

# Federation of Community Councils, Inc.

## Board of Delegates

### Hybrid Meeting

### Minutes of September 20, 2023 meeting

Meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m. by FCC Chair Gretchen Stoddard.

#### FCC Delegates in attendance (22):

|                    |                                  |                      |                   |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Abbott Loop        | Bruce Roberts                    | Mountain View        | -                 |
| Airport Heights    | Amanda Moser                     | North Star           | -                 |
| Basher             | Hilary Morgan                    | Northeast            | Bob Reupke        |
| Bayshore/Klatt     | Bob Laule                        | Old Seward/Oceanview | Donna Delevante   |
| Bear Valley        | Kaitlyn Jackson                  | Portage Valley       | -                 |
| Birchwood          | -                                | Rabbit Creek         | Mike Kenny        |
| Campbell Park      | Kevin Fimon                      | Rogers Park          | Linda Chase       |
| Chugiak            | Darryl Parks                     |                      | (FCC Vice-Chair)  |
| Downtown           | Silvia Villamedes                | Russian Jack         | Kathleen Plunkett |
| Eagle River        | -                                | Sand Lake            | -                 |
| Eagle River Valley | Tom Freeman                      | Scenic Foothills     | Patrick LeMay     |
| Eklutna Valley     | -                                | South Addition       | Ruth Ann Jennings |
| Fairview           | James Thornton                   | South Fork           | -                 |
| Girdwood (GBOS)    | -                                | Spenard              | -                 |
| Glen Alps          | -                                | Taku Campbell        | -                 |
| Government Hill    | Jody Sola                        | Tudor Area           | -                 |
| Hillside           | Carmela Warfield                 | Turnagain            | Dan Gleason       |
| Huffman/O'Malley   | Gretchen Stoddard<br>(FCC Chair) | Turnagain Arm        | -                 |
| Midtown            | Kris Stoehner                    | University Area      | Al Milsbaugh      |

#### Others in attendance:

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Office of the Mayor                        | Michelle Hodel       |
| Anchorage Assembly                         | Daniel Volland,      |
| Anchorage Assembly                         | Anna Brawley         |
| Anchorage Assembly                         | Christopher Constant |
| Anchorage School Board                     | Margo Bellamy        |
| Ombudsman                                  | Darrel Hess          |
| Community Councils Center                  | Jean Sauget          |
| Cathy Gleason, Turnagain CC Vice-President |                      |
| Mark Butler, North Star CC Member          |                      |
| Paxson Wilbur                              |                      |

Zoom meeting being recorded, including the "Chat". No expectation of privacy.

**A. Call to Order and Establish Quorum:** Gretchen Stoddard, Chair  
Quorum attained.

**B. Approval of Agenda**  
Unanimously approved.

**C. Approval of March 2023 Minutes**  
Unanimously approved.

**D. Presentations:**

1. AO 2023-87 HOME Initiative – Assembly Members Anna Brawley & Daniel Volland

Discussed Anchorage's housing challenges, including increasing home and rental prices, limited housing inventory, and slow development due to zoning requirement, highlighting:

- the need for more flexibility and universality in residential zoning to address the housing shortage in Anchorage;
- the disparity between housing prices and wages in Anchorage, with the city's average home price being over half a million dollars, while surrounding areas have the cheapest homes in the state.

Alaska ranks 45th in new housing units built, with high construction costs being a major factor, but also considering what's within control to address the issue.

Daniel Volland noted that Anchorage is building fewer than 400 units of housing per year, despite having a shared economic base with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (Maps) that is building 2000 units per year. He suggested that land availability and zoning regulations may be contributing to Anchorage's slower housing growth, while acknowledging the importance of building safety codes.

Rent in Anchorage is too high, with little affordable options for young professionals like Nurse Sarah. The community must decide if costly regulations on housing development are worth it.

The **Home Initiative** proposes streamlining zoning based on land use designations in the 2040 Land Use Plan, consolidating 15 residential zones into 5. The ordinance will not impact Girdwood or Eagle River, which have their own comprehensive plans.

Some neighborhoods have HOAs with their own rules, which may not align with zoning changes. New single and two-family residential district ordinance allows for one- and two-family dwellings per lot but does not allow for high density development or mixed-use development.

The city is proposing to replace existing zoning designations with new ones that allow for more density and mixed uses, particularly near town centers and transit corridors.

The Urban Residential High zone is intended to provide urban living opportunities close to major employment centers, with a mix of housing types, including multifamily and condominiums.

Anna Brawley discussed changes to the proposed ordinance, including referring it to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review. The substitute version removes the waiver of Planning and Zoning Commission review and keeps the January 1, 2025, effective date.

Daniel Volland suggested increasing taxes on empty houses to encourage development and address housing issues. He also mentions a direct grant to the Anchorage Affordable Housing and Land Trust to convert vacant houses into residential properties.

Daniel Volland discussed the possibility of building three residences on a 3500 square foot lot without off-street parking, citing a Rogers Park example where six single guys are living together and parking on the street.

Anchorage's patchwork of public and private systems hinders development, with high costs for water and sewer pipes (\$1,000/linear foot). In urban areas, infrastructure is connected, but in more developed neighborhoods, septic systems are prevalent.

Daniel Volland proposes stricter regulations for sidewalks and walkability in Anchorage neighborhoods.

## **E. Government Updates (5 minutes each)**

### **1. Office of the Mayor –**

Michelle Hodel

Mayor Bronson expresses gratitude to Assembly leadership for bipartisan collaboration on affordable housing initiatives, including the cold weather shelter plan and the potential use of the former SWS admin building as a temporary low-barrier shelter.

The Anchorage Police Department and Cops4Community partner to create a youth mentorship program, aiming to introduce the policing profession and potentially aid APD recruiting efforts.

Plans for homelessness are taking shape, with 400 people in non-congregate settings and a report on a potential 150- to 200-person congregate shelter on the 29th.

Expects to have a final call on utilizing the old solid waste transfer station administration building by mid-October, with additional policing and Parks and Rec office spaces support for camps.

### **2. Assembly –**

Christopher Constant, Chair

No report.

### **3. Anchorage School Board (ASD) –**

Margo Bellamy, Board Chair

Margo Bellamy answers questions about the Anchorage School District and provides a written report.

The school board provides various options for public input, including in-person, telephonic, and written testimony on agenda items.

The board meets quarterly with the assembly for joint meetings, with a focus on school safety and budget planning.

### **4. Office of the Alaska Governor -**

No report.

### **5. Ombudsman**

Darrel Hess

Explained the role of Community Councils in advising assembly and mayor on neighborhood priorities.

The Assembly has limited jurisdiction over Community Councils but must ensure open meetings and membership.

Community Councils have autonomy in establishing committees and officer qualifications but must follow code provisions or face assembly action.

Community Councils must prioritize inclusivity and respect for diverse opinions, with effective leadership crucial for their success.

The Federation was established to provide support to Community Councils, as the municipality was worried about liability issues and wanted to keep Community Councils separate from local government.

The Federation plays an important role in communicating between councils, managing listservs, and maintaining websites, but there is a need for more support and coordination to effectively serve the Community Councils.

Training is important, and the Assembly increased the Federation's contract by \$10,000 to fund it, but it needs to be done by the end of the year to avoid losing the money.

## **F. Standing Committee Reports:**

### **1. FCC Chair – Gretchen Stoddard**

- The FCC Executive Board is conducting due diligence to understand the role of the FCC manager and create a position description.
- The board is committed to updating policies and procedures and providing training to an informed electorate.

- Encourages elected officials to communicate their availability for meetings to avoid conflicts and limit follow-up questions.
  - Thanked the attendees and mentioned the passing of Morris “Jim” Pickel (Eagle River CC) and his contributions to Community Councils.
2. **FCC Vice Chair** – Linda Chase  
Suggested that the town needs to address housing affordability and provide good jobs and business opportunities to attract and retain residents.
  3. **FCC Treasurer** – Carolyn Hall.
  4. **FCC Secretary** – Amanda Moser  
Disclosed her contract to provide consulting services to Legislative Services.
  5. **FCC Outreach** – Al Milspaugh  
June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for council CIP nominations. Assisted hosting numerous Zoom council meetings.

**G. Council Sharing (brief points):**

**Abbott Loop CC** – Bruce Roberts expresses frustration with lack of prioritization in city planning, particularly for Eagle River area.

**Airport Heights CC** –

**Bayshore/Klatt CC** –

**Birchwood CC** –

**Campbell Park CC** –

**Downtown CC** – CC discusses downtown issues, including Third Avenue construction and parking concerns.

**Girdwood** –

**Government Hill CC** –

**Hillside CC** – Carmela Warfield discussed intersection improvements and potential tax changes with state excise tax for cultivators.

**Midtown CC** – Kris Stoechner (MTCC) expresses concern about damage caused by homeless encampments in the area

**Mountain View CC** –

**Northeast CC** –

**Old Seward/Oceanview CC** –

**Rogers Park CC** –

**Russian Jack CC** –

**South Addition CC** – Ruth Ann Jennings requests more information on community council activities and how they can work together on issues.

**Sand Lake CC** –

**Scenic Foothills** - reports on homelessness and participation from elected officials, with a positive note from the president.

**Turnagain CC** –

**Turnagain Arm CC –**

**University Area CC –** Al Milspaugh expresses frustration with past attempts to combine residential and business areas in university area.

**H. Comments by the Public (3 min. each, time permitting) –**

None.

**I. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jean Sauget, Community Councils Center Acting Manager.