

NECC

Northeast Community Council

Minutes – January 21, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00PM

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

Board Members Absent: Genevieve Holubik & Kevin Smestad.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Motion to hold over approval of the previous minutes to the February meeting due to the lack of printed copies was made, seconded, and carried.

Approval of November Agenda: Agenda was amended to add Item 7: Concerning the combined meeting of the NECC and SFCC. Clerical errors were corrected, and the agenda was approved.

Treasurer's report: The balance in our checking account is \$604.43. There was one expenditure in January in the amount of \$81.70 for lights and no donations. 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:

Anchorage Assembly Member Sheila Selkregg: Presented by Heather Ireland. The Title 21 committee is still meeting each week and the issue should come before the Assembly in March. Sheila is working with the various municipal departments and administration to develop a summary presentation of the issues concerning the Muldoon Park Strip concept. The Housing & Neighborhoods Workgroup presented to the FCC. Issues related to workforce housing were addressed and they are looking for feedback. Community Help Workgroup also spoke at this meeting. Obesity plan was brought before the assembly and will be approved at the next meeting. Land use, transportation and trail improvements were not addressed in this plan, but there is some advocacy for including these details later. The Northeast district plan will begin to be developed by the Planning Department this spring.

It was brought up in comments that the FCC is a contractor for the municipality, and addressing the FCC does not fulfill any agency's requirement to address community councils.

Concerns about Sheila's level of involvement with the community councils were aired.

Executive Report: We had our last board meeting on December 3rd. We discussed the agenda for this meeting and the combined NECC/SFCC meeting.

Community Activities Report:

Community Patrol: Aaron Pascar of the Nunaka Valley Community Patrol presenting. We are still having issues regarding recruitment. I called the area community patrols and have scheduled a general meeting for February 5th to discuss the FCC funds set aside for patrols, our role in area-wide disaster plans, and recruitment. The NVCP has donated 430 hours of community service since December. Projects included helping H1N1 distribution centers, working at the New Year's Eve celebration, and of course, community patrols. Teresa Rick is taking over the administration of the Northeast Community Patrol. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at 726-7038. Office help, as well as patrol help, is needed.

Northeast Community Center: Bob Reupke presenting. The cuts that were discussed at the last meeting were reinstated, and we will be operating with an \$181,430 grant. Mountain View's grant was also reinstated. A federal grant of two million dollars that was directed to the Boys & Girls Club was taken away, but may be reinstated.

Federation of Community Councils: Bob Reupke presenting. The federation met yesterday from six to eight. Their grant is \$95,000, a \$7,600 cut from the previous grant. Carol Comeau spoke regarding the cuts in the Anchorage School District's budget. In May of 2011, the Neighborhoods USA event will be held in Anchorage, and volunteers are needed. The logo is "Great Land, Great Neighborhoods Alaska NUSA, 2011" and a decal of

the Anchorage skyline. The next meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of February between six and eight at 1057 W Fireweed Lane.

Business:

Item #1: Russian Jack Springs Park Resolution, action item. Presented by Marc Grober. The resolution came about as a result of two separate events. One, there is a concern with the Muldoon Estates property, its planned conversion to commercial property and our desire to see it used as parkland. Secondly, although John Rodda had conveyed to me that nothing further would be done with Russian Jack Springs Park until John, the new director of Parks and Recreation, could meet with the community councils, I read a Tweet from Sen. Wielechowski stating that he had met with the Russian Jack Community Council about doing some development in RJP. I followed it up with a discussion stating that the NECC was very serious about needing a new master plan and that nothing should be done before then. I have heard stories about installing playgrounds, and Bill said he wanted to put a skate park in North Russian Jack. I spoke to John about what was truly happening and when could he meet with our council about the parks in our area. We called a parks meeting and began drafting this resolution. One of our first concerns was that the \$750,000 available for Russian Jack Park should not be used to update the park, but rather to update the park's development plan, which has not been done since 1979. Secondly, we feel the municipality should meet the goals set in the original plan. One idea that came up in our discussions was to instead use this money towards purchasing the Muldoon Estates property. This would go a long way to adding recreational opportunities in the town center, proximate to local amenities, transportation and supervision. These ideas were brought together into this resolution. We would like to present this to Mr. Rodda so he may come to our next meeting and address these concerns.

Discussion of Sen. Wielechowski's proposed skate park and its location. It was mentioned that the SFCC is interested in having a facility like this in their area. Heather Ireland, who was at the RJCC meeting mentioned above, said that the discussion of the skate park involved a renovating a tennis court near Cartee Park that had fell into disuse. The RJCC decided to begin public involvement in discussing spending money towards that goal.

Discussion of the relevancy of the issue and the wording of the resolution continued. The importance of RJSP to the NECC was discussed at length. The majority of the discussion then turned to the proper wording of the resolution, and it was decided by the board to table the discussion while Marc and Genevieve reword the resolution.

Item #2: Park Renovation Project Update. Presented by Terry Cummings, Park VIP Committee. Susan Little, a park planner for the Municipality, would like to renovate three neighborhood parks in our area. The three parks are Creekside Park, Cheeney Lake Park and Ira Walker Park. She would like us to form committees for each park to provide input for design and what the community would like done. The action is based on the results of a municipal park survey conducted in 2008. There is approximately \$40,000 in funding for each park. If anyone would like to serve on these committees, you may contact me at 333-7809 or Cummingst44@yahoo.com.

It was suggested by Stu that a way to drum up volunteers would be to canvas the neighborhood and distribute flyers on the subject. Terry stated that Susan's plan was to have three meetings with a limited number of community members involved in the design meetings, with more volunteers to be available for the actual implementation of the upgrades. She went on to say that Susan would like to see the design meetings finished by the end of February. There is a list of suggested improvements and draft plans culled from the survey data available on the municipal web site.

Marc mentioned that he sent a note to Susan stating that it would help the advisory committees if they had access to user data and maintenance and replacement cost information for equipment. He was concerned that new equipment without money for upkeep would be counterproductive. Her response was "No, you have no business looking at that." No data is forthcoming. He stressed the importance of having this information and urged the community to continue to request the data.

A motion was made by Stu Grenier stating, **The NECC requests of Susan Little and the Municipality that they provide all requested and relative information on these three parks (Creekside Park, Cheeney Park and Ira Walker Park) to the community prior to the VIP design and planning meetings.** The motion was seconded and discussed.

A vote on the motion: 15 for, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining. Motion passed.

Item #1 was reopened at this time and the rewritten resolution was introduced to the meeting. It was decided that the resolution would need more editing, but that the spirit and meaning would not change. Genevieve and Marc agreed to do the revising. A motion was made by Genevieve to accept this resolution. It was seconded and a vote was called for. The resolution is as follows:

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 2010-01

The Northeast Community Council having determined that:

* in 2009 the Northeast Community Council (NECC) repeatedly opposed both the Plans

promoted by the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Parks and Recreation Department (P&R) for Russian Jack Springs Park (RJSP) and the planning process, and

* the last MASTER PLAN for RJSP was adopted by the MOA in 1979 and a site plan was allegedly adopted in 1997 by the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&ZC) though the planning process for the latter specifically excluded NECC from notice contrary to the provisions of MOA ordinance, and

* the community at large during hours of public testimony before the Parks Commission made it clear that it wished to see a systemic plan addressing RJSP before any further planning or development was undertaken, and

* various members of the Parks Commission have indicated that the Master Plan is "dated" and the Commission's most recent resolution on RJSP called for additional planning and review before any further development or construction, and

* the NECC is informed and believes that P&R is considering the expenditure of several

hundred thousand dollars that may have been initially intended for developments at RJSP that were broadly opposed by the community, and

* the RJSP MASTER PLAN as well as the 1997 site plan appear to call for completion of the adopted trail plan including the creation of a second tunnel under RJSP and the completion of trail lighting, including the lighting of the paved trail in North RJSP, and

* NECC supports the creation of a Muldoon Park Strip and the conversion to park land of the balance of the Muldoon Estates property now held by the Heritage Land Bank, as well as efforts to provide youth with recreational opportunities proximate to the Muldoon Town Center, and

* a new Director of P&R has been appointed by the Mayor of the MOA,

NOW THEREFORE THE NECC HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

NECC would like to congratulate and welcome John Rodda, the new P&R Director to his new post and extend an invitation to Mr. Rodda to appear before the NECC to discuss resolution of the outstanding issues with respect to planning documents addressing RJSP,

NECC notes that to the extent that P&R has funds for which it seeks NECC's advisements as to projects upon which such funds should be expended, that the most critical project demanding P&R funding is the compilation of a new RJSP Master Plan, and the NECC strongly urges P&R to secure funds promptly to address same,

NECC feels that pending adoption of a new Master Plan for RJSP no development should be undertaken with respect to RJSP. Should P&R insist on moving forward with development in RJSP over the objections of the community, such development should be limited to those projects over which there has been no apparent dispute, which would limit development to matters set out in the 1997 site plan to the extent such matters are not inconsistent with the 1979 Master Plan. NECC recommends completion of the most long standing approved developments for which no apparent objections have been raised, and these would include the creation of the second tunnel under DeBarr and the lighting of existing paved trails. The NECC notes that the multi-use trail connecting RJSP to Cheney Lake is unlit between the current "lighted loop" and Nunaka Elementary and that bridges in the Park need repair or replacement. Additionally, in as much as the 1997 site plan was adopted without notice to the NECC, this apparent breach of MOA ordinance should be acknowledged and remediated.

NECC is aware that CIP funding is often NOT tied to a particular project; i.e., funds initially targeted for one project, even if obtained from bonds, can be employed in other projects. Should P&R have funds initially intended for RJSP which P&R would rather not spend on a new RJSP Master Plan or aforementioned community approved developments, NECC has maintained a CIP list over the years which list does include park projects. As NECC has repeatedly noted that North East District Parks are inadequately maintained, to the extent possible, any funding available should be directed at maintaining existing infrastructure as opposed to constructing or developing additional resources that would possibly deteriorate for lack of adequate maintenance.

NECC is aware that a number of Assembly persons have opined about the need for greater recreational opportunities for youth and to that end the NECC has proposed the creation of a park strip to encompass the balance of the Muldoon Estates property now held by the Heritage Land Bank and is interested in the creation of a skate board park somewhere within the confines of the Muldoon Town Center (potentially within the Muldoon Park Strip) where youth can be engaged at a location which affords amenities such as proximity to school, food, transport as well as ease of observation, integrating such youth activity into the center of the local neighborhood's focus. If a portion of such a facility could be covered it would offer additional winter recreational options to local youth.

NECC is aware that Centennial Park has a reputation for being the best sledding venue in the North East and as access to sledding venues is typically via automobile, the NECC is interested in any plans P&R may have to promote such a venue, especially to the degree that such planning might alleviate safety concerns at other locations that may not be appropriate venues for sledding.

NECC presently does not see the need for additional playgrounds in the North East District and is concerned that as most playground usage seems to be via motor vehicle that what the District needs is better public appreciation of the existing facilities as well as comprehensive user data concerning how playgrounds are used (time of day, day of week, season of year, age of users, how park accessed, etc.) together with an understanding of the degree to which school playgrounds serve the same purpose before any consideration is given to the construction of additional playgrounds.

Approved and adopted by the NECC this 21st day of January, 2010.

_____/s_____

Ron Rivas, President

Attest

_____/s_____

James Starzec, Secretary

A vote on the motion: 15 for, 1 opposed, 3 abstaining. Motion passed.

Item #3: Anchorage Bike Plan. There was no one in attendance that volunteered to present on this issue. Stu voiced his concern that the while the plan is focused on safety for the bike riders, it does not contain or speak to a proposed bike trail along the municipality's boarder with Fort Richardson, parallel to Muldoon Road. He believes this trail is important because it will re-route bicycle traffic to a safer route, away from Muldoon, and he cited a recent accident involving a child on Muldoon. He stated that he had asked the planners to include this idea in the plan or at least study the idea, and was rebuffed. He was told to address the Assembly with the idea, and was given the impression that the planners were looking for a "rubber stamped approval" from the community councils. In the ensuing conversation, it was discovered that the plan had previously been presented to the NECC, no action was taken at the time, and the subject was never brought up again. The discussion then turned to the council's options for comment at this time. After debate on the manner of the council's comment and the validity and relevance of the plan itself, it was decided that the proper way to address the issue would be a resolution attached to the Scenic Foothills Community Council's resolution in support of the plan. A motion was made by Ainslie Philips

stating, **NECC supports the resolution adapted by the SFCC in reference to the overall bike plan, with the additional request that an extension of the bike path be added from Chugiak Foothills to Centennial Park along the military reservation to alleviate dangerous biking conditions along Muldoon.** It was seconded, and a vote was called for.

A vote on the motion: 11 for, 0 opposed, 2 abstaining. Motion passed.

Item #4: Liquor Committee: The NECC board would like to move a resolution to add the liquor committee posted to the website. Action item. Stu Grenier presenting. The liquor committee would like to have representation on the NECC website similar to what the other committees have. They would also like to have each liquor license in the area discussed at the council meetings as they come up for renewal by the assembly. It was determined that creating a liquor committee web page did not require action by the council and any page or link could be added immediately. Stu agreed to speak with Kevin to make the additions that he felt were necessary.

Item #5: Liquor ID issue update. Stu Grenier presenting. At a recent town hall meeting on the issue, there were approximately 15 speakers, almost all of them were in favor of changing the law to require ID for every alcoholic purchase. The ACLU was in attendance and did not discourage this view. At the last assembly meeting, there were only two speakers. Other people did show up to speak, but were told they would not be given a chance to speak, so they left. I stayed, and forty-five minutes later, there was a chance to speak. A gentleman in attendance was one of the people turned away at this assembly meeting and gave his description of the events. He stated that he was told the assembly and representatives of the liquor industry were meeting to update the regulation. He was informed that if he wanted to speak at this meeting, he could, but he would not be able to speak at the next meeting. Given those options, he left the meeting. Stu returned to his narrative. It looks like the majority of the community is in favor of this change, and it seems unlikely that anything detrimental to this effort will occur at the February 2nd meeting of the assembly. Marc Grober made the point that in his opinion, the proposed change to the ordinance would not hold up in court, and that the assembly's discussion on the matter was pandering to the electorate. He suggested what needs to be done is the creating of a law that is in accordance with the Constitution.

Item #6: WalMart access road on 11th Ave informational update. Ainslie Philips presenting. Copies of the final landscaping plan for the proposed WalMart on Debarr Road are available at this meeting. The staff report is in our favor and everything is in there that we asked for with some minor compromises. The majority of the changes are in regards to the caliper of the trees to be planted, and they are smaller than we asked for. One thing that we asked for which is not specified is balled or dirt trees, we could ask for container, not field grown trees. Also, WalMart has chosen to sell off the residential property adjacent to the site. They plan on starting construction when the snow melts, possibly March. A motion was made by Ainslie Philips stating,
Be it hereby resolved:

The NECC requests that the U.D.C. and Planning and Zoning Commission incorporate the following additional conditions to the final landscape plan for Case 2009-008, WalMart, Inc.

- 1. Road/vehicle access to the adjoining neighborhoods via 10th and/or 11th Avenues be prohibited, with pedestrian access only.**
- 2. Identify who, when and how is responsible for the maintenance of the landscaping, including replacement planting of equal or greater quality for damage to proposed landscaping by snow removal or road and/or parking lot maintenance.**
- 3. All trees be container grown, as opposed to field grown.**
- 4. A dense foliage screening of trees and hard material screening wall be installed along the entire length of the boundary between Patterson Street and the WalMart parking lot.**

The motion was seconded and discussed. A vote was called for.

A vote on the motion: 9 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 abstaining. Motion passed.

Item #7: Scenic Foothills/Northeast joint meeting. Stu commented that he would like to address this meeting to ask for the councils' help getting the Anchorage Daily News to recognize Muldoon as being appropriate for a location byline on letters to the editor.

Ainslie asked that the NECC recognize Richard Benevides from Sen. Davis' office to speak. She stated that at the previous SFCC meeting, they had resolved to hold this meeting at the Wayland Baptist University campus of February 10th at 7PM. They would like this to be the first of three meetings held this year. The agenda for this meeting has three items. One is to discuss the Muldoon Park Strip and Centennial Park's involvement in it. The second item is to develop park plans, adding the bike trails previously discussed at this meeting. Finally, to develop the North East, Eastside Combined Area Plan (NEECAP) to set a master plan for this area, similar to the Hillside district plan.

Richard Benevides then spoke on the matter. He stated that it is important for the community to use this meeting to come up with solid recommendations that the senator can then take to Juneau and request funding for. He stressed that it would not be possible to acquire funding without concise and well articulated plans, and that it is important to get these ideas to the senator as soon as possible in order to be added to this year's capital budget.

The discussion continued, focusing on the importance of the community promoting their plan, regardless of the municipality's decisions.

Ainslie made a motion **to extend the meeting ten minutes to complete this topic** and was seconded.

A vote on the motion: 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining. Motion passed.

The discussion continued. The importance of the join meeting was stressed by various members of the meeting. Issues such as financing and reducing the amount of Centennial Park affected by any plan were voiced as being primary concerns. Strategies on how to conduct the February 10th meeting were discussed, including brainstorming and group discussion.

Adjournment- 10:10 PM