

Spenard Community Council Meeting Minutes

Spenard Recreation Center

January 5, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. The December meeting minutes were read and approved. Chair Rene Haag announced the Airport Advisory Board would be meeting Feb. 10, 6-9 p.m. in the Arts and Crafts Room of the Spenard Recreation Center. There were no legislative reports.

Jeffrey Mittman of the ACLU explained why they got involved with the ordinance passed by the Anchorage Assembly to deal with homeless camps. The court threw out the ordinance yesterday. The ACLU felt there was a discrepancy between how the authorities dealt with one class of people's belongings, in this case the homeless, as opposed to how they typically deal with those not found in compliance with Anchorage ordinances. After Mr. Mittman's presentation, there were many questions about individuals dealing with public inebriates and homeless trespassing on their property.

APD Officers Will Cameron, Nate Mitchell and Mark Karstetter were on hand to tell the council they are making headway with the hotels which have been the most problematic for our community: the Chelsea Inn, the Spenard Hotel and the Royal Suites. A complaint about the drug dealing at Northwood Park has led to regular patrols on each shift which seems to have eliminated the problem.

Rather than calling and leaving messages for the community policing officers, they ask the public to make complaints to dispatch so the cases will become a part of a record. As per AMC 880, if there are more than 8 recorded cases of dispatch to a one address, the owner or owners can be billed \$500.00 per police call. One problem hotel was recently billed \$30,000.00. The caller is not billed even if the problem is occurring on their property.

Anchorage Fire Department firefighters, Station Five, talked about the state bond which will be needed for the expansion and remodel of their station.

The State had appropriated \$5,000,000.00 for a remodel, but it became apparent it would need to be a rebuild which will be larger and more expensive. The decision was made to give the money back and ask the Legislature to approve funding in a higher amount. They would be headquartered elsewhere while the building work is being done and are looking at using the old Armory on the corner of Spenard and Aviation Ave. Station 7 at Jewel Lake purchased a new ambulance which will free up the ambulance at Station 5. The firefighters also asked those attending the meeting to be sure their house numbers are sufficiently displayed so the Fire Department can see them from the road.

Harriet Drummond gave an Assembly report. A study will be done to examine denser, higher efficiency housing here. The municipality is retrofitting lighting on their properties. Work is being done on a regional transit study. The Assembly also appropriated money for a future police academy.

The Dimond library is now closed. It cost \$50,000.00 to pack and move the books and other library materials. The library staff have been absorbed into other parts of the library system. The Dimond Mall owners had offered the Municipality two years free rent if they would stay. Assemblyman Chris Birch offered an ordinance of a sales tax which would have reduced a dollar for dollar amount on property taxes.

Assemblyman Ernie Hall followed up with his Assembly report. He also talked about the sales tax and a need for clarification of the taxing up to the cap. He then told the council about the Spenard Road plan. He has been getting calls from people complaining about the 3 lane design which is one of the proposals. The project is not yet funded and will not even be on the ballot until there is enough consensus for the Municipality to move forward with confidence it will be acceptable to most people. He did not do a formal presentation as that had already been done in December at Romig Middle School.

He did take questions from the audience and there was discussion. Ballots were distributed to those who were already members of the council. The votes will be tallied with those from the Romig meeting and the other community councils which border various parts of the project.

Jim Bowers gave an update on 48th and Van Buren. He's been in contact with Russ Oswald of PME who has in charge of the project. Phase I is almost done, there is still landscaping to do. The land swap has turned out to be problematic in that federal funds were used to acquire the land for the soccer fields. The gate which will keep the truck traffic away from the fields will not be up until the trade is complete.

The municipality wants to finalize the plat and vacate the ROW south of the Rec area. The land exchange ran into problems because the land was acquired through land and water conservation funds. Therefore, the municipality is required to now do an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement). The Secretary of the Interior must then sign off on it. The parcel is on the agenda of the platting board in February so the project will be kept alive while the EIS is being done. Most likely it will be part of a consent agreement of the commission at the start of the meeting. The community council has been notified but cannot participate at this point. The municipality has had to modify the contract with DOWL so they can perform the EIS. It will take months to complete, according to Mr. Oswald.

Peggy Auth also spoke to Mr. Oswald about the problems with the trucks using the road near the Rec Center since this has been a problem for the neighborhood. He said the only trucks that should be using that road are ASD. He said AFF is trying to be a good neighbor and if there are any problems with their trucks for the community to call Joel Boyd, the manager, at 248-5548. So far Mr. Boyd has been very responsive to community concerns. Also, the neighborhood should keep track of who's taking trucks down that road so Mr. Oswald can address the issue with the trucking firms.

Jim Bowers also gave an update on McCrae Road. He's spoken with Cathy Gleason of the Turnagain Community Council. She said funding was deleted from the legislative budget last year. The council should include it in this year's CIP list. Bob Auth said we should include Fish Creek Trail which is supposed to continue from Northwood to Spenard where it picks up again. This process was started in 1998 and in 1999 monies were bonded and then moved to other projects. Chair Haag stated the annual CIP list needs to be done – any council member can join the CIP committee.

Next month we will have our election for officers of the council. The nominations are:

Rene Haag - Chair

Jason Bergerson - Vice Chair

Allen Thornhill - Treasurer

Ryan Knight - Secretary

Peggy Auth - Secretary

Jason Bergerson said Martin Buser will be the keynote speaker for the NUSA conference in May. Father Michael Oleska of the Russian Orthodox Church will also be a guest speaker. There are 40 workshops scheduled and a dozen tours. The conference will be held May 24-28 at the Egan Center. The Hilton Hotel will be the host hotel. So far they have raised \$70,000.00 of in-kind support.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.