told the Assembly, the school board, I realize that school is a business and you have to run it, but our kids are not business and it affects them a lot. Every time you pick up a kid and put them someplace else you're going to have downfalls or back falls or whatever you want to call it. It is going to affect them and the family and whatnot. What scares me is that it affects the whole family, the older kids, if it affects them they're going to be out in the street doing things they're not supposed to be doing. Closing these schools is quite ridiculous. It is going to increase crime and low level stuff that the kids shouldn't be doing. We are watching that. If you could say something, say it loud, please. We need to keep these schools going, they're all title one schools and they're all from low income families. So we want to make sure that they're especially taken care of.

**Selina Metoyer:** I just want to make a comment that he has been faithful and loyal and he has protected the community for all these years and sometimes by himself.

**George Martinez:** He is outside at the end of school days making sure that the kids are safe now. He mentioned he wants to help keep things going. Let's talk with Mr. Pascal after our meeting if people are interested in volunteering or getting involved with the community patrols, this is a starting point.

**Kelly Lessens:** I hope you all are doing well, life on the school board feels very relevant right now. It is humbling and heartbreaking and all sorts of things all at the same time and yet I still choose to see the opportunity in this important role. The kids are exceptional as always. We had a busy school board meeting on Tuesday night. A lot of folks speaking up about programs that were important to them, particularly the immersion program. A lot of folks speaking out about the proposed school closures and repurposing. Many folks may be aware, there have been six schools that the district has suggested we do something different with to provide more efficient services to our students. For five out of those six schools the idea is to repurpose them and the sixth school the administration is suggesting would be disposed of and returned to the municipality and that school is Abbott Loop. The other five schools are Birchwood up in Chugiak, Klatt Elementary in southwest Anchorage, Nunaka Valley and Wonder Park in your neck of the woods, and Northwood across town. We've had four town hall meetings so far and the administration makes a 20-30 minute presentation on how we did we get here to this \$68 million fiscal cliff and what exactly does a school repurposing or closure entail. There have been opportunities for community members to ask questions or share what's on their heart. Students were singing last night as a demonstration of their community. The school is their family and it's their community. I think each community has offered a really beautiful portrait of who they are and what they care about. There are young families and walkability is really important and preschool is important and the culture and students resources that are offered. There are all these wonderful things that we're hearing but at the end of the day, the Board has got to pass a balanced budget



and we need the community's help to move forward. We cannot be fractured. We've got to approach our legislature and our Governor with the demand that we need adequate funding. Our students need adequate inflation adjusted funding. So for the upcoming fiscal year that's an \$860 difference between what we are slated to receive and what we need to receive. \$860 is the increase just to adjust that base student allocation for inflation. I wanted to share that we have two more community town halls coming up. Monday night will be at- Wonder Park is Tuesday and Abbott Loop is Monday. Monday and Tuesday of next week and then on, after Thanksgiving on the 29th and 30th also from 6-8pm there will be virtual town halls on the six school closures. There will be an opportunity for the same public process as school board meetings. Members can sign up to testify by 5PM the day before and that will help with translation needs. You will get three minutes to testify or ask questions. December 1 will be another virtual town hall really focused on relocation and repurposing. We also had a communications committee meeting today, member Wilson chairs that committee, we will have- there is a second survey open to the public. We are looking for feedback and that will probably remain open through December 2. So I will say that is the latest news that I have to share and I would be happy to pause and answer questions you have.

**George Martinez:** Just to confirm that those surveys will be available in multiple languages?

**Kelly Lessens:** Yes, It is my understanding that the surveys will be available in multiple languages and I was really impressed to hear that at each of our town halls the IT department has set up a bank of chrome books on sites and they are available in different languages already ready to go. There's also hard copies in addition to the online survey. If you're going to a town hall you're kind of a captive audience there and that's an excellent opportunity to access those surveys but they should be available if you go to [Asdk12.org/fy24](https://Asdk12.org/fy24) That is the homepage for all of the budget solutions.

**Kristi Wood:** A number of neighbors and myself have been emailing the board some questions about how you arrived at the utilization numbers for Nunaka and we've got some- either no answers back or the answers we get back we don't understand. We've been referred to some websites and we're digging through the websites trying to find what's the information, why did you send me this link, or the DEED formula which we've looked at and don't understand. Some really simple questions. For instance, a pre-k classroom has a lower cap than a grades classroom, so are you taking that into account for utilization numbers in Nunaka Valley since we have so much pre-k there? There are also some resource rooms in the school that they're not allocated to a teacher, they're used every day but by different teachers at different times. Is that an empty room when you calculate utilization since it is not assigned to a teacher? It would be really awesome if we could at some point get some answers to the utilization questions.

**Kelly Lessens:** Great question, I have similar questions. The Board has not received any more detail than what has been released to the public. My understanding is that we will receive some kind of report in early December. The way I have found is navigating utilization figures, and I'm trying to understand that myself, you can go to- ASD has a data dashboard and there's an enrollment portal and you can look at detailed enrollment for any school. You can click on and look at the enrollment data dashboard for any school, look at Nunaka Valley and you will see the number of students there. There are two tabs; there are enrollment and detailed enrollment and with detailed enrollment, I have found it helpful, you can look at pre-k, kindergarten, etc. There is also often detail, I'm not sure about the resource question, but that will give you a breakdown of who's enrolled at every school. Then you can compare that, and I'm sorry this is really a lot of digging that I'm telling you to do because that's what I'm doing. We have a capital improvement place, and there is something called a six year CIP. You can go, there's a ton of data in it. It's all online, and if you go to the most recent one which is for 2022-2028, there's data sets towards the back and it will tell you what the capacity for every school is. I have been trying to match up current enrollment figures with- I'm trying to get that answer as well. I don't have any more detailed information for you so I apologize.

**George Martinez:** We have a question online which is can you confirm that the meeting on December 2nd is open to the public?

**Kelly Lessens:** Yes, it's my understanding that all of these virtual town halls are all open to the public.

**George Martinez:** I have one more question and then I want to encourage people to continue to follow up with you and everybody has your contact information. One of the questions that came to me after the Nunaka town hall, was when people talk about population shift and decline in Anchorage, do we have specificity to what that actually means to our area? Or are we included in an aggregate number and have we not lost population?

**Kelly Lessens:** The district hired a consultant who has been working on numbers and a number of other inputs. I have not yet heard that there is hyper local data about birth rates or rent or a lot of other variables. He has a number of plans, just general overall trends for Anchorage using birth data that's linked to PFDs but I'm not sure to the extent to which it is hyper local.

## **Committee Updates (limit 2 min. each)**

### **Public Notices:** [Uncle Herbs](#)

**George, Placemaking:** Nothing to report.

**Donna Mears, CIP:** Capital improvement project committee. The CIP list that was submitted to the municipality last spring will be the basis of our capital project requests to the state legislature. The session starts January 17th. The only addition I have received since then is from non motorized user safety improvements on the road from Bartlett High School to the Alaska Native Heritage Center. If I have missed anything or if you have any additional items from parks to potholes please get in touch with me through the community council email at [northeastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:northeastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com) and cc my personal email which is [mears@alaska.net](mailto:mears@alaska.net).

**Jamie Lang, Alcohol and Marijuana:** We have an update that we got from FCC on Uncle Herbs. The application on there says they're- I don't really understand it. I've read it multiple times and I asked Ryan from the planning department to please update the website because there's no application and we don't really know what Uncle Herbs is trying to do, it's incomplete. I also put public comments on there that there's nothing to look at, the application isn't on there so we don't know what they're trying to do. Hopefully he will get back to me tomorrow. If anybody else has other public comments about we don't know what they're trying to do they can submit them by December 6th.

**Stu Grenier, Parks and Trails:** We did pull quite a bit of trash out of Centennial Park. It seems like the muni did a great job of cleaning up the campground, they neglected the woods between the campground and Boundary Ave. There's two more piles that you can see sticking out. There's a burn barrel. Things that you can get to the side of the road and I think the muni would get them. Some of them might get taken to some other location if we don't get them. Also, with the Boundary Trail which is the trail that Scenic Foothills and this council are talking about trying to get a realignment on the boundary between the civilian and the military and get a bike trail on the gas line connecting the Ship Creek Bridge with the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. I was surprised to get an email from Chugach Electric, they bought the powerplant which is right over here and guess what they want. They want solar panel fields, guys it never occurred to me that the gas line is perfect north-south. Can you put solar panels next to a gas line? I don't know. Anyhow, they are very interested, so I sent them a big jpeg of the proposals. Also, Ron, were you on the radio yesterday?

**Ron Meehan:** It was Tuesday, Talk of Alaska discussing statewide food security.

**Stu Grenier, Parks and Trails:** Okay Tuesday, I heard Ron on the radio and I called in and get on the radio too and talked about trails and stuff like that. Anyhow, we're just talking about it. We're going to get together and work on the letter to JBER. Ms. Boston I'm sure will get a copy and have suggestions because they sent a nice letter. Those discussions are happening and everyone is welcome to get involved.

**Stephen D. Ward:** Solar panels around gas lines, as long as they're kept enough distance away couldn't that also provide enough power to help with any new lights that go in the area, and any emergency access systems?

**Stu Grenier:** Guys I'm totally naive about this subject so I talked about it with Chugach Electric. I see this massive solar panel field in Willow, that's 30 miles now and said boy if they can make it pay there and he said we can't find a place to put it, property is too expensive here. They have a questionnaire if you want to go to Chugach Electric to do their questionnaire on solar power. It's probably 30 questions. Anyhow, Chugach Electric will be part of the discussion from now on too. I did talk with Steve about the Chanstnu Muldoon dog park, about the mud problem. As some of you may remember, we pressed to get gravel and they put grass and now-next summer we are going to talk about gravel again because more people will use it and it's just a mud hole without gravel.

**Lyn Franks:** I thought about that a lot because my little dog likes to go to the dog parks but they're always muddy and nasty and he's really low to the ground. So instead of gravel, how about astro turf? Is that possible? It might be cheaper and easier to clean.

**Stu Grenier:** Well maybe we could get Bartlett's when they're done with it because I think it had a ten year lifespan and it's been there for 7 years. I don't know. Picking up after the dogs, I would much rather do it with gravel than grass. It's just a surface area question. Astro turf, it never occurred to us but we could include it in the discussion. I don't let my dog on astro turf, where would I get the opportunity to know how that works? Because you can't go to Bartlett and use theirs.

**George Martinez:** Do you have a date for the doon dangles?

**Stu Grenier:** Okay guys here's the deal. My condo is full of stuff. So I do the dangles in batches. By the way, everybody is welcome. If you specially want to have a picture of you putting up those dangles on the



light poles up and down Muldoon road there I will arrange it for you. Bob and I have been doing it and you know, everybody has helped a little bit. The thing is I can't move them all at once.

**George Martinez:** When?

**Stu Grenier:** Some time during Thanksgiving break.

### **Presentations (limit 3 min. each, unless otherwise note)**

[Russian Jack Bike Trails](#) - Steve Cleary (4 mins)

**Steve Cleary:** I'm the Executive Director for Alaska Trails. I've been using Russian Jack for many years and I'm really excited about the updated master plan and what's going to happen there. Every time I think about Russian Jack or give a presentation like this I think of all the ways I and my family have used Russian Jack over the years. For my son's birthday party to cross country running, cross country skiing, events like the Tuesday night races. We biked there for some of my son's last days of school. Holidays in the greenhouse, skateboarding for my son. Playground, I think I played snowshoe softball there maybe 20 years ago in what feels like another life. I'm really jazzed about Russian Jack and my coworker and I both have sons who grew up going to junior nordic skiing there and now they're skiing for East High School and using those trails a lot. We were advised to wait for completion of the master plan which we were happy to participate in. I would like to thank all the Northeast Community Council members who helped with the updating of that master plan. Now as part of that plan, these would be beginner and intermediate trails for bikers who we hope would access the trails by biking there. There are 19 schools within a two mile radius of Russian Jack and so we're very excited for young people to be able to bike and recreate there close to their neighborhood. It's close to the playground, it's close to the skate park, it's close to other great parts of Russian Jack. From our last iteration of bike trails we were proposing for Russian Jack, we've heard from the community through the master plan process, we've moved them all to the northside out of wetlands and away from the springs. We're utilizing social trails. There is a lot of trash to clean up in the areas we want to work on as well and we hope that bringing more people to utilize the trails in the area will make them safer. We also have the advantage of learning from the other trails built on the hillside at Kincaid Park to make sure there are sight lines for people and wildlife safety. To make sure where trails do cross multi-use paths, which they won't very much in our design, there's a safe place for those to coexist. We have gotten good support from the Anchorage Parks Foundation. We've got the challenge grant, we've got letters of support from the Single Track Advocates and Mighty Bikes and so we're excited to bring another recreation opportunity to people in the area blending in with the other many great uses at Russian Jack and making sure that the design for the trails are fun, safe, and sustainable for people. We are working very diligently with the muni park staff to finalize the design. We have applied for a recreational trails program grant which we hope will bring funding for the project and it will move forward in 2023.

[Checkpoint Subdivision Lot 2](#) - Kate Sauve (3 mins)

**Kate Sauve:** We're proposing a unit lot development. Basically the idea is to create a garage town so each unit will have two bedrooms and a two car garage. There will be 53 units. This is going to go through the Assembly since it's a unit lot development. That's about it, it's not very complicated. The parcel is five acres and it's located off Boundary Avenue and WhisperWood Park Drive. If you have any questions I will be in the back here. We will be holding a zoom meeting to go over this in more detail and cover community concerns on December 7th at 6PM and I will have the details of the zoom and you can come and ask me for those.

### **Old Business (Limit 10 min/item including discussion)**

[NACTO](#) - To amplify support for NACTO plan/concepts/policy

**Marc Grober:** What is NACTO? NACTO is the National Association of City Transportation Officials and it's the premier source, and it has been for the last 20 years, of design guides on how to provide safe sharing of our transportation corridors. The Federal Highway Administration, which is arguably the chief arbiter of what it means to have safe streets in our country, has adopted large parts of NACTO design guides because NACTO does such a great job. The designing for all ages and abilities PDF was a separate report that NACTO produced to add to its urban design guide and it has now in fact been added to that broad design guide as a manual. If you buy it it's hundreds of dollars and hundreds and hundreds of pages, there are links if you want to look online. Some time ago I submitted a resolution to the Assembly basically suggesting that we affiliate with NACTO and that we formally adopt their design guides. This followed a history of the community trying to get the municipality to do something about safety on our streets. Despite

this repeated effort, let's just say that the people in charge with a capital T have over and over again made it impossible to promote safety on our streets through affiliation or adoption of the NACTO guidelines. If you want to see what NACTO membership means and why hundreds of municipalities participate and belong to NACTO you can go to NACTO.org and look at the membership. It will tell you all the reasons why all these communities are members. What I would like to see the Assembly do is move forward with the resolution and the Assembly has basically said until community councils want us to do something, we aren't going to do something. So I've been pushing the community council to get familiar with NACTO, get familiar with the NACTO guidelines, and become knowledgeable enough that we can promote such a resolution to the Assembly.

**George Martinez:** I do have one clarifying question before I invite a motion. The complete streets policy from AMATs references NACTO and NACTO reports, is part of the question here to include this new designing for all ages report or how does that work with the complete streets and existing reports with NACTO that have been accepted by AMATs

**Marc Grober:** That's a tricky question because while AMATs has repeatedly said we want to endorse NACTO guidelines. In every case where they have adopted any kind of plan, NACTO is simply referenced as another tool. So AMATs, and this is a really complex area of discussion so anyone who gets confused by the acronyms, there is a lot to work through here. That's one of the reasons I put together this lengthy resolution because it had links to explain all the acronyms and what have you. AMATs has never adopted any of the NACTO guidelines and technical staff have specifically told the bicycle and pedestrian committee that they may not recommend AMATs adoption of the NACTO guidelines. AMATs is composed of DOT and the municipality and the municipality holds three of the five seats. The only way we are going to get AMATs to comply with NACTO guidelines is get the municipality to adopt it and force the municipality members of AMATs to promote the NACTO guidelines.

**Marc Grober motions to develop a resolution from the Northeast Community Council to support the designing for all ages report and encouraging the municipality to adopt it as part of their other NACTO adoptions, Stephen D. Ward seconds**

**Unanimous vote to approve**

#### **New Business (Limit 3 min/ item including discussion unless otherwise noted)**

[Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance](#) - Dianne Holmes, RCCC

**Dianne Holmes:** We don't know when this will come actually, I don't think it's been laid on the table, we don't even have a case number. I am Dianne Holmes from Rabbit Creek Community Council and along with Rogers Park we have been very interested in trying to get other councils attention on the ADUs, Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance which actually was revised in 2018 and a lot of us are concerned that it hasn't had time to see how it works. This is not about whether there should be ADUs because that's already in code, this is about the details that will provide for more housing and it's about neighborhood integrity and cohesiveness. I personally think a lot of us prefer this ordinance be delayed until significant revisions can be made or delaying it indefinitely. It's not ready for prime time. How does this affect you? ADU ordinances across the US have resulted in unintended consequences mainly because of short term rentals, STRs. We know they're more profitable certainly but they do nothing to increase resident housing, and certainly not affordable. They're disruptive to neighborhoods especially if owners do not live on the property. Hawaii and Washington, D.C. now have conditions for STRs, some work better than others and I believe if I understand correctly, Sitka is really having a lot of problems with STRs. My concern and a lot of Rogers Park Council- we're all concerned with this ordinance- I don't think the planning department has looked closely at what other cities have done and are trying to redo regarding ADUs. A few points for this ordinance are that the intent or mission statements have been totally removed from the 2018 ordinance and we cannot allow this to happen because those purpose statements are the heart of any ordinance. The purpose statements explain why those regulations are important and how they work for a particular community. They do state community values just as the mission statements and policies in our 2020 land use plan state that. Don't be confused, the 2040 land use plan is only a subcomponent of our 2020 plan. They also record the intentions of the regulations and they guide commissions and staff when variances or tradeoffs are requested. We don't want to remove the current purpose statements and that's what's being done with this proposed ordinance. We want to encourage the need for additional resident housing. We all know we need that. The purpose statements should be there to state the intent. A range of housing including affordable, and for a mix of housing for changing needs and for smaller households in some instances. These purpose statements state that ADUs should be compatible with neighborhood character. ADUs should be lower in height and smaller than the main dwelling to preserve lot setbacks and shadowing. The Roger's Park resolution definitely hones in on that. One of the planners is telling people that with two buildings of the

same height, they won't cast more of a shadow than one building. I don't know but that doesn't make any sense to me. The owner should reside there for at least six months of the year to provide for neighborhood cohesiveness and that is in the 2018 ordinance. They should be limited to a certain number of days per year, regulated like b&b's or other hospitalities. Some cities have a cap of 90 days a year, you can decide. By ignoring the language of STRs it actually equates to a policy decision that they are more desirable than resident housing. If it is decided that STRs belong in another title, staff should prepare that and we should vote concurrently with that as well as this ordinance. If that's not done, things will fall between the cracks. Density calculations, ADUs should be included in the city's future density calculations for future rezoning and for determining the levels of infrastructure and services. It's not done now.

**Stephen D. Ward:** ADUs from what I've read in the past are generally mother in law suites that are separate from that. STRs tend to be more decorative and be more secondary building on a property. Is there a way to make sure STRs are not involved in this? We already have enough hotels in this town, we need more sustainable rentals or mother in law suites.

**George Martinez:** The question was about the definitions and honing in on the difference of ADUs and STRs and making sure that the intent of ADU ordinance and code change words is maintained.

**Dianne Homes:** ADUs are actually in the 2020 plan and I think they're mentioned in the 2024 land use plan which is a subcomponent. It's more profitable if you rent it out like an airbnb but that doesn't help us and that's not the intent of ADUs when you go back to the 2020 plan.

**Marc Grober motions that the Northeast Community Council join in the Rabbit Creek Community Council resolution on the review and recommendations for the ADU ordinances, Selina Metoyer seconds**

**Dianne Holmes:** Roger's Park would like someone to sign onto their resolution as well.

**Murray Crookes:** Just to be clear, we are seeking to increase residential housing by taking this step?

**George Martinez:** Yes

**Voted unanimously to approve with no objections.**

#### **Nunaka Elementary support resolution - Kristi Wood**

**Kristi Wood:** I have a spot on the table back there where you can sign up if you want updates on this issue. There is also a petition if you want to sign it, we will be presenting that to the school board in favor of Nunaka Valley. A couple of really quick updates, some highlights. We found out the school district will lose money by consolidating these schools. It gets a little complex but there's a differential that's given to smaller schools and the school district will not be getting any of that money once they consolidate the schools. If you go to [savenunaka.net](http://savenunaka.net) we should have something posted pretty soon that explains it better than what I have time for right now. You've also heard they're only going to save \$240,000 by closing Nunaka Valley. The board is about to vote on the Inlet View rebuild; they want to spend \$37 million on it while simultaneously closing six schools, five of which are title one. I asked the utilization questions because we have a neighbor that works at the school and she's very confused because the school doesn't feel only 65% full, it feels really full. So as you heard tonight, I asked the school board for clarity for how they came up with those utilization numbers. They don't even know which really worries me because this is the body that is going to make this decision. How can it be an informed decision if they don't even know if the utilization numbers are correct. Many, many concerns with the closures. Somewhere between 1600 and 2000 families are affected if they close all six of these schools. Obviously some of us who live in the neighborhood are concerned about things like our property values if that big building is empty or not used at its full capacity.

**George Martinez:** I would entertain a motion for the Northeast Community Council to support this resolution for saving Nunaka Valley Elementary to be passed at a special December meeting. I want to be clear about that because we don't meet in December and this is a timely issue so we would be voting both on the resolution and to hold a special meeting in December to approve the resolution so folks have time for a public review.

**Stephen D. Ward motions to pass a resolution saving Nunaka Valley Elementary to be voted on at a special December Meeting, Marc Grober seconds.**

**Stephen D. Ward:** It is my understanding that our area is highly dense with the amount of families, new families, families affected by poor people. Yet we're starting to build new schools in richer areas where doctors, lawyers, and other people with higher influence. That doesn't seem very fair to me, I don't have kids, I don't have a family, but I do understand that education is the only way to get out of that kind of recession of poverty. How is it that they can make that decision so quickly and without any merit?

**Kristi Wood:** Definitely a question best left for the school board. I would suggest you email your comments to the school board and the superintendent. 12/5, so if you could have your special meeting before 12/5 because that's the decision point. Technically they don't announce their decision until the 19th but the 5th is our last opportunity to testify at least in person. By all means, contact the school board. The last school board meeting was packed so if you've got something to say you might want to get those comments in early.

**Unanimous vote to take up this resolution opposing the closing of Nunaka Valley Elementary and to hold a special meeting on December 1st to pass the resolution.**

#### 10 yr Community Council Boundaries Review

**George Martinez:** We're up to the ten year community council boundary review. Every ten years part of the redistricting and all that happens. If people have any comments for the Assembly or for this process to know feel free to forward them to us as well. I would encourage you to go back to the agenda online and go to the hyperlink that's in there and and you can see all the notifications.

#### **Centennial Park 2023 Usage Plan**

**Stu Grenier motions to develop with the Parks and Trails Committee a Centennial Park usage plan as a resolution to be submitted to the Department of Parks and Recreation and the municipality, Aaron Pascas seconds**

**Stu Grenier:** We were right here about 15 years ago. The council at that time did pass a motion in favor of privatizing the management of Centennial Park. Then when it came to the Assembly nobody bothered to come and stick up for it. The idea was to let one of the private camper parks like the Gold Nugget, if they're interested, manage the park instead of Parks and Rec. The idea is, after talking to numerous managers over the years, the muni actually advertises the park on literature for RVs and stuff like that. I don't know if that still continues but we used to have a guy named Tommy Bishop who managed the park for years and he reminded us when he left, if the muni doesn't advertise the park on these advertising sites the profits are going to take a massive nosedive. That's something we can talk about if that's the direction we want to go again. I walked the park before it was repurposed and you could see that people were coming in there and they were dealing. People were parking their cars on Starview Drive and walking through the woods to camp spots and then walking back to their cars. I'm not sure that was a big problem 20 years ago, I'm not sure if someone wants to privatize it now because they would have to pay for security that you wouldn't previously need. All these questions need to be included in some kind of motion and we need to talk about it with all the parties. The people who do have those RVs do tend to go to the businesses in downtown Muldoon. They weren't there anymore. Nobody would be there. That's what we want to think about. Somehow also use this effort to get the Muldoon Chamber of Commerce off the ground that we've talked about for decades. That's probably the different sides that I hope to come out of it.

#### Community Announcements

**George Martinez:** I wanted to highlight that we have a special guest with us tonight. This person has been with us all summer long on the front line of Centennial Park and I had the privilege of cosigning a certificate of appreciation that was given to this person from the Scenic Foothills Community Council. Their idea was basically, wouldn't it be great to have both of the far east community councils saying thank you to this person. I thought it was an important step so I signed onto this certificate of abbreviation for Roger Branson. Roger was in the park, the lead advocate, helping people every single day in Centennial Park and also just ran an election as a Republican in Eagle River. Your commitment to our community is well noted and I wanted to make sure that every person here also heard that as well. It was a privilege to sign off on that. Roger, thank you for being with us.

**George Martinez adjourns meeting at 9:01PM**

**Upcoming NECC meetings: Jan 19, 2023**

**Respectively submitted by,**

**Ron Meehan, Northeast Community Council Secretary**