

Minutes

Northeast Community Council (NECC)

February 15, 2024 | 7pm

Creekside Park Elementary- Gymnasium

7500 E 6th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99504

Board Members Present

Murray Crookes, Vice President | **Lyn Franks**, Treasurer | **David Weber**, Secretary | **Selina Metoyer**, Member | **Stu Grenier**, Member | **Pamela Raygor**, Member | **Mary O’Loughlin**, Member

Murray Crookes calls meeting to order at 7:00pm and provided a land acknowledgement.

Murray gave thanks for Bob Reupke, long-time NECC board member, and asked for a moment of silence to recognize Bob for all he has done.

40~ people were present virtually or in the room

Pledge of Allegiance – Murray Crookes

Board Roll Call – Murray Crookes

Minutes Approval: [January](#)

Stu Grenier motioned to approve the January 18, 2024 general membership council meeting minutes; Mary O’Loughlin seconded. None opposed. January 18, 2024 general membership council meeting minutes approved.

Treasurer’s Update

Lyn Franks: Reported \$1,714.60 in the bank account.

FCC Report

Murray Crookes: Bob Reupke, former board member, was the FCC Delegate for NECC. We need a new FCC Delegate if anyone would like to volunteer. Pamela Raygor will attend this month’s FCC meeting.

Pamela Raygor: The FCC meeting is next Wednesday, February 21, 2024. Pamela will provide a report after the meeting takes place.

Community Concerns and Activities (opportunity for community members to share concerns, requests for the council, and upcoming needs/activities, up to 2 min)

Steve Farris: Gave thanks to assembly member Karen Bronga for a speedy return on Steve’s safety concerns. Steve expressed concern at other assembly members not responding. Steve also thanked Sen. Bill Wielechowski, Karen Bronga, and the mayor’s office for snow clearing in Steve’s area.

Stu Grenier: Thanked assembly member George Martinez and Rep. Donna Mears for their help in cleaning up trash near dumpsters on Boundary Ave. Stu expressed disappointment that there has been lots of trash stacked near dumpsters over the years.

Legislative Reports (limit 3 min. each, including questions)

Sen. Bill Wielechowski: For the state capital budget program called CAPSIS, the availability to submit project for the capital budget closes this Friday, February 16, 2024, email Bill’s office to submit your project. There are three priorities we have in the legislature. The first is education. We passed a bill increasing base student allocation funding to \$680 last year. The education bill will be up in the house Monday or Tuesday (February 19-20, 2024). There will be a couple dozen amendments on the floor, and we’ll see how it goes. The next priority is to return the state to a defined benefit system. That was passed last week. A couple days ago there was a first hearing on that. The next priority is energy. There are several bills. There is 100 years of natural gas supply in the Cook Inlet, however the producer that controls 90% of the gas is refusing to drill new wells. So we are looking to increase the storage capacity for Cook Inlet and increasing renewable energy capacity. The biggest way to increase renewable energy projects and usage is to increase capacity in the electrical grid.

Stu Grenier: Is there any possibility we could move the natural gas from the north slope via tanker to Anchorage? Stu mentioned the Russian's are moving natural gas via tanker with the sea ice receding.

Sen. Bill Wielechowski: The problem is the ice and shallow water. The boats are iced in for 6-7 months a year when the gas is most needed and there would need to be miles of dredging on the north slope. There is a possibility of building a pipeline to Nome where a new port is being built, however that is at least ten years away. Bill has had a number of meetings this week with people about the dream to build a pipeline for LNG from the north slope to Nikiski. The possibility of building the pipeline is greater than it has been in the past due to geopolitical conditions. However, shipping LNG from the north slope to Anchorage is not feasible for at least the next decade.

CONTACT: Phone: 907-269-0120, Email: Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov

Rep. Donna Mears: Rep. Donna stated the town hall meeting on Saturday February 10, 2024 was well attended and thanked people for attending. Donna is Co-Chair for the Anchorage legislative delegation. The delegation is planning a big town hall on March 9, 2024, 2-4pm, at UAA-Cuddy Hall, and encourages people to come. Donna is looking forward to education discussions on the floor. Donna has been doing work on the food security task force. We are working on getting local food to keep costs down that is also nutritious and is Alaska based.

Selina Metoyer: How much Alaska food is served at the Anchorage School District?

Rep. Donna Mears: It's a bit limited because we do not have manufacturing and processing in state. The governor's proposed crop bill will help address increase in processing raw Alaska crops.

CONTACT: Office: 907-465-3438, Cell 907-632-6382, Email: Rep.Donna.Mears@akleg.gov

Rep. Cliff Groh: A lot of work is being done on K-12 education funding and energy. The house majority has had trouble figuring out how it will handle education funding. The house minority that Cliff is in is very much in support of an increase in education funding to improve schools and create more opportunity. There have been discussions with how to deal with energy costs. Building of Susitna dam has been in discussion, but there are others.

Cliff is putting in a measure for the legislative oversight over the permanent fund. The board of trustees of the permanent fund has been considering more risky investments for greater return. Cliff is interested in more legislative oversight to promote safe growth. Cliff is also interested in other measures to generate more revenues. Cliff last year introduced an oil tax measure to raise revenues. Cliff is also interested in implementing constitution amendments for sustainable limitations for the budget. On February 24, March 2, March 9, March 30th, 2024 Cliff is hosting "Saturday Pancakes with Cliff" at Kava's on Muldoon from 5-7pm. The first pancake stack is on Cliff. From 12-2pm on the same dates Cliff will also host "Saturday Milkshakes with Cliff" at the Lucky Wishbone. The first milkshake is on Cliff. Cliff looks forward to meeting members of the community at those locations.

There was a question about the deadline for filing for the PFD. Cliff stated it was by the end of March and encouraged people to file.

CONTACT: Phone: 907-952-3353, Email: Representative.Cliff.Groh@akleg.gov

Lyn Franks speaking for Sen. Loki Tobin: Lyn Franks read Sen. Loki's emailed legislative updates for the NECC meeting.

We anticipate that the omnibus education bill will, SB140, will be on the house floor next week. Sen. Tobin along with two other senate majority members have been negotiating with house majority members, with some agreement, on reasonable education policy. Senate Health and Social services, SB 115 will be heard again on Thursday where we anticipate it will move forward in the process. SB 46 has been passed out of the house committee and bill will be voted on the house floor soon. Our office has been monitoring the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process and we have been aware of the continued issues on this important document and have been communicating with DOT to get Alaskan federal transportation dollars we rely on. We will work with department for close adherence and best practices and encourage best practices with multi-nodal transportation. We have been in communication with the Alaska Department of Transportation on improved snow clearing. Sen. Tobin wants to give a shout out to the constituents who have reached out to Tobin's office on improved snow clearing on sidewalks. Sen. Tobin would like to stay in contact on these issues and encourages constituents to report these issues with Title 6, ADA compliant form. On Saturday, February 17th Sen. Tobin will host a constituent's meeting at New Sagaya's downtown location at 11:30, and at Kava's on Muldoon at 1:30pm.

CONTACT: Phone 907-465-3704, Email: Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov

Assembly Reports (limit 3 min. each, including questions)

George Martinez: The assembly sent out a random mailing to 100,000 people across the municipality with a survey. On the postcard there is a QR code and George will make it available to the community council to give their voices.

George thanked Stu Grenier for thanking assembly members, and others, for giving thanks on good things happening.

The online checkbook is now live. Every transaction in the municipality is available for review by the public.

There is \$4.35M for parks and trails bonds on the ballot and includes two major projects for east anchorage, and one of them in the NECC area. The assembly approved \$4.1M for new cemeteries in anchorage and eagle river area. There is limited availability in the current cemeteries. It does raise questions on where dollars are spent and how we collect and assess.

George visited some local schools and in particular George visited the 7th grade of Anchorage STREaM academy who are doing some hands on project learning. George is appreciative of that.

Recently the economic and community development committee had a presentation from Anchorage Community Land Trust. The program Set Up Shop has been going on for several years where small businesses have trained, with focus on businesses in Mountain View. They presented that they are interested in expanding the program to the Muldoon area and making sure the small business community is seen and heard.

Stefanie Taylor: Stefanie had read about the assembly decriminalizing jaywalking back in October and no right turns on red in the downtown areas. Stefanie was concerned about safety and how people would be educated about those matters.

George Martinez: At least one of the twelve assembly members is talking about these matters. George mentioned there are areas where no right turn on red is already in place. George mentioned the discussion about jaywalking is interesting and it is relatively unenforced and jaywalking is technically not a crime due to width of some streets.

Selina Metoyer: There used to be a number you could call into the Municipality where you could call to get a snow berm out of your driveway. Selina lives at 6th and Oklahoma near Creekside Elementary and there was 7 feet of snow and there has been no pick up of snow, it's just been shoved over. Streets surrounding Selina have been turning into a one way and makes it really difficult to get out of her driveway.

George Martinez: Right of way clearing is a real problem. George encouraged people to make phone calls and emails to road maintenance. There is a faster response to snow matters where there is an issue related to emergency vehicle access.

Pamela Raygor: There is an issue at the elementary schools and Begich middle school. The pickup is dangerous where parents are parked on all sides of the roads. Children are darting out to get to the cars. There should be something looked at by the city and school board for a more safe way for children to move about and get picked up.

George Martinez: Mentioned this year pickup is better than last year, comparing his observations. The street maintenance is working twelve hour days and George mentioned street maintenance is trying to stay in front on the snow and safety issues.

Community Leadership Updates (3 min each) [JBER](#), [Mayor's Office](#), [Police Department](#), [Fire Department](#), [Parks & Recreation](#), [Muldoon Public Library](#), [School Board](#), [Muldoon PTA](#), [Bartlett Area Principal Group](#), other

George Martinez: Mentioned he asked the police department to attend the NECC meeting after hearing the feedback from the last NECC meeting. George expected them to show up today.

Pamela Raygor: Was tasked with asking the police to attend the NECC meeting and submitted a request for them to attend. However, she has not heard back from the police, or get anyone to answer the phone from fire department.

Stu Grenier speaking on behalf of Jim Curran of Muldoon Public Library: The library does not have a visible sign for the library. The sign on the library itself is not easy to see either because of snow berms in the winter, and tree cover in the summer.

Carl Jacobs, Anchorage School District Board Member: The board is focused on the operating budget for 24-25 school year. The ASD unveiled a new budget which will require action this February. By the 1st

week of March a balanced budget is due to the Anchorage Assembly and then it will go to the Alaska Department of Education for review and auditing. When the budget process started there was a projected \$90 million deficit due mainly to flat funding from the state. 70% of the deficit is going to be address through fund balance and allowances from the state. Other changes and efficiencies relate to reduction in holdback teachers, reduction in administration, 10% reduction in cost of supply, reduction in replacement in Chromebooks and other district devices, changes to IGNITE program, and small reduction in force to the immersion program. For those who wish to weigh in on the budget process you can email the school board at schoolboard@asdk12.org. We have another meeting on February 20, 2024 at 6pm.

A policy for integrating PTAs, PTOs, PTSOs within the community and school board, and it passed and there is now a PTA representative on the School Board's communications committee. Carl is working on a policy update for tobacco and vaping policy and is working with the American Lung Association on the update.

Carl Jacobs | (907) 632-7285 | jacobs_carl@asdk12.org

Rep. Donna Mears: There have been a lot of input from parents on the school board district. Donna made a comment that the school board has been very clear on what different funding levels would mean. The budget has to do with what we give the school board. Donna hopes fellow legislatures are keeping that in mind as votes are taken on education funding next week.

David Crystal, Bartlett Area Principal Group: Susitna Elementary had a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Mathematics) night. Currently there is a rotation between health and art teachers and students would only see these teachers 3-4 times a year. One of the proposals for the school board is moving health back into the classroom, being taught by the teachers full time. Then art and health would move to STEAM, and the person hired will stay at the school full time.

This morning there was a family breakfast around attendance at Creekside Elementary. Right now 4,142 students are being served by the area and the absentee rate is 13.1% and the target for the Creekside Elementary is under 5%. The school district overall is at a 10.5% absentee rate. When kids miss 10% or more there is a huge impact. Right now in our community 49.5% of kids are considered chronically absent. It comes down to community members and parents to decrease the absentee rates.

Committee Updates – 2 min

Lyn Franks, CIP Committee: We had a meeting recently and prioritized CIP projects we think are most important. There are three categories, high roller, medium, and small projects. The top one we are looking at currently has to do with Boundary Ave. There needs to be sidewalk on Duben and Grand Larry as well. Little kids are coming from school and have less than 12 inches to walk next to cars.

Stu Grenier, Park & Trails Committee: We have a surprising number of homeless people camping in Centennial Park. Stu is very interested in the mayor's office participation in action with the US Supreme Court on homelessness.

Murray Crookes, Picnic Committee: June 8th is the day chosen for Spirit of Muldoon Picnic. We are looking for a volunteer to help plan it and it involves talking to businesses in our community and see if they want to participate. Last year we had a block party and Murray would love to see that again this year. It is an exciting time and it happens 2 weeks before the farmers market opens.

There was a question on Balthazar's proposed marijuana shop proximity to the Chanshtnu Muldoon park, referring to the 500-foot rule. George Martinez answered it is up to the city planners to make the legal determination for the Marijuana shop proximity to the park.

Presentations: (5 mins)

No presentations this month.

Old Business (Limit 6 min/item including discussion)

[Muni Ranked Choice Voting Resolution](#)

Stu Grenier: This resolution has been coming before NECC for four months. Some people are trying to stop ranked choice at the state level. However, most of the testimony is in favor of keeping it. Stu would like to have ranked choice voting as a Municipal Ordinance for reasons of the "spoiler effect". Stu believes that for everyone to have the best chance of being elected ranked choice voting is the best way to do it.

Nate Martin: Nate opposes the resolution for ranked choice voting. Nate gets the appeal of ranked choice voting to moderate increasing polarized society, however Nate believes ranked choice voting does not do

that exactly. Nate explained ranked choice voting takes people's secondary selections and ranks them and Nate believes ranked choice is not a clear mandate from the voters. Nate does not believe ranked choice fixes the "spoiler effect".

David Ulmer: Believes what Nate Martin said is not true in regards to a clear mandate from voters. David explained his understanding of ranked choice voting and how it works is that, eventually, a candidate does wind up getting an above 50% vote.

Kyle Rehberg: Kyle is against ranked choice resolution. Kyle questioned why there is a need for ranked choice voting when there are nonpartisan elections already existing for the municipality. Kyle expressed that a lot of people are still confused by ranked choice voting and that mail in voting was changed and ranked choice voting will also be faced with skepticism and will decrease voter turnout.

Marc Grober: Expressed disappointment at people who do not understand ranked choice voting after there was much instruction provided by the state and others. Marc expressed that ranked choice voting is cheaper than runoffs because it does it automatically. Marc recommended a test for people who do not understand ranked choice voting, and perhaps those who do not pass the test, should not vote.

Stefanie Taylor: Believes the resolution is not well written and is an opinion. Stefanie believes going back to in-person voting will save money and time. The resolution needs to be well thought out. Municipal ranked choice voting is a complicated process, and an automatic runoff may result in a different result (as opposed to a run-off under the current voting rules).

Lyn Franks: Expressed that people were nicer last time Lyn ran for office. Lyn gave a personal example of Lyn's election experience and expressed that municipal ranked choice is a good thing and what our country needs right now.

For: 8 Opposed: 22 Abstain: 5. Muni Ranked Choice Voting Resolution does not pass.

[Eklutna River Restoration Project](#)

Murray Crookes tabled for next month as there was no one available to represent the project.

[Opposition to Traffic Circles and Roundabouts Resolution](#)

Marc Grober: There is resource file that Marc was able to garner from the traffic department. Marc asked if there were any questions on the data from NECC members.

Selina Metoyer: Exactly where are the intended roundabouts?

Marc Grober: There are two planned, one Nunaka and Buckner and one further up the road. The resolution essentially states no roundabouts for now. If the traffic department has more analysis we would like to collaborate with them when the analysis is available. The materials that have been posted relate to stop signs and the reason people speed down Buckner is because there is no stop signs. Marc proposed two stop signs were better than circles due to winter snow conditions. Stop signs are also more cost effective. Marc expressed traffic calming by design will calm traffic better and that traffic is moving at 130% of the speed limit.

Laura Moy: We have a stop sign at Twining and Perry Dr. and people drive right through the stop sign. Laura expressed she did not know what the solution is.

Pamela Raygor made a motion to table the vote on the resolution till the March general meeting. Lyn Franks seconded. For: 10 Opposed: 20 Abstain: 2. Motion to table does not pass.

Ted Ariel: Ted is a school bus driver in Anchorage. Ted expressed it is difficult to move around the roundabouts and in Airport Heights where there are roundabouts. Moving through is impossible without stopping and backing up. Ted could hit snow berms and the school district does not want buses hitting snow, which is impossible with roundabouts. Ted drives a special needs bus and is not sure how full-size bus drivers are handling the roundabouts. Ted drives other streets to avoid the roundabouts.

George Martinez: Giving clarity for things that we are not for is a good thing. However, we should be clear as to what we do want as a community so the dollars do not leave the community.

Marc Grober: Expressed the traffic department representative, Zak, was a nice guy and we do want to work with him on getting more information.

For: 32 Opposed: 1 Abstain: 5. Opposition to Traffic Circles and Roundabouts Resolution passes

[New Business](#)

Opposition to Boundary Avenue East Extension Resolution

Stu Greiner: Boundary Ave is at the northern end of Muldoon with Centennial park on the north side of the street and condos and single family houses on the south side. Years ago there was a fire bond including the Boundary Ave extension and some problems developed with that bond because there were no community comments. Stu stated \$140,000 was spent on the Boundary Ave extension, but the NECC has yet to see the plan.

Marc Grober: Asked if Stu was amenable to include 2018-01 NECC resolution stating the NECCs disappointment engage community council feedback, as required by municipal by charter and ordinances.

Stu Greiner: Was amendable include reference in the resolution.

Muldoon Perimeter Fire Safety Road Resolution

Stu Greiner: We have been working on a trail that would connect then non-motorized fire safety trail on the Tudor/Muldoon road curve along the east side of the gas line to the Ship Creek bridge. In order to get this fire safety road we would be requesting to rearrange the JBEAR/civilian boundary like they did in Birchwood. More discussion will occur on this during next month's general meeting and parks & trails committee meeting.

April Board Elections

Murray Crookes: There are three board openings up for vote.

Selina Metoyer: To be eligible to run for the board you will have need to attend three general meetings out of the last six general meetings. You need to live in the NECC boundary. If you own a business in the area only one person from the business can run. The election will be at the general meeting in April. Any NECC member can chair or join the election committee. On the back of the agenda there are the terms that are up for vote.

Pamela Raygor: Is there an election committee? We need to connect with Ron Meehan, NECC president, to get more information on who is appointed to the committee.

Discussion was had regarding need for a Parliamentarian.

Alternative Schools & Programs Expo

Pamela Raygor: The Expo was fairly well attended and there were many booths. The lottery for alternative schools is open February 1 through March 21.

Homelessness in East Anchorage

George Martinez: There is a housing program partnership between the municipality and coalition to end homelessness on a housing plan. Up to now 50 people have been now housed who were previously in the solid waste services converted homeless facility. The plan is to house 150 people that are in the current shelter by the end of April. The cost is \$4M to do that work. That is juxtaposed to the \$2.4M settlement the city paid for the Tudor and Elmore experience. The point is that we are on the right track and alleviating the homeless emergency shelter responses.

Stu Grenier: Is there any way to target the people that are in the parks (for the housing program)?

George Martinez: The point is that we are taking people from the shelter to housing. So folks must go from camping to emergency shelter to housing. So, the people in the parks are not the target for housing.

There was discussion related to homeless pathways to housing and dollars spent on it. George suggested going to municipality website to find more information on dollars spent and homelessness housing operators. For deep answers go to homelessness and housing committee meetings. The assembly funds the operations. George encouraged specific questions be sent to him and he can ask the committee and operators on record.

Community Announcements

None made for time.

Murray Crookes adjourned the meeting at 9:12PM

Upcoming NECC meeting: March 21, 2024

**Respectfully Submitted,
Dave Weber, Secretary**