

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, June 14, 2023

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Lori Pickett, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Karen Bronga, Kari McKitrick, Lindsey Hajduk, Kari McKitrick

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by President Kendra Kloster, then the meeting was run by Lori Pickett.

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. Bill Wielechowski – Seat K (Mercedes Colbert provided the report) All the bills went through Senate Rules, which was interesting and a lot of work. Amazing teamwork helped a lot of good things happen. Carbon bill SB 48 was governor's bill to create authority for state to manage carbon on state lands, which may provide finances. \$1300 dividend – with a caveat if oil prices go up (a supplement next year). Monday/Tuesday may see information about vetoes but hopeful it will be veto light. Long trail is one of the issues they have supported. SB 152 to get conversation started on renewable energy and communications pricing. SB 135 AK Work and Save program for small business retirement program. Finalizing paper newsletter – family event flier will be included.

Sen. Forrest Dunbar – Seat J Priorities SB 77 – blight tax discussed at the last meeting passed Senate, and House Finance, and Community Regional Affairs. Hoping to get it passed. AK Performance Scholarship is before House & Senate Finance, keeping working age Alaskans in Alaska. 103 – passed Senate and waiting Health & State Affairs. Office open during the week. Lori asked if GED was included in the Alaska Performance Scholarship? It did not as they absorbed the House version. It will be run as a separate bill if it doesn't get passed. Example of a requirement of 1 year Alaska driver license prior to obtaining a CDL which was eliminated allowing for more truckers.

Rep. Genevieve Mina – Seat 19 Update on budget – transmitted to Governor who has 20 days to either sign or establish vetoes. HB 191 Stroke care -including streamlining when someone has a stroke to potentially help for better outcomes; SNAP application bill great way to fill the gap for those in need and incentivizing people to become independent without penalizing them; community/constituent event – July 22 – more info to come on when/where. Door knocking is being planned to assess people's concern. Reminder that you can still call the main office line. Lori asked about the Medicaid - not sure if House Health & Social Services has meeting planned. State upgraded the Medicaid computer 7 years ago, which had many glitches.

Rep. Stanley Wright – Seat 22 - no report

Rep. Andrew Gray - Seat 20 HB 53 required DOC to provide photo IDs to everyone getting out of prison. SB that was similar passed – taking this as a win. SNAP benefits have a 6 month renewal process, with a large backlog, so extending this to up to 2 years (whatever federal gov't assigns). Unitarian Church discussing freshman caucus work this Sunday at 9 am. Andrew has a podcast rather than a newsletter. East Anchorage Matters is the name of the podcast. Margo Bellamy will be the next guest. She was one of 8 black children asked to integrate a white school. Phone numbers on our agenda that work are listed as Stanley Wright's.

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Christopher Constant Seat 1B – no report

Daniel Volland Seat 1L – no report

Karen Bronga Seat 5H – scofflaw law – if you rack up \$1000 in fines and haven't made any attempt to pay, your car can be impounded. There is belief this disproportionately picks on lower income people and is indiscriminate in what the fines stem from. Bike equity ordinance – bike laws are rarely enforced and some believe this law is abused. Vulnerable road user is a national term for anyone using the road in something other than a vehicle. Idaho stop allows a rolling stop for bikes. Also makes jay walking no longer illegal. Clean slate had 2 meetings this week, represented with Yarrow. Ed spoke that he is opposed to any laws that are not being enforced. The problem with jaywalking is that it is not enforced. Carson City, Nevada only took 3 months to eradicate jaywalking (by locals). Building on 4th Avenue that used to house Health & Social Services that is sitting empty. Kathleen asked about bike laws – on Pine Street in the last 2 weeks bikers not slowing down at all crossing that intersection on 4th & Pine.

George Martinez Seat 5I – no report

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – see attached from Kelly Lessens

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – Met in May in a hybrid meeting at BP Energy Center. Mark is retiring June 30 (will need to work on efficient logging in to our meetings). Boundary Commission meetings kept RJCC as is and voted on Monday to split NECC into 2, using DeBarr as the boundary, if the residents choose to do that. Changes between Scenic Park, University and Tudor councils.

6. Homeless Coalition Update – Yarrow Griffith roadweed@gmail.com 907-744-1574 has been approved as the representative for District 5 on this committee. Clean Slate meetings began this week. Yarrow wanted to give everyone an opportunity to weigh in on what you envision as a well run long term shelter looks like and what your concerns are. Some questions: 1) How will it look different from how it's looked in the past? 2) How will they guarantee capacity limits are respected? What happens when cold weather comes and suddenly there is this push to expand to 360 or 500 beds like has happened at Sullivan? What is the plan to avoid this? 3) Can we have shelter, camps, and warming areas in separate locations so that we don't end up with 350 people in one spot?

I strongly believe that we need navigation center specific legislation (separate & more comprehensive than shelter licensing.) This should be two pronged to focus on & protect both clients and the surrounding community, as well as codify a housing first approach in how we offer navigation services. I have sent examples from other cities to several assembly members in the past and I've always heard - that's a great idea - then no one moves forward on it. I plan to continue pushing for this and hope some of our new Assembly members may embrace this.

Hilary Morgan hilarymorgan@gmail.com has been approved to serve as an alternate on this committee.

4 locations suggested by Yarrow that they can vet and select from.

These are Northway mall parking lot, Walmart parking lot - disadvantages are they are not municipality owned and I still need to suggest a municipality owned property to be productive.

ASD administration building parking lot.

Advantages - near gas station, value village, buffered from residential by Northern Lights, Boniface and the building, on bus routes, minimal treed areas nearby.

Disadvantages - property is leased by ASD, not owned. The building does house a charter school.

East parking lot of Begich middle school.

Advantages - closest to services and has the largest buffer from residential areas. Bus service nearby. Muni owned. Fire department nearby. Minimal treed areas.

Disadvantages - the community may use the ball fields and tennis courts on the property.

Both ASD buildings would need to be vacated for school start.

I think we need to ask for a commitment for the administration to provide:

Fence with single entry/exit point. Not locked - no keeping people in.

24 hour security on location.

24 hour patrol in the neighborhoods surrounding the location.

Good neighbor agreement with no camping allowed in nearby parks.

7. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Boniface Gate Visitor Control Center will be close June 18 – July 10. Richardson Gate will begin 24/7 operations in place of Boniface through July 10. During this time visitor passes will be issued solely from the Richardson Gate, locate at the intersection of D Street & the Glenn Highway. Base access services will be available 24/7 from this location beginning at 6 am on June 18. Information provided by Hannah Strobel, SSgt, USAF, Community Engagement 673rd Air Base Wing Public Affairs, 907-552-6449.

Sherry Wright reported on the UMED Community Workshop meeting held yesterday. The final plan and transportation demand management toolkit will be available for review June 23 with one month for public comment. 23 total strategies have been identified that will reduce traffic congestion, improve mobility choices, enhance equitable access to UMED destinations. The implementation is a living process. Trail signage is one of the identified needs. More information is available at their website: www.destinationumedstudy.com

Next meeting is scheduled for September 13th at 6:30 pm. Start thinking about CAP items. If you have any events this summer, let Kendra know and she will post.

Shout out to the Assembly for AK Literacy Program funding. Shout out for NeighborWorks Paint the Town off Klatt, Penland Park and Airport Heights. Several events coming up this weekend were mentioned.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Sherry Wright, Secretary