

**Rogers Park Community Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting Held January 10, 2011 in the Rogers Park Elementary School Library**  
Minutes Prepared by Beate Zinck, Secretary

**Community Council Officers in Attendance:**

Jim Wright, Past President, Presiding  
Bob Churchill, Vice President  
Cheryl Forrest, Treasurer  
Beate Zinck, Secretary

Handouts available included: January Meeting Agenda; draft of both the November and December 2010 Meeting Minutes; compilation of responses to the New Year's Eve Fireworks; December 2010 Federation of Community Council Meeting Minutes; draft of letter to the Municipality from the RPCC regarding APD services.

**Welcome**

Jim Wright welcomed everyone to the meeting and members were asked to review the December and November minutes for accuracy and/or typos –no corrections were deemed necessary. At 7:05pm a show of hands indicated the group was one member shy of quorum.

**Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the minutes took place following the legislative reports; the minutes were approved as submitted.

**Assembly Reports**

Speaking first, Elvi Gray-Jackson indicated that hundreds of emails were received, pro and con, regarding the New Year's Eve fireworks. Assembly Member Harriot Drummond is bringing forward an ordinance to repeal - prior to a vote the issue will be discussed by the Public Safety Committee and a public hearing will be held, resulting in an opportunity for the community to voice their approval/opposition and/or to suggest revisions.

Mentioned were two ordinances to be introduced at the January 11 Assembly meeting:

\*Title 21 change regarding municipal permits for Correctional Community Residential Centers – P.H. 2/15/11

\*Revising Title 4 enabling language for Boards and Commissions, adding sunset provision and repealing inactive Boards and Commission and related matter -- documents are available on-line

Assembly Member Birch is working on a sales tax ordinance that would authorize a majority vote instead of the 60% requirement and a dollar for dollar reduction in property taxes. Public hearing will be opened and continued tomorrow night (Jan. 11). Assembly Member Hall will take the lead on educating the business community and the public on both issues; if approved by eight votes of the Assembly it would not be on the ballot until 2012.

Assembly Member Birch introduced an ordinance to include language in the Charter that states “the base amount for calculating the next year's tax increase limit is the amount of taxes collected in the current year.”

This is and has been the intent and practice since 1982 when the tax cap was established. There will be a public hearing tomorrow (Jan.11).

A public hearing will be held January 11 regarding Municipal Vehicle Code Enforcement with discussion to authorize enforcement by a designated municipal agency in the downtown area only.

The City received a \$4.6 million dollar settlement from Alyeska Pipeline (2006 tax issue); the funds are currently in the City's undesignated-reserved fund balance in the event that the City loses on appeal.

The City lost an ACLU lawsuit regarding the homeless; Assembly Members Gutierrez, Drummond, and Gray-Jackson are continuing to work on the issue.

Assembly Member Dick Traini spoke next suggesting that the January 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly meeting would be lengthy as there is a lot on the agenda. He spoke to Item 14.F, the 'Parking Authority' -- he wants clarification and specific language on what exactly they would be able to write tickets for -- 8 votes are needed to send the issue to the voters.

Mr. Traini also responded to a question about the fireworks; he indicated he believed some confusion about the time restrictions was a result, in part, because the Mat Valley allowed different hours than did Anchorage.

A community member raised concerns about the trail east of the overpass, on the north side of Northern Lights -- several lights were out and he wanted to know to whom the situation should be reported. Elvi Gray-Jackson indicated the city's street light guy has retired and not yet been replaced. Along these lines it was mentioned that two young men were observed shooting a handgun at signs on the Chester Creek trail near the Maplewood trailhead. It was noted that the sound-barrier fence had graffiti -- Ms. Gray-Jackson indicated this situation has already been addressed.

It was also noted by Ms. Gray-Jackson that the municipality has been without an Ombudsman; Ms. Barbara Jones will be acting in that position for the next four months.

## **Legislative Reports**

The office of Senator Bettye Davis was represented by Mr. Tom Obermeyer who mentioned that their office has been very busy preparing for the upcoming session. Senator Davis and her office have pre-filed nine bills that respond to school issues, one of which asks to repeal the High School Qualifying Exam and another asks the State Board of Education to provide an annual report to the Legislature. Other concerns that are being worked on include health insurance parity, grievance procedures, and more coordination with the Department of Education. Mr. Obermeyer asked citizens to participate by offering their comments; individuals can utilize the state legislative website for information: click BASIS: BASIS has been designed to help the public access legislative information. Inside BASIS you can find information on Bills, Schedules, and Legislative Members. He also mentioned that the Anchorage School District has established their top four or five priorities -- they are listed on their website.

Representative Les Gara was not present; his aide, Amanda Metivier, spoke on his behalf. She spoke about the Laptops for Kids in Foster Care initiative that Rep. Gara started -- to date, ten matches have been made in Anchorage. There is still a need for laptops -- new or gently used, not older than four years -- call 269-0106 to donate. Ms. Metivier also talked about work being done to loosen some licensing standards for foster families, for example in the bush, on issues such as window egress and running water.

It was noted at 7:25p.m. that a quorum had been reached – Bob Churchill asked that we deviate from the agenda momentarily; he made a motion to approve the minutes from both November and December. Tom Obermeyer seconded the motion, a quick vote – 14 in favor, none opposed, 3 abstained -- approved both the November 2010 and December 2010 meeting minutes.

## **Federation of Community Councils Report**

Rogers Park Community Council FCC Representative, Bob Churchill, provided copies of the 12/15/2010 FCC Meeting Minutes. He offered a brief explanation of the FCC as an umbrella organization and mentioned that Assembly Member Dick Traini attends most FCC meetings as does Kathleen Plunkett from ASD.

Bob was asked how community councils run in other cities – he indicated that in some cities of comparable size there is paid municipal staff to assist community council efforts.

Elvi Gray-Jackson asked for a reminder of the date of the National Federation of Community Councils Annual Conference --to be hosted here in Anchorage—the conference is scheduled for May 2011. The last time Anchorage hosted the national conference was in 1994. She believes there should be a resolution to create a ‘Welcome’ to conference participants from the city.

## **VI. Presentations and Discussion, as follows:**

### **A. CyberCrime Presentation**

The desired presentation is rescheduled for the February meeting.

*At this point the group deviated from the agenda and skipped to VI.C.: A proposed resolution Re Anchorage Police Department Service:*

Bob Churchill referenced a recent TV news report in which a citizen was complaining that no police officer came out for to make a report when he called APD for assistance after finding his vehicle window broken out; he referred community members to his draft letter to the Mayor on behalf of the Rogers Park Community Council and asked for a motion – David Frazier made the motion, Cheryl Forrest seconded, discussion followed:

It was mentioned that due to staffing and prioritizing, citizens must report a crime via computer if there has been no physical confrontation and/or no physical harm. APD must prioritize calls – if it is likely that the crime can't be solved and there is no personal injury, APD will not come investigate.

Tom Obermeyer suggests modifying the letter by offering a solution or better state what it is the Community Council wants such as, if we want more officers say so in the letter.

Assembly Member Traini indicated that our community is 50-60 officers shy for a city of this size.

Assembly Member Elvi Gray-Jackson suggests we simply have too few officers – officers are retiring and that we have had no academy in some time although we will have one in September of 2011.

A suggestion is offered that since we do have an academy scheduled, should we change or eliminate the language in the proposed letter regarding the academy?

Bob asked if there were any more questions, any more suggestions for changes – no more questions or suggestions raised, a call for a vote: 13 yays, 1 nay, 6 abstained -- motion passed.

Elvi Gray-Jackson asked for a moment to clarify her vote – she abstained due to the fact that she sits on the Assembly and the letter will be addressed to the Mayor and the Assembly.

## **B. Obesity Progress Report**

Discussion continued with regards to the Health and Human Services “Get Fit Anchorage” 10-Year Obesity Plan. RPCC Member David Morgan was scheduled to provide an update following his attendance at the January 12<sup>th</sup> HSS meeting; he was unable to give an update because the meeting had not yet taken place. Dr. Andree Fenaughty, the top medical official on the Obesity Prevention, will be speaking at the meeting and Mr. Morgan will provide an update at the February RPCC meeting.

Pete Mjos again articulated some of his concerns, stating that he helped author the physical activity portion of the plan, that he doesn't feel anything has been implemented, and that he is willing to attend the HSS meeting also. Jim Wright asked questions about the physical activity recommendations for city residents and students in the school district. Mr. Mjos has current matrices that refer to health issues. Dave Morgan stated that documents and standards are obsolete and that no funds were made available to implement recommendations. He did not question the validity of Mr. Mjos's documents but did state that the commission passed a resolution and that said resolution did not appropriate funds. Ms. Gray-Jackson asked Mr. Morgan for the number of the resolution he referred to –Mr. Morgan told Jim Wright that he would ask for a copy of the resolution at the upcoming HSS meeting. Back and forth discussion continued with concern and frustration that nothing is being done locally about the obesity pandemic coupled with comments that suggest the difficulties of changing lifestyles of a large population and the costs involved to do so and if the city can't afford police officers, where does the money come from to address the task force plan? Questions were asked about raising funding outside of the municipality; both Mr. Morgan and Mr. Mjos suggested that efforts had been made to raise funding outside the municipality with little yield to date. Mr. Mjos feels efforts made in the schools would have the largest benefit and suggests that the ASD fit more physical activity into the school day.

## **D. Fireworks**

Many have weighted in, pro and con, on the issue of fireworks on New Year's Eve. The Assembly will reconsider the issue on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. Jim Wright prepared a compilation of the responses he received from RPCC members (handout available) which he will forward to the Assembly prior to their meeting.

Elvi Gray-Jackson mentioned that she received hundreds of calls and emails regarding the issue. She indicated that Assembly Member Harriet Drummond is working on an ordinance to repeal but will not bring it forward until it is reviewed at a Public Safety Committee meeting. She reminded members that there is a process for an ordinance which includes a public hearing; more information about this issue and the opportunity for public comment will be forthcoming.

Ms. Gray-Jackson asked Jim Wright to forward the responses he received to each and every Assembly member.

Several people present shared their viewpoints: the Board Treasurer, Cheryl Forest mentioned that she loves the fireworks; her husband is a war veteran and fireworks are a problem due to PTSD. She offered that she supports veterans – fireworks are not good for their mental health. Another community member (Dave?) expressed appreciation that the Assembly is willing to review and consider what is best for all. Another member expressed concern for personal safety and the safety of pets. Another suggested that perhaps additional public education would be helpful. A statement was made that fireworks are a short-term activity, if there is no legal

window some folks will do anyway and that perhaps there was a bigger response this year than there will be in future years since this was the first time it was legal. A question was asked, is it the boom? The flash? What is it that pleases the user? Another member shared that it really did sound like a war zone and is empathetic to those who have been and were traumatized by the fireworks.

Jim Wright asked Elvi Gray-Jackson what type of enforcement is there if police encountered activity outside the hours of legal use – she will look into it and report back.

### **E. Carlson Park Update**

Suzanne Little, Senior Parks Planner with the Municipality, Department of Parks and Recreation, has been conducting meetings to plan and coordinate park upgrades, including improvements at Carlson Park and Russian Jack Park. Suzanne was unable to be at our council meeting, but Jim Wright has been attending the Carlson Park planning meetings.

For those unfamiliar with the park, Jim identified it's location at the corner of Cornell and Stanford. There is a field and a playground on one side of the lake and the area has been enjoyed by surrounding neighbors who have assisted in maintaining brush and trees around the margins. One thing that has been proposed is a bigger sign marking the park. There is approximately \$50,000 available to make park improvements and Jim passed out some drawings showing what is being proposed which includes expanding the playground area (it hasn't been decided what the 'showcase' playground piece will be), adding benches and trash receptacles, etc.

June 18<sup>th</sup> has been identified as a 'work day' in the park and the Department of Parks and Rec is looking for volunteers to help cut brush from around the lake, rake glass out of the sand, spread top soil, etc.

Anyone interested in helping with the park improvement project may contact Suzanne Little directly (343-4586) or let Jim Wright know of your interest. A suggestion was made to contact Boy Scout groups that might be interested in a community service project.

A motion was made by Bob Churchill to adjourn, seconded by Cheryl Forrest, all hands 'aye'.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40pm.**