

NECC

Northeast Community Council

Minutes – November 19, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00PM

Board Members present: Ron Rivas, Stuart Grenier, Bob Reupke, Ainslie Phillips, Mary Pedlow, Selina Metoyer, Genevieve Holubik, James Starzec, Kevin Smestad.

Board Members Absent: None

Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from October meeting were presented and approved unanimously.

Approval of November Agenda: Time for John Rodda from Parks and Recreation to speak on item # 1 was added. The abridged agenda was presented and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report: The balance in our checking account is \$686.13. There were no expenditures in October and one donation for ten dollars. We have \$203.11 remaining funds out of the \$1,200 donation by ML&P. The NECC is a non-profit organization and receives no funds from the State of the Municipality of Anchorage. We therefore would gladly accept your donation of \$5.00 or more.

Legislative reports: The reporters are asked to keep their comments brief, within five minutes.

Senator Betty Davis: Tom Obermeyer presenting. The Senate hearing on CMS waiver and moratorium program was a success. They have been reinstated and the department has explained why the moratorium had occurred and what steps they are taking to prevent it from happening again. The ongoing bills in the Senate that we will be following closely concern Denali Kid Care, the nurse's limitation on overtime, and the clinical trials bill for cancer.

Senator Bill Wielechowski: The gas line presentation at Begich Middle School had about two dozen people attending. There will be two open seasons next year, which is very important. I expect the oil companies will make conditional bids. I am the Co-chair of the energy resources committee and we have released our energy recommendations. It is available online at www.energy.aksenate.org. These are a group of ideas that we thought might work in Alaska, and we are looking forward to public input. The deadline for suggestions is December 15th. We are working on legislation for next session to put into law some of the recommendations from this list. Last month, Pete Peterson and I sent a letter to the Highway to Highway group opposing the East City Alternative. We do not think it is a viable alternative. The conflict between the Veteran's Administration and the Pioneer's Home on the distribution of medications has been resolved.

Representative Pete Petersen: I have also been working on the state energy plan and will be introducing legislation promoting our choices next session. I have brought a survey with me for anyone who would like to add their comments on this matter. There is also a report that updates us on how Alaska gasoline prices compare with areas with similar sized populations. Enstar will be lowering their rates by 16% starting in January. The territorial guard retirement money has been reinstated by President Obama. There are two bills that have been filed so far concerning PERS/TERS.

Anchorage Assembly Member Mike Guterrez: We are concerned with the municipal funding for the FCC. It has been reducing for a number of years, and there was no money in the proposed budget for it this year. We pass an amendment Tuesday night to fund it at a level of \$98,000, which is a 4% cut from last year. The federation believes this will be enough for them. There is some consideration for the idea of moving some of the FCC's functions to the City Clerk's office. I don't think it's job could be done as efficiently at City Hall. Stu did a great job at the assembly meeting on Tuesday representing this community council. The issue was the new Brown Jug store at Tikhatnu Commons. This council passed a resolution asking them to require a valid ID for every liquor purchase at that store. Brown Jug responded negatively, and when we reviewed their conditional use permit, I was able to add by amendment the additional condition to their permit that they will be required to check IDs for purchase. We would not have been able to do this without the strong turnout by the NECC and area residents in favor of this requirement. Eight of the eleven assembly members voted in favor of the amendment. Next week, I will come forward with a proposal that will require every package store to check IDs during liquor purchases. There is a proposal from the mayor to change the way the city pays off its debt. The idea is like paying a credit card balance with another credit card. This is debt we all voted on, we need to pay it off. The amount allocated for the grants for community centers is just over \$200,000, down from \$700,000 last year. There has been no specific allocations yet, the mayor wants to require the programs to apply for funds. We could put an amendment in, but we do not have the votes to override a mayoral veto.

Anchorage Assembly Member Sheila Selkregg: Presented by Heather Ireland. Shelia commends the NECC on its involvement in the Brown Jug liquor license issue.

Executive Report: We had our meeting on November 5th. We discussed the agenda for this meeting and also discussed the Muldoon Parkstrip idea at length.

Community Activities Report:

Community Patrol: Aaron Pascas of the Nunaka Valley Community Patrol presenting. The condition of the community patrols is not very good. Only Mt. View and Nunaka Valley patrols are active, so we would appreciate any help. There are only four people in NVCP, and less than three in the NECP. Not only do we keep an eye on the community, we also do things such as provide traffic control at Halloween town and helping out the ASD with distributing flu shots. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at 726-7038.

Northeast Community Center: Bob Reupke presenting. We opened up in 1987 and we are funded by a grant from the municipality totaling \$181,000. The mayor wants to cut \$25,000 from that for next year. The Boys & Girls Club manages the center, and with their budget cuts, there are a number of financial difficulties for both organizations. Many other organizations use this space, such as AARP with their tax preparation seminars in the spring, Volunteers of America, Pop Warner, Boy Scouts, Head Start and several others.

Federation of Community Councils: Bob Reupke presenting. The current grant from the municipality is \$102,000 and is currently set to be reduced to \$98,000 for next year. There are 26 of 38 community councils currently active in Anchorage. Neighborhood USA organization is having a conference here in Anchorage in May of 2011 and is looking for a theme and logo for the event. There is \$1,000 set aside in the FCC budget for the Nunaka Valley Community Patrol, and \$4,000 for the North East Community Patrol. John from CHARR spoke with us about the ordinance to extend the bar hours for one hour without liquor sales. CHARR reported that there are approximately 3,000 people who enter the streets downtown at closing time. This ordinance would allow people to wait in bars for cabs an hour after last call. They are in favor of this ordinance because it should cut down on drunken driving and sexual assaults. The ordinance will be implemented in 15 bars and will expire in one year, at which time it will be considered for universal application or not.

Business:

Ainslie made a motion to change the agenda back to its original iteration, with an additional 20 minutes added for discussion. Seconded.

A vote on the motion: 22 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstain. Motion passes.

Item #1. MOA Case S11700-2. To subdivide two lots into four tracks. The Old Green House property.

Russ Oswald from the Municipality presenting. The city is looking into a land swap between the city and ML&P of the approximately 15 acres at the old greenhouse property for 20 acres in Centennial Park. I have been directed to continue with the re-plat, but if this goes through, we can kill the re-plat. We are not required to follow through with the preliminary re-plat. I just learned about the swap last night, and the first time I heard about the desire for a park was at the last NECC meeting. My direction is to get this land ready for sale and relocate the creek.

John Rodda, Parks & Recreation Director for the Municipality: ML& P wants to exchange approximately 20 acres located in Centennial Park, mainly the campground, for the land along Chester Creek from Autumn to Boston and Boston to Muldoon owned by the Heritage Land Bank. The land in the campground is dedicated parkland that can be transferred or exchanged for public purpose without a vote of the people, unlike its disposal, which does require a vote. This action is being designated as a public purpose. First off, both properties need to be appraised. The question I posed to Jim Posey was if this goes through, who's going to pay to develop this new parkland? I am going to argue against taking this raw land and having to figure out where the money will come from to develop it into something usable like the currently owned land. It's not just the market value of the land, but its intrinsic useable value that I have to consider. ML&P has an obligation to pay off this, they need to get out from under that, they can do that by taking ownership of the land, trading or transferring it over. I don't know the details the CFO and the money people are handling that side of it. The question is, will you get what you want, which is a dedicated park strip for the 20 acres in Centennial?

There will be a re-plat there for buffer requirements, undisturbed vegetative buffer between the soccer fields and the land going east towards the power generation plant. The mechanics of the swap, I can't speak to. The concept of the land swap is what I've been asked to speak on and is being discussed at high levels. We hope to give you accurate information in order for you to develop your opinions.

Ainslie Philips: In 1996, when Debarr was blocked off at Muldoon, John Gates, the park director at the time, gave Gateway Rotary the right to develop that area into what it is now, the Muldoon rest area. At that time, Mr. Posey looked at the property and believed that the only good use for the greenhouse land was for parkland. The Leisers sold it in 2006 for 2.5 million to three men who were later brought up on criminal charges, resulting in the land being seized by the feds. This community council went to the city asking it to buy the property assuming the city would be able to purchase it for fifty cents on the dollar. The land was bought for five million dollars. The city borrowed the money from ML&P. They now want their money. During this transaction there was an appraisal done on this property that said the middle tract and most of the far east tract is unbuildable land and it devalued the property. This appraisal was never given to the city. The amount of money needed to develop this land is more than what it is appraised for, so funding the project will be difficult. If it is re-platted the way it is currently being proposed and the land swap doesn't go through then the east half of the re-plat could be sold off and used for commercial purposes and the stream will be re-routed. The current location of the stream is the only thing that is currently stopping the extension of Debarr Road east. The H2H East City route proposes to implement this extension as a four lane road. They are proposing to take even more land as an easement to do this. This is a worst case scenario, and while we are discussing this land swap, we need to take into account the future ramifications of our actions.

Discussion:

Q. How many acres along Chester Creek are involved?

A. Approximately 16 acres.

Stu: My main concern is that we minimize the land we have to give up at Centennial and maximize the land we receive along Chester Creek.

Ainslie: And also the financial implications of the deal.

Q. Once the park is in place, will the right of way still be there for the road?

A. Yes, and it might take part of the park as well.

Clarification was made that the stream realignment's function is provide easier transit under Muldoon for juvenile salmon. The right of way will always be there, regardless of the platting. If the realignment doesn't go through now, there is a chance that Fish and Wildlife Service will no longer have the money to do it. The crossing at the intersection does not allow for improvements because of current utilities.

Q. Do we have any power, if the creek is relocated, to stipulate landscaping?

A. This question is being worked on at F&WS and dense vegetation is important to use because of fish habitat.

Clarification was made that the area in Centennial Park under discussion is the campground, and not the sledding hill. It was suggested that this plan was in development last year when the city cut back on the hours of operation at the park. It was stressed many times that neither the creek realignment or the re-plat will effect whether or not Debarr Road gets extended, but we should do all we can to protect that land for as long as we can.

A resolution was introduced to reject the re-plat. Seconded.

A vote on the resolution: 13 in favor, 6 opposed, 6 abstaining. Motion is passed.

A resolution was introduced stating "The NECC would instruct the planning department not to make any decisions on the replat or land swap until this body gets further information, and not consider the potential land swap as condition for this re-plat." Seconded.

A vote on the resolution: 24 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstaining. Motion is passed.

Item #2: Habitat for Humanity development project at old Hess Auction house property:

Craig Jaeger, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, Anchorage presenting. The project is located at Oklahoma St. and 4th Ave. there are three contiguous properties owned by three different individuals. The area is approximately 100 by 300 feet per parcel. It is zoned R-2M. We are considering a set of townhouses with two, three and four bedroom floor plans, based on community needs. We do not have any design plans drawn up yet. Possibly 7 to 8 units per parcel. Construction would begin in 2011. Because of concerns from this council, we will discuss with Creekside Park Elementary the impact this project might have on school enrollment. Any further questions can be addressed to Habitat for Humanity and a flyer is available at this meeting.

Item #3: Knik Arm Bridge Crossing Update

Lori Fagnani presenting. This is a part of the Knik Arm Bridge planners to discuss its progress with community councils. The ultimate goal is urban connectivity. The construction date is 2014. It is funded through a public/private partnership, 5:1 private to federal funding. The tolls will pay for part of its construction and all of its maintenance. The toll is undetermined, but the projection is around \$5. This project is needed due to studies that project a 50% increase in the population of the Anchorage/Mat-Su area. A Dittman poll shows there is broad support in Anchorage huge support in the valley, and both the state and municipal governments have shown support of the bridge. This will also help make the Glenn Highway safer. An ISER study showed that the construction of the bridge will create 5,000 jobs, and the growth associated with the project will eventually bring in 14,000 new jobs and 18 billion dollars of economic activity. Neighborhood concerns include the dissection of the Government Hill community and the cut and cover tunnel. The process is nearing a final decision. It is on the short term transportation plan, and our main goal right now is to keep it there. The current plan connects the bridge on the Anchorage side to the A/C St couplet. During Phase II of the project, as the traffic count grows, the connection will be moved to the Ingra/Gambell connection. It is likely to be designed as a two lane road.

Sandy Dipietro of the Anchorage Citizen Coalition presenting. KABATA promotes this project as a public/private partnership, but that has yet to be determined. There are no contracts or written commitments. So far, 47 million has been spent on this project, and 60 million is still budgeted for it. That money could be better spent elsewhere in maintenance. The traffic funneled downtown will negatively impact the area. It is estimated that an additional 600 gravel trucks will go through downtown Anchorage each day during construction. As far as the population growth is concerned, we already have a plan called Anchorage 2020. During the development of this plan, they specifically rejected the notion of promoting spread into the valley. There is nothing on the Mat-Su side of the bridge, and the infrastructure needed in the area would be enormously expensive. In addition, the rail and pedestrian access is included in Phase II, which is many years down the road. One of the impacts to the community would be that 14 to 16 houses would be lost in Government Hill. A route thorough military land would not be feasible due to buried ordinances and firing ranges.

Item #5: Reestablishing a Community Patrol for the Muldoon area with a discussion on what its role would be and purpose etc.

Stuart Greneir presenting. I do not have much more to add to the earlier discussion. Our concept is very local and we are looking to patrol in our area. Discussion included financing options, specifically from the FCC. Many people felt that the most relevant issue is increasing participation. Aaron Pascar volunteered to show anyone who's interested how patrols work.

Item #6: Crossing Signal at Boundary and Boniface. Discussion on the feasibility of a signal at that crossing.

Scott Thomas DOT presenting. We have had concerns about this intersection (Boniface and Caribou) for over a decade, and we have no good solutions, but we would welcome any suggestions. I am not proposing a traffic signal at this time. I am proposing options such as alternative connections or blocking turn lanes. It may be possible to do some traffic studies in the future, but we do not have the staff to do this at this time. One problem is that the signaled intersections on Boniface were not planned to be a unified system. Another issue is that this intersection is 670 ft. from a highway off ramp, and we generally don't want to put signals that close. Because of concern over a fence in the sight line, I will check the sight distances at the intersection. One suggestion brought up was a signaled crosswalk similar to the one on Northern Lights in front of the ARC of Anchorage. This is cost prohibitive, as these signals often cost up to one million dollars.

**A motion was made to extend the meeting ten minutes in order to finish this discussion. Seconded.
A vote on the motion: 10 in favor, 0 opposed.**

A roundabout would be feasible if it was integrated with the on ramp, but the closeness of the military base access might create more congestion. Again, I am not planning on adding a signal, but I am proposing that something be done. We will be studying this matter further. It is on a list that is going to the chiefs of DOT to determine which projects get study money, which get something built and which get put on hold. This intersection is near the top of that list.

Item #7: Resolution in support of a 120 day Legislative Session.

Held over for discussion at the next meeting.

Adjournment- 10:10 PM