

Rogers Park Community Council  
March 12, 2007  
Rogers Park Elementary  
7:00pm  
Minutes

I. Welcome

Heather Ireland, President, called the meeting to order.

II. Announcements

Ms. Ireland introduced Anchorage School District, Assistant Superintendent George Vikalis, who discussed school district bond propositions. Proposition 4: Clark Middle School, 65,000,000 to demolish, reconstruct and equip the school, 60% State debt reimbursement, 40% local. Compared to the cost of Begich Middle School of 55,000,000, which is just being completed. This school is all new, no demotion costs. Clark's cost includes the old school demolition, added square feet, and an increased cost in construction of 7-9 % per year. He emphasized the affect of the learning environment on a child's success. It also includes electrical upgrades and cameras to reduce vandalism. Clark is the school district's #1 priority this year.

III. Proposition 9

A. Friends of Jacobson Park

Dr. Michael Bleischer introduced himself. He has lived in Rogers Park for 20 years. He indicated he is not here to speak against the Jewish congregation, that he is a Jew. He stated that he is opposed to the construction of the Lubavich Center/Alaska Jewish Historical Museum within our subdivision. "The center is a commercial venture and is not appropriate in a residential neighborhood". He said that not every Jew in Anchorage favors the combination of the museum and synagogue. He raised the issue of State funding of \$850,000 for the project and a concern regarding the separation of church and state. He stated that the plan does not discuss the cost of hydrology and traffic studies and a concern that a commercial building will decrease the property values. He requested that the Lubavich congregation request that Proposition 9 be removed from the ballot or if that is not done that residents vote against the proposition.

B. Questions and Answers with Mayor Mark Begich

Ms. Ireland introduced Mayor Begich

Heather read a list of questions for the Mayor from the RPCC:

1. When did you become award of this project, its targeted location, and begin meeting with its proponents?

The process began in the fall; he had one meeting with them

2. Why rush this project ignoring neighborhood concerns?

There were no promises. There will be a public process of many steps. The trade cannot occur unless every step is satisfied. A “yes” vote on Proposition 9 will not guarantee the land swap.

3. What do you see as the role of community councils?

The process includes going to parks and recreation, in order for them to do the studies, they had to go through process, they will pay for the studies

4. What role do you see for the Assembly members representing the interests of Community Councils?

I can't speak for the Assembly members.

What is your relationship with community councils when in disagreement with its Assembly members?

As mayor, I don't usually attend Community Councils.

Mr. Coffey indicated that he attended January meeting and did not attend the February meeting.

Mr. Traini said he is waiting for the studies to come back.

5. Why do you believe a museum, including the kosher delicatessen, lecture halls, and banquet facilities, IS appropriate in THIS proposed location, as opposed to an area zoned for mixed use?

The approval will be up to the Corps of Engineers.

6. Will these studies be completed in an unbiased manner? How will the results impact the future of the project and protect the neighborhood?

The traffic analysis will be done. It is our job to review the studies.

7. Question re: who will receive wetlands “mitigation credits” for Lot 14, the municipality or the Alaska Jewish Historical Museum. Has this been clarified? What assurances are there that this credit will not be counted twice?

Mitigation credits will not be counted twice.

8. At the February 12 RPCC meeting, the proposed project was identified as violating the subdivision covenants. Were all Assembly members made aware of this and why

would the Municipality of Anchorage knowingly put a proposition of the ballot when they knew or should have known about this violation?

I don't know the answer to this one. I can't answer this fully.

Mr. Coffey: the city cannot enforce the covenants, entitlements – can someone get a variance – relationship between CCNR's; Mr. Begich re: enforcement issue, may be other violations of covenants

Why does the ballot state that this land exchange is of no cost to tax payers?

There will be a cost for the studies.

10. There are many worthy groups in need of land in our community. Will this land exchange set a precedent of eroding parkland? Why or why not?

We do land trades all of the time; we get proposals all the time. Simeon Ball Field; Pauline's Pond is an example which the assembly rejected. We go through an enormous process. Any transfer of Park Land will go to a vote of the people; Park Land cannot be utilized without a vote of the people.

### C. Group Discussion

Resident: concern that taking Park Land and converting it to parking for public use will affect the Real Estate. Ask how the land swap will affect the properties in the area?

Resident: Deli and stores mentioned in proposal, tour buses, world class retail business; this will impact the neighborhood; the users of the commercial building other than the synagogue, can park on residential streets and walk.

Resident: expressed concern with hydrology; our properties are our resource.

Resident: incomplete information to the voters; how much space is allotted to the museum. Is the \$100,000 donation to the city for park development a bribe?

Mayor: in order to answer these questions we have to go through the process; the process includes consideration of the impacts by Parks and Recreation.

Resident: question re: the existing Micvah. Will it stay?

Resident: concern whether the impact of traffic on the College Village residents has been considered.

Mayor: AMATS did the study; they didn't see a concern.

Resident: a lot of things disturb me. How can the voters vote if they don't have honest information? I see \$100,000 to the city, Jewish Museum, Jacobson Park, brochures mailed to the community. As a voter, how would I know about the possible negative impacts? By omission, we don't have the truth.

Mayor: it is true; it (the proposition) does not have all the information. I support sending this proposition to the ballot.

Resident: I did not receive a single public notice; they made it clear that they hadn't applied and therefore do not have to send a notice.

Heather: they haven't officially applied.

Mayor: explained that public notification process is not required unless it is a zoning issue.

Resident: I'm concerned about the ballot measure; it implies support by the Assembly and the Mayor, implies tacit approval.

Bob Williams: a point of clarification; a lot of the information has not been factual. I have not been able to get a full story. Regarding the state funding of \$850,000. At the present time, the grants administrator is inquiring into whether it meets the requirements of the church/state. I have a copy of a letter from a state grants administrator.

Mayor: that is correct; they have not received the money yet.

Resident: at what point can the citizenry affect ballot language?

Mayor: two steps: 1) with Parks and Recreation, 2) at an assembly work session, an organized group could present, 3) at the assembly meeting; the League will ask for a pro and a con on this; there is a huge opportunity for the community to engage

Heather: I have been asking about the ballot language.

Mr. Traini: Heather, I changed the language based on your input.

Mayor: zoning change, every Monday there is a list about what is going on in the city. The next town meeting is an opportunity. Go to the city web page for information.

Resident: Does the city value undeveloped park land? How do you justify this?

Mayor: we have to identify open space with any development, it is critical, it is going to be one of our biggest debates on Title 21.

Resident: we are losing Park Land.

Resident: we will loss half an acre of Jacobson Park.

Resident: analysis of traffic on 36<sup>th</sup>.

Resident: Parks and Recreation should obtain the opinion of legal representatives of the Jacobson family.

Resident: thanked the Mayor for being here; also thanked Mr. Traini and Mr. Coffey and stated that the majority of people in the area are opposed to this, asked who votes on this the entire municipality?

Mayor: acknowledged that we did not have the full engagement on the issue that we are having now.

Resident: my biggest concern is that our assembly members did not vote this down.

Mayor Begich left the meeting.

Resident: expressed concern re: the blue flyer that was distributed today. There is no mention of the 14,000 square foot building. Also a concern about the fill material placed on the land during the construction of the Micvah. The speaker identified himself as a member of the Friends of Jacobson Park; ask members to "Please vote No on 9."

Resident: mitigation can include a cash payment to the US Treasury.

Resident: Is there anything to prevent any future land exchanges?

Resident: I have a copy of the Otis Lake study from 1999. The old lake bed was at the end of Wentworth. The water that will come off the parking lot will have benzene; it will go into the wetlands, dangerous.

Patrick Bromley: I have lived in this neighborhood for about 13 years. I feel manipulated; this community has to organize. I think we can do it.

Mr. Bromley moved that the RPCC recommend a No vote on Proposition 9. Robert Churchill seconded.

Olsonoski: Proposed a friendly amendment to request that CC's city-wide be asked to support a No vote on Proposition 9. Friendly amendment accepted.

Call for the question: all in favor 92, 1 opposed.

IV. Announcements (continued):

Ms. Ireland: The February minutes will be available at the next meeting.

## H. April 2006 Election

1. Mike Davidson of the Anchorage Fire Department recently appointed Captain at Fire Station # 4. He announced that the Tudor Fire station is being renovated. There are two ballot issues that affect the Fire Dept: 1) Proposition 7, \$3,075,000 for Anchorage Fire Service Area Fire Protection and 2) Proposition 3, \$5,700,000 for Areawide Public Safety and Transportation Capital Improvement. I will be at your next meeting.

2. Dan Rogers: requested support for Proposition 8 for the Lease of William C. Chamberlin Equestrian Center by the Rainbow Connection Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program and Anchorage Horse Council, two non-profit corporations. The lease would allow these groups to provide a therapeutic horseback riding program for Alaskans with physical disabilities.

3. Anchorage Tomorrow: Here to provide information on Proposition 2, \$4,995,000 Anchorage Parks and Recreation Service Area Bonds, Proposition 3 \$5,700,000 Areawide Public Safety and Transportation Capital Improvement Bonds and Proposition 6, \$35,550,000 Anchorage Roads and Drainage Service Area Road and Storm Drainage Bonds. Emphasized leveraging of funds and encouraged a Yes vote on the bond measures.

Resident: comment that we tell Eagle River friends that we will votes for their issues if they will vote for ours.

4. Kitte Miller: - Parent of Polaris K-12 students spoke for the committee that is looking at the 91 schools that we have here in Anchorage. "Clark Middle School needs to be replaced. I could use any help that you would like to give me."

### 5. Assembly Candidates

Mr. Coffey: I practiced law for 32 years as a commercial business attorney. I am not practicing any longer. Public service record includes the Museum Board, Alaska Housing Finance Board, Board of Fisheries, Planning and Zoning Commission and now is on the Assembly. Offered to answer questions. He wants to finish Title 21.

Peter Mjos: RPCC voted to support the extension of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. Why didn't you support it?

Mr. Coffey: The cost of 30 million would have taken all of our trails money. It was not on the coast; it was on the bluffs. I don't want to take peoples' private property.

Manager of Elvie Gray Jackson's campaign asked a question regarding the sales tax.

Mr. Coffey: it was not ready for prime time.

Bob Williams: were you supportive of the changes to the signage code?

Mr. Coffey: I supported it, but the assembly changed it with a series of amendments.

Mr. Mjos: The Mayor put together a proposal for Tudor and Lake Otis. You opposed it?

Mr. Coffey: explained let's not do it until Bragaw is done; put it off a year now to have a better design.

Elvi Gray Jackson: I have lived in Anchorage for 25 years; I worked with Anchorage Assembly for 18 years. I have worked with community councils on many issues, environment, long-range transportation, Title 21, 20/20 plan. Your priorities are my priorities. I will listen to what you have to say, learn and make decisions with you. I support honest, ethical and accountable government.

Question what is your biggest first challenge? Put Lake Otis Tudor back at the top of the list.

#### V. Assembly Report

Mr. Traini: Knik Arm Crossing is the biggest issue; there was no testimony in support except one.

Question: Is a \$3 a toll realistic?

Mr. Coffey: concerns re: Knik Arm Crossing mitigate impacts, Title 21 committee report on public hearing tomorrow night; vote on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

VI. Federation of Community Councils Report: Bryn Mawr development, code enforcement were discussed.

Election of officers is in April. All current officers are interested in serving again.

#### VII. Treasurer's report - \$193.95

Joyce Hughes, RPCC Secretary spent \$139.00 on a digital recorder for the council meetings. Motion by Bob Baer, seconded by Robert Churchill to reimburse her. Unanimously passed.

#### VIII. Unfinished business

Cottonwood Project: Traffic calming. Plan completed in May 2000. Two alternatives presented at the February meeting.

A motion not to do the project failed. An Ad Hoc Committee was convened to look at the alternatives. Recommended that the intersection at Cottonwood and Vassar buffer area be reduced to four feet. Separation for pedestrians shortens driveways.

Comments on narrowing the street to 31 feet: narrowing on Annapolis, Redwood is way to narrow, it is a one-way street now, due to lack of snow removal.

Resident: I've lived on Cottonwood since it was a dirt road. Why isn't it cleared since it is a main road? I don't like the idea of splitting the route of the sidewalk from one side to the other. I'm not sure that it is necessary.

Heather: expressed concern re: problems on Fireweed Lane, opposition stopped improvements and an 80 year-old man was killed there this weekend

Steve: lives on Cottonwood. He likes what was done with Redwood.

Resident: comment that no one stops at stop signs. It is not how the road is designed. It is a problem with the traffic regulations not being enforced.

Resident: support for street narrowing. I don't want to loose any more ground. The neck down was effective in slowing the traffic.

John Wanamaker: lived in the neighborhood 38 years. Concern re: snowplowing? Do we need a motion so we can discuss it?

**Ms. Shoemaker would like to propose that we postpone the action: we do not have enough details. I move that we do not vote now, that we postpone the vote until we have additional information.**

**Motion seconded by Paul Mamora. In favor – 24. Opposed – 11.**

Request a separate meeting for just the sidewalk issue.

**John Wanamaker: proposed that the council have a definitive vote at the next meeting. Anne Brooks seconded. 24 In Favor, 11 Opposed.**

Motion to adjourn. Muriel Richardson. Hoyt Cole second.

Minutes submitted by Joyce Hughes, March 27, 2007.