

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, May 10, 2023

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Lori Pickett, Brad Authier, Owen Hutchinson, Karen Bronga, George Martinez, Lindsay Hadjuk, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Keelin Baughman, Mark Bundy, AFD, Katy Giorgio, Maya, Mercedes Colbert, Rich Sewell (Merrill Field Airport Manager), Seth Tigarian, Laura, Leigha Gonzales.

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 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.

Mark Bundy of AFD spoke about 5 fire fatalities in Anchorage. None of them had working smoke alarms. There should be one smoke alarm in every bedroom and every common area. Burn hotline is available for criteria regarding fires in Anchorage. 907-267- 5020. Pulse point app regarding CPR trained alerts or major car wreck, wildfire, etc. Grilling safety – don't use your grill under eaves. QUESTION – Does AFD have any fliers with the information? AFD Facebook page should have this information, but Muni.org also has links to this information. QUESTION – What languages does the information come in? English only. I will ask my Chief about other languages.

2. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – Seat K (Mercedes Colbert provided a report) – Financial literacy bill will allow students to gain practical knowledge.

Sen. Forrest Dunbar – Seat J - Day 114 of the session with 6-7 days left. He went over the list of increases in budget line items. Conference Committee will be formed. He went over several Senate bills under consideration. SB77 property tax exemptions passed senate and a couple of committees thus far. Allows certain properties (vacant, dangerous) to increase taxes on that property to encourage landowners to either fix up buildings or sell them to someone who will. His monthly update will be with meeting handouts.

Rep. Genevieve Mina – Seat 19 - Family care giver bill. HB 191 seeks to include major medical services for emergencies (stroke, trauma). This intends to allow providers to identify and treat these type of emergencies in a timely manner. SNAP application process bill, which is federally funded. SNAP looks at both assets and income. Broad-based categorical eligibility increases the amount of people that can obtain help. Addresses the benefit cliff, helps families in need and streamlines the application process. QUESTION regarding childcare reimbursement and having to have a GED from those who may not have access to their information. linktr.ee/repmina has our constituent survey, links, and social media!

Rep. Stanley Wright – Seat 22 (Rachael Gunn provided a report) HB 51 on Senate floor to allow more modern refrigeration. HB 28 – low level marijuana records to be removed from court view. HB 57 Medical record review to ensure patient care. HB 145 – small loan. HB 126 dual licensure. HB 137 – national compact for Physical Therapists. HB 138 national compact for audiology and speech language therapists (interstate).

Rep. Andrew Gray - Seat 20 (Maya provided a report) HB 198 SNAP – extending certification period to two years. This will address the current backlog created by having to reapply every 6 months. HB 24 short term rental registry bill to help with affordable housing. Many housing used for short term (aka

AirBnB) previously that could be used for affordable housing. They are trying to assess how many of these properties there are. People will not be allowed to operate more than 1 short term rental property. Bed & Breakfast are excluded from this. They believe this will add 30% more affordable housing in Anchorage. HB 53 requires people leaving incarceration to receive an ID if they don't have one.

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Christopher Constant Seat 1B - no report

Daniel Volland Seat 1L – no report

Karen Bronga Seat 5H karen.bronga@anchorageak.gov 907-343-4119– She attended her first full assembly meeting last night. Done at 9:30 pm (set a record). She is attending every committee she can to learn. Committee assignments will be made next week. Homelessness and housing are some of the meetings. Use Anchorage Works to report the camps, in order for the sanctioned camps to obtain access to more permanent housing when it becomes available. There will be no abatement of camps this summer, but they are encouraging people to not be in the middle of the parks. Coffee with Cops was kind of fun – torch run next Saturday. Karen was a guest speaker for Career Day at Colledgegate Elementary. Similar to going to school – work sessions, field trips.

George Martinez Seat 5I George.martinez@anchorageak.gov 907-343-4120 – Realities are that the issues discussed last night are much more complex. Mayoral veto was not over-ridden as people were able to work together to keep issues moving forward. Police body cams are on the way. Unified statement of Mayor and Assembly calling on increased support to help with homelessness. Good things happening with alcohol taxes. Regional technology hubs may also provide more federal dollars.

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Kelly Lessens spring bond passed and Board is grateful. Early registration is very helpful. Freshman Academy (this year's 7th graders will be the first group to pass through it). Integration of workplace learning with students / mentoring. **Info in chat.** Fentanyl is a problem in the schools – 10 incidents. Narcan is now available – talk to the students in your life. Teacher professional development will create a late start time on Mondays. 7:30 am for HS. 9:15 for middle school. 10 am for Elementary. New start times for September 2024 school year in part to help alleviate the shortage of bus drivers. Over 1/3 of students are chronically absent. Board approved Native School moving into Abbott Loop vacated facility. Wonder Park Elementary will still be open. Congratulations to 2023 Graduates. Sonic Boom brings 6th -graders together for a concert, which was held at the Alaska Airlines Center. Board members are going to start rotating council meetings in July for one year rotation schedule. [Bit.ly/ASD-CCL](https://bit.ly/ASD-CCL) for info on ASD's forthcoming Academy model.

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – FCC working a test hybrid meeting. 20-year outlook for distribution of water AWWU. Mayor's office talked about survey for capital improvements. Mr. Whitekeys gave a presentation regarding working with Audubon Society to distribute spruce trees to individuals that had beetle kill to occur the end of May.

6. Park Clean up event discussion – Lindsay Hadjuk – Anchorage Park Foundation, Neighbor Works will help sponsor this year's cleanup event. June 3 at 10 am with breakfast burritos in the morning. Park Foundation posted May is Bike Month – 45 students & teachers from Polaris biked to RJSP and did some cleanup. Muldoon dog park needs gravel or wood chips for mud.

7. Boundary Areas – Kathleen Plunkett has been attending meetings. Members prefer to keep the boundaries as they are, particularly not moving part of RJCC area into the Mountain View area. Current major streets are natural boundaries for the council area. There was one member interested in Northern Lights/ Baxter Road, DeBarr/Turpin to Glenn Highway and Northern Lights/Lake Otis to DeBarr and Airport Heights to Glenn Highway as new RJCC boundary area. RJCC does prefer that NE and Airport Heights CC weigh in on these issues that pertain to their areas. Shared boundary issues are worked and

reviewed by multiple councils along with working together when appropriate. NE splitting into 2 council areas with Turpin as one boundary was mentioned. Concern of growing our area would lower the amount of support we can provide. RJCC area currently is almost 12,000 residents.

Kathleen Plunkett moved to keep RJCC boundaries as they are. Ed Leach 2nd. Only one oppose - Motion carried.

8. Homeless Coalition Update - Owen Hutchison of Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) (presentation packets were handed out and will be available in the handouts). 272 additional emergency shelter beds are needed in Anchorage. 2,478 permanent housing units are needed to fill the housing gap in Anchorage. Homelessness is a public health crisis. People who experience homelessness experience higher health crisis issues. The goal is functional zero, making homelessness rare and brief. A survey was provided for feedback. The federal definition of homelessness doesn't include those couch surfing. They must not have a place to stay indoors for over 24 hours. Anchorage has very little single room occupancy. A proposal by Ed Leach to build 20 rooms per floor with 5 floors – outside doors (kind of a dormlike structure) and shared bath/shower area would keep costs down. 200 sf efficiency with rent around \$400-500/month. Hotel conversions are one way, but scattering facilities of the type proposed around town can make it more convenient for access to jobs and public transportation. Bethel, Juneau, Fairbanks could also use a facility. Rent could be used to pay off the loans to build. Changing the current codes will help assist the current housing shortage. RJCC wants to know how can we help?

9. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Leighan Gonzales – Lives on E 26th behind Value Village – 5242 E 26th building caught fire and has sat abandoned, attracting unwanted attention. Complaints have been filed with APD and the new legislation Forrest mentioned may help. Abandoned properties lowers property values and are unsafe. She has information on the property owner. Karen Bronga asked her to email information to her.

Keelin Baughman, Mountain View Public Library May 18th 6-8 pm pm – comic book author/illustrator Raina Telgemeier; Reading Rendezvous May 20 noon to 4 pm Cuddy Park; June 6th 3 – 7 pm Consumer Protection & Fraud Prevention fair; Story time 6 pm on Tuesdays and is moving to Dave Rose park on June 6. Summer Discover is our summer reading program, open to all ages, visit any location after May 20th to pick up your reading log and read to earn some great prizes (restaurant gift cards and Kindle Fires are some past prizes). Questions or comments? Call or email me! keelin.baughman@anchorageak.gov or 907-343-2904

Brad Authier – votechugachstability.org Brad is one of the 9 candidates running for Chugach Electric Board. 34 year Chugach member. Running as a team with Chastain and Hollis. He was an engineer and has served as a board member. Has some resource development experience and is agreeable to moving toward renewable energy responsibly.

Lindsay spoke about Paint the Town Penland Park and Noreen Street in June.

Ed Leach said Fred is getting out of the picnic business – putting the grill up for sale.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 14th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary