

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, February 8, 2023

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Lori Pickett, Jon Cecil, Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Keelin Baughman, Meredith Redick (with Karen Bonga), Pete Petersen, Ted Eischeid, Lindsey Hajduk, 1907****559, Brennon, Kari McKitrick

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 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) – submitted her January Newsletter (attached).

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – Chair of Rules committee which has to do with hiring staff, calendar the bills. Resources Committee, Legislative Budget & Audit, Joint Arms Services Committee. Priority is increased education funding. Around \$860 per student would catch up to inflation (current), but \$1000 would catch up and maintain viability for student costs. Defined benefits is tied to recruitment issues. Fire Chief said they pay quite a bit to train fire fighters here in Anchorage who in turn work for 2-3 years, then go to another state that has defined benefits. Utilities are losing gas contracts in the next few years, which creates a huge problem. We heard there is a large supply of Cook Inlet gas that is not being utilized or developed. Department of Resources has not confirmed any plan to address the gas contracts issue.

Kathleen plans to visit Juneau March 1. Lori will be there this coming Monday.

Sen. Forrest Dunbar (Seth Tigarian provided a report) Written report (attached). Senator Dunbar's socials are:

https://twitter.com/Sen_Dunbar<https://www.facebook.com/sendunbar><https://www.instagram.com/sendunbar/>Subscribe to our newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/SenDunbar-Newsletter>Office Contact:907-465-6944Sen.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.govSethan.Tigarian@akleg.gov

Rep. Genevieve Mina – (Katy Giorgio) House is organized. Working on employee recruitment/retention issues. Post-partum expansion to 12 months. 2 committees – Health & Social Service, Transportation, SNAP applications backlog is an issue of concern. Some of the problems include lack of employees. Medicaid eligibility able to find other forms of health care resources. HB23 Recognition of Filipino Americans. HJR4 honors AK Career Relationships. Reminders re: CAPSIS deadline February 14th at 5 pm. In person constituent meeting coming up. QUESTIONS Ted – runs into staffing issues throughout state government. Budget cuts impacts staffing of various departments. Lori added she deals daily with families in need of public assistance. Ed spoke about his former employment with HSS and some history of trying to integrate Medicaid and SNAP programs which bombed. This is part of why they are still using the COBALT program. Newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/ezZzJE8/signuprep.genevieve.mina@akleg.gov>

907-465-3424Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089318508960>Twitter: @rep_mina

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Rep. Stanley Wright (Forrest Wolfe provided a report) Member of the majority. Resources, Labor & Commerce, Military Veteran Affairs, Joint Armed Service Committee, Revenue, Administration. HB 28 expungement of marijuana convictions at the state level. HB 51 covers potential gap in policy with air conditioner installations. HB 57 relates to EMS professionals protection of discovery.

Rep. Andrew Gray (Nate Graham provided a report) Judiciary, Military Veteran Affairs, Ways Means. Dept of Correction work with DMV to ensure released prisoners have ID. Weekly podcast providing updates to the community. Nate's Cell 907-318-0747 Links provided: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/east-anchorage-matters-with-rep-andrew-gray/id1667318355?i=1000598360049>

<https://www.adn.com/opinions/2023/02/08/opinion-provide-teachers-the-retirement-theyve-earned/>

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen – Update on Sullivan with increased crime in the neighborhood. 32 officers assigned to the area in shifts which has helped reduce incidents. Amy Demboski seeking a settlement for unlawful termination. 3 Emergency orders passed. Boards & Commissions terms were extended for another year. The person running the Boards & Commission program resigned and some of these need to have meetings. Any contracts over \$10,000 need to be reviewed by the Assembly. Ombudsman now has the authority to investigate personnel issues. Road bonds, fire bonds, park bonds, etc passed. Introduced an ordinance (online checkbook) for the MOA finances and transparency. Ballot coming up will include use of marijuana tax for pre-school education. Approved Robin Durn to fill out the remaining Eagle River assembly position. Girdwood real estate issue was voted down in a vote of 5 in favor – 7 oppose.

Kathleen – still having issues with snow removal on E 5th Avenue. Sherry shared that she and Dan called Street Maintenance and they did come out, but the street is still one lane wide. The phone number is 343-8277. Ted spoke about the Boards & Commissions problems of communication. McKenna Construction owner took responsibility for fuel and has covered the costs of fuel used in conjunction with snow removal.

Egg shortage due to chicken flu, the subsequent slaughter of many chickens and is a nationwide issue.

Joey Sweet – no report

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Kelly Lessens visited Juneau, met with legislators and students. The students will be providing a report of their trip at the next School Board meeting. Plan to move 6th graders to Middle School in 2024/2025 school year. Possible changes to school start times and its impacts depending on age of students. This also impacts parents and educators. Algebra 2 completion rate. Reading proficiency for younger learners, college readiness. There are still some profound gaps (based on economic of families on who

completes). Revisions on Veteran Holidays – allows teacher/veterans to choose to take personal leave if desired. Comprehensive student nutrition/ recreation policy updated. February 21 meeting will vote on FY24 school year budget. They have \$29 million in reserves due to position vacancies. They will be spending those funds, which will increase the deficit for future years. They will reduce teachers by attrition. AK Native Cultural Charter School would like to move into Abbot Loop Elementary School facility. SB 52 proposes \$1000/student. HB 65 \$1250 student increase. Discussion of K-3 English Language Arts replaced with evidence-based program – AK Readback. February 16 at 6 pm Language Immersion meeting discussion at Rilke Schulle.

Kendra – She didn't like the idea of extending the school day which impacts after school programs, and many still have to pay for those programs, even though they no longer can participate. Adding a couple days at the end of the year – why was that not even an option? Commissioner of Education and Superintendent came up with the longer school days plan. Wondering if moving 6th graders to Middle School also impacts Charter Schools? Charter Schools will follow their own guidelines. Some schools already have 6 – 8 graders in Middle School.

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – Property Assessment cards are out. 10-year boundary review committee (Sherry volunteered). Parking ordinance reduces number of parking spaces required. Anchorage Affordable Housing and Land Trust – working on homelessness issues and has a facility with 270 rooms, but not sure when they will be available.

6. Destination UMed Study Update – Jon Cecil, Sr Planner w/AMATS (project information available at <https://www.destinationumedstudy.com>) The next meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled March 8 via MS TEAMS from 10 am to 12 noon to dig into the draft TDM Goals & Strategies and the TDM toolkit (which will be released after the March 8 meeting). 60% through the process. Really need representation from RJCC at that meeting. Final site visit from the consultants in April or May. Jon's number – 907-343-7915

Ed asked why there are so many commuters on Tudor Road? People use alternative routes if they see another route is crowded. East High pedestrian traffic is one of the areas of concern. There is a lot of foot traffic on Tudor Road, as well, as people will try to go the most direct route, rather than go to a light to cross.

Ted Eischeid is willing to represent RJCC at the March meeting, as Sherry is not available.

7. Capital Projects update for RJCC area – Ted provided a report on the Executive Board meeting and work on the Rubric voting system. The DRAFT produced from this meeting was provided at the meeting, and Lori talked about how we would proceed. Sherry Wright made a motion to submit the DRAFT list. 2nd by Kathleen. Due to the lateness of the time and the urgency of getting the list submitted, we will submit the DRAFT and start earlier next year, making use of the rubric. Thanks to Ted for the help working on this process. Motion carried with no objection.

Ed suggested we begin work on the CAP list in September 2023, modify in October and plan to have the individual vote in December, so it can be submitted in a timely manner.

8. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Sherry Wright reported that RJSP trail and bridge repair are scheduled for this summer (per Steven Rafuse with Parks & Rec). MOA announced RAVE Mobile Safety as a new program to keep Anchorage residents informed of emergency situations. Can download this free at <https://www.smart911.com/smart911/ref/reg.action?pa=anchorageak>
10 Year Boundary review online survey has been extended to February 17.

Kendra invited Nicolette from Parks & Rec for next month's meeting.

Karen Bronga is running for District 5H seat. She grew up on E 9th Avenue. Her parents were active on RJCC and worked on community patrol. Karen is a Parks & Trails advocate, working on Chugach Foothills trail connections. Increasing behavioral health, former teacher. Advocates for community connection to the schools with evening classes for parents. Healthy community – options for travel that isn't car. Finding medicare network providers. Community safety ride along showed short handed staff and incredible work happening. Better snow removal is an issue she continues to hear about as she goes door to door. Karenbronga.com Aligns with George Martinez on progressive side.

Keelin Bauhman provided Mt View library update – Storytimes on Tuesday evenings at 6pm. Feb 21st at 4pm, Dan Parent, illustrator for the Archie Comics, will be giving a talk on his work w/ a Q&A.

Feb 22nd at 1pm, Job Lab will begin on a weekly basis. The Department of Labor will be helping folks write resumes, apply for jobs, practice for interviews and anything/everything job related.

Feb 25th at 2pm, Construction Creations. This is an event for kids to try out all kinds of construction activities like LEGOS, KEVA blocks, and Makedo cardboard construction tools. For questions/comments, feel free to call or email me. keelin.baughman@anchorageak.gov or (907) 343-2904

Next meeting is scheduled for March 8th at 6:30 pm. Sherry Wright will not be available, so Kathleen agreed to cover minutes for the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary