

# NECC

**Northeast Community Council**

**Minutes – June 17, 2010**

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Call to Order: 7:03PM

**Board Members Present:** Kevin Smestad, Bob Reupke, Carla Hadley, David Ulmer, Ainslie Phillips, Genevieve Holubik, Selina Metoyer, Gabrielle Ledoux

**Board Members Absent:** Stuart Grenier

## **Introduction of the Board**

**Approval of June Meeting Agenda:** A change was made by the President to remove New Business item #4 due to Enstar being unable to make the meeting. They will attempt to reschedule for a future meeting. The motion was made and seconded to approve the new agenda which was accepted.

**Approval of Previous Minutes:** May 2010 minutes were put forth for approval. Board member Ainslie Phillips made a correction to item #4 (Cheney Lake Kiosk Resolution). She will provide the correction in writing to the secretary. A motion was made and seconded for approval of the minutes with the amendment. The minutes were accepted.

**Treasurer's Report:** The balance in the NECC checking account is \$629.44. There were no expenditures in June. There are \$203.11 in remaining funds out of the \$1,200.00 donation by Municipal Light & Power. The NECC is a non-profit organization and receives no funds from the State of Alaska or Municipality of Anchorage. NECC has provided a donation jar at the meeting and gladly accepts and appreciates all donations.

**Executive Report:** The Executive Board met on June 03, 2010 to develop the current agenda.

## **Representative Reports:**

**Assembly Person Mike Gutierrez** reported that he and Assembly Person Paul Honeman introduced a resolution to the assembly taking a stance against Army Live Firing Range Option #3 (new range in East Anchorage) which passed the Assembly unanimously. They transmitted the resolution in writing to the military as part of their Environmental Impact Study.

Mike announced a Town Hall Meeting for citizens to express their concerns regarding crime and public safety. He would like to hear ideas and discussion from the council members at the Town Hall Meeting which will be held at East High School on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mike is working on an ordinance to strengthen the city's law regarding graffiti and make it easier for the city to get it cleaned up, including incentives for property owners to cover it themselves. They may classify it as a public nuisance which may allow the city to charge landlords and absent

owners for cleanup costs. Mike reminded the council members that a call can be made the city's "Graffiti Busters" program to get the graffiti cleaned up, or he also suggested that the city has the supplies but lacks manpower to provide the clean-up service and maybe the community could take it upon themselves to provide the manpower needed to keep up with the graffiti.

Mike updated the council on the ID check requirement for carry out liquor stores. He announced that the volunteer ID checks failed since not all liquor stores were participating. Therefore, Mike would like to bypass the Assembly and put a mandatory ID check on the ballot for the voters to decide. He feels this is the best way to put an end to the debate on this issue and make all liquor stores participate.

Mike is working on a requirement for background checks for all ice cream truck owners and operators.

The community can reach Mike by his email on the website or on his cell at 382-5972.

**Senator Bill Wielechowski** reported on a hearing regarding the Denali Project. There are two projects which are competing to build the natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to Valdez or Canada; one is TransCanada Exxon, the other is a joint venture between BP and Conoco Phillips called Denali. There are two open seasons going on right now. Denali's will start on July 6<sup>th</sup> and TransCanada's will end around the middle of August. This is the furthest that the state has been on the natural gas pipeline. Bill believes that this is indication that there is interest out there to build the pipeline.

Bill commented on the construction currently happening on Muldoon Road which will be on-going this summer and next. Included are repaving, and pedestrian and landscape improvements.

Three bills were signed this week. The first is an animal cruelty bill that Bil has been working on for a number of years. This will bring Alaska in-line with 46 other states that have felony provisions for the worst cases of animal cruelty. The second is to correct a bureaucratic mix-up regarding prescription drugs for the elderly at the Pioneer Home. The third bill is Senate Bill 220 which requires that State of Alaska to weatherize the least energy efficient state buildings. The cost of weatherization is off-set by the energy savings. The estimated savings is about \$3 million per year. Another provision was to take Federal money (\$18M) and use that as seed money to create a revolving bond fund which will be leveraged for up to \$250M in bonds that will be used around the state as a revolving loan fund for local communities to weatherize buildings. This will also create approximately 1,500 and 2,000 jobs. Another provision will have the state looking into using natural gas vehicles.

Bill called up Representatives Peterson and Gruenberg to present a Legislative Citation to Brigadier General (Ret.) George Cannelos to commend his service to the community.

**Representative Max Gruenberg** reported that several bills the he sponsored passed during session. One is “Cop in the Neighborhood” bill that provides tax breaks for police officers that live in high risk areas and provides an extension of tax exemptions of widows and widowers of disabled veterans. This bill also includes tax exemptions for the Red Dog Mine which is the main economic engine for the Kotzebue area. The Red Dog Mine exemption ripples out economic benefits to the Kotzebue community.

The second bill is in regards to violations by corporations. It increases corporate fines to \$2.5M per violation and can penalize efforts, bribes, or solicitations to commit a crime by a corporation.

Max commented on the continued effort to strengthen anti-trust laws. He would also like to see a law like in Kansas where if a military base is adjacent to a city the military must coordinate with the city on things of mutual interest. And finally, he reminded the public that they may vote on General Obligation Bonds. This is the public’s only say on the budget process. The last time this happened was in 2002 and there is no obligation by the government to inform the public that they can vote on this. Max is drafting legislation that will require the government to inform the public of these kinds of votes.

**Representative Pete Peterson** reported that HB306 was signed. This bill was sponsored by the Energy Committee and entails discussion of long range energy goals for Alaska. It encourages energy savings and alternate energy resources. Pete also worked with Representative Sharon Cissna to introduce a resolution to use methane from landfills as an energy source.

### **Community Activities Reports:**

Community Activity Reports were bypassed.

### **Business:**

1. NECC President Kevin Smestad introduced new Board Member Ainslie Phillips. She replaced departing Board Member James Starzec.
2. Senator Wielechowski and Representative Peterson reported on the Capital Budget. Among the programs that were funded are: Fire Station #6, Muldoon Community Park, Muldoon Road and Pedestrian Improvements, Centennial Park Upgrades, School Zone on Debarr Road for Begich Middle School, East Anchorage Plan, and Public Transit. The only project that was vetoed was the Duben Street improvement. Bill also reported that the traffic calming and public safety funds of \$350,000 that the community wanted for speed humps will not be used for speed humps because the Municipality has discontinued the program. Bill will be working this issue.

Bill also noted that the funding for Debarr Road was an agreement he made that provided the first \$10M of the \$24M that the MOA asked for be used for Debarr Road improvements.

The Governor cut all but \$10M of the proposed \$24M, so Bill anticipates that all \$10M should go to Debarr.

3. The Muldoon Beautification Project was updated by Joel Stout with Lounsbury & Associates. The first phase of the project was the wall between 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They discovered that the soil was so hard that they had to innovate a new way to make the wall and they delivered that phase under budget. The second phase of the project provided plantings and bike trail extensions from 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue down to Pioneer Drive. One phase is left to go; sidewalks will be put in from the transit center up to Boundary Avenue and landscaping will be added between the sidewalks and parking lots. The next phase is scheduled for next summer. One or two public meetings will be held in the fall regarding the next phase.

Discussion brought up that the proposed pre-cast walls may be replaced with walls that are more easily fixable, match the walls already in place, and can be removed if necessary. A resolution was mentioned from the floor regarding the new walls, but was put off until all decisions are made and the NECC is approached with a final plan.

4. The Volunteers for Park Improvements Program was briefed by Susan Little who is with Park Planning for the MOA. Each Community Council was asked to appoint a committee to organize the volunteer effort in cleaning up and fixing three Eastside Parks. Ira Walker Park is the first park to be cleaned up on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>. All volunteers will be provided the tools necessary to work on the park and will also be fed a pulled-pork barbeque. Creekside Park will be July 10<sup>th</sup>, and Cheney Lake will be on July 17<sup>th</sup>. All ages are welcome.
5. Russian Jack Park Improvements were presented by Peter Briggs who works for the Anchorage Park Foundation. The Anchorage Park Foundation would like public input on how to use \$750,000 that was appropriated to Russian Jack Park. Citizens can send an email with their suggestion to [www.NORTHRJSP.blogspot.com](http://www.NORTHRJSP.blogspot.com). The Anchorage Park Foundation will be hosting a family fun day to try to get people involved in the planning process and will send out flyers to all residents within one mile of the park to tell them about the planning meetings so the community can have a voice. They will know the dates of the meetings soon and will let Kevin Smestad know so that he can disseminate the information to the NECC.
6. Don Brooks from Anchorage Sports Association (ASA) briefed on their efforts for beautification of the Cartee Complex and Russian Jack Softball fields. They painted the main building at Cartee and have plans to paint a storage building at Russian Jack. The old tennis courts that are between the fields only have two usable courts. The concern is that there is no parking if soccer and softball are running at the same time. ASA would like to use the unused and unkempt courts as parking areas. ASA is open to suggestions for the parking problem. Suggestions from the council included carpooling, parking at the old Anchorage School District Building on Debarr, and the Churches on Pine Street. Don Brooks can be

reached at [www.AnchorageSports.com](http://www.AnchorageSports.com). A resolution was introduced regarding the improvements.

**A Resolution: NECC June 17, 2010, Concerning Improvements to North Russian Jack Park.**

The NECC wishes to have any upgrades and/or changes (except maintenance) to North Russian Jack Park be postponed until such time that research and community meetings can be completed to find what is the maximum wish of the community. NECC would like to continue to work with the Anchorage Park Foundation and Anchorage Sports Association with regards to improvements.

**A vote of the motion of the Resolution: 11 in favor, 4 opposed, 6 abstained. The motion passes.**

7. Ainslie Phillips briefed the council on the need for speed humps in East Anchorage. The council chose to proposed the following resolution:

**A Resolution: NECC June 17, 2010, Concerning the Reinstatement of the Speed Bump Program.**

We the citizens of the Northeast Community Council (NECC) hereby request the Municipality of Anchorage reinstate the Speed Bump Program and additionally, immediately install speed bumps on Debarr Road between Boston Street and Cross Point Loop using some of the \$350,000 State money allocated from the 2010 Legislative budget.

**A vote of the motion of the Resolution: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 7 abstained. The motion passes.**

8. Kevin Smestad announced that there is a July meeting (July 15<sup>th</sup>) due to a surplus of items that need to be addressed.

**Community Concerns:**

A council member asked if the community had any plans to put in a skate park on the East side. Kevin mentioned that it has been addressed many times and that we may eventually get a skateboard park.

Another council member addressed the ACLU's negotiation with MOA to give the homeless a five day notice before evicting them from illegal camping. The citizen mentioned that they are lighting fires in the trees behind the Fred Meyer and that he fears that they may start a fire that will affect the surrounding neighborhood. Kevin suggested that he call the police if he sees a fire and fears this will happen.

Bob Reupke announced to the council that if anyone is receiving snail mail that they sign up, if possible, for email notices instead. He also stated that the Federation addressed a

resolution supporting Fairview Community Council with their opposition of the Red Roof Inn becoming a residence for chronic inebriates. The Federation did not want to vote on this.

Bob announced that the Mayor vetoed the funding (\$70,000) for the NUSA Conference. Ainslie suggested that Bob approach the Rasmuson Foundation to get the funding needed for the conference, or approach CIRI.

Ainslie sadly reported the passing of George and Mary Jones, two active community members.

Kevin brought up the idea of presenting community awards for police officers, fire department members, and other community volunteers.

Ainslie brought up the revitalization of the "Spirit of Muldoon" celebration. Ainslie suggested that spring would be a good time to have the event.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.