

North Star Community Council  
February 9, 2011  
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Location: North Star Elementary School Library, 605 West Fireweed Lane

1. **Call to Order and Approval of Minutes and Agenda.** The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by President Matt Johnson. There was a sign-in sheet on a table near the entrance. The minutes of the council's last meeting (January 12, 2011) were approved with no objection (moved by Sharon Schlicht, seconded by Gordon Glaser). Bonnie Jack moved to amend the proposed agenda by changing the discussion of bylaw amendments from #6.b to #5.a (that is, moving it ahead of "Presentations" and other items in "Old and New Business"). Andre seconded the motion and there was no objection.
  
2. **Officer Reports**
  - a. Matt Johnson, President, stated that he had to leave at 8:30. He also said he witnessed the aftermath of another accident on Fireweed. This one was a collision at Fireweed and A Street. He saw one car, apparently totaled, being towed away. In a separate incident, Matt's wife almost got T-boned when another car ran a red light at that intersection.  
  
Note: Matt left at about 8:30 during the bylaws discussion, and Andre took over as chair for the rest of the meeting.
  
  - b. Andre Camara, Vice President, announced that the 2011 Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Citywide Cleanup Week will be April 30 to May 7. The three free dump days will be April 30 (Saturday), May 1 (Sunday) and May 7 (Saturday). Also, the Anchorage Waterways Creek Clean-Up Day will be Saturday, May 14. Andre asked if anyone was interested in joining him on a team to clean up Chester Creek. Some members expressed interest.  
  
Mark Butler also mentioned that May 21 (Saturday) will be the first day of this year's Spenard Farmers Market (between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenues on Spenard Road, next to Chilkoot Charlie's).
  
  - c. Barbara Pepek, Treasurer, reported that our January statement showed a 13 cent savings account dividend, bringing our checking and savings total to \$548.28. She collected \$85 at our January 12 meeting and deposited it into our checking account. The statement she received the day before the February meeting shows a 9 cent dividend in the savings account and a \$446.56 total in that account. After depositing the \$85 in the checking account, the checking account total is now \$187.25. The combined total in the two accounts is \$ 633.81.
  
  - d. Susan Miller, Secretary, had no report.

**3. Legislative Reports**

None. The legislators and staff are now in Juneau for the legislative session. Harriet said we could probably arrange a teleconference with one or more of the legislators if we want to.

**4. Assembly Reports.**

- a. Harriet Drummond reported that the Assembly's January 18 meeting was short, but the discussion of liquor licenses at that meeting led to a public safety meeting today about them. The state's ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) Board is apparently concerned that the Assembly is overstepping its bounds, but the Assembly believes it is a land use issue. Harriet also reported that Turnagain Community Council Secretary Treasurer Barbara Jones was appointed acting municipal ombudsman for four months.

At its February 1 meeting, the Assembly awarded to SMG of Alaska a contract to manage and operate the Sullivan Arena, Ben Boeke Ice Arena, and Dempsey Anderson Ice Arena. That award is being contested. The Assembly also approved the 2011 audit plan and approved the bond propositions and ballot propositions that will appear on the April ballot. Harriet also mentioned a newsletter, the "West Anchorage Assembly News," that she and Ernie Hall produced and that was inserted in the January 27 Anchorage Daily News. Copies were available at the meeting.

- b. Ernie Hall mentioned some of the bonds that will be on the ballot. He said the school district has not had bonds on the ballot for two years. In that time, they have paid off \$155 million in bonds. This year, the school district proposed three packages of bonds worth \$87 million. That was cut to \$70 million. The biggest bond will be for finishing Service High (\$37 million, to which the state will add 21 million and 10 million will come from another source). The most controversial part of the Service High bond is the money (\$24 million) for the auditorium.

Ernie said the municipality will have just under \$40 million in bonds on the ballot. He said we will pay off around 50 to 60 million annually, so we are paying down our debt. He reported that the municipality's total debt is a little over \$2 billion (including school debt and ML&P debt)

Ballot measures will include an advisory vote on whether to require liquor stores to card everyone. Another measure would allow downtown parking enforcement to be done by a municipal agency rather than the police department. The agency would only enforce parking and only in the downtown core and would not have the authority to tow vehicles (although they could notify the police who could have vehicles towed). He said the Parking Authority no longer exists. Harriet added that the downtown business community is dissatisfied with the current level

of parking meter enforcement and probably will campaign for the new enforcement proposal.

The Police Department is planning an academy for 28 officers in October, and the Fire Department is now accepting applications for about 18 vacant positions.

**5. Old and New Business.**

- a. NSCC Bylaws Revision. Andre Camara explained the bylaws changes proposed by the bylaws committee (Andre Camara, Bonnie Jack and Susan Miller). He also explained that we would just discuss the changes at this meeting and that the final vote on them would occur at the March meeting. The bylaws require 14 days notice of any proposed changes, and this draft did not get distributed in time. The original purpose of the changes was to clarify who qualifies for membership and who can vote. While reviewing the bylaws, however, the committee found several other sections that needed review. Susan and Andre both pointed out that some of the proposals were not unanimously supported by the bylaws committee and were included so council members could consider them and decide what to do. Andre highlighted the main changes and then council members asked questions and proposed additional changes.

**Article III. Definition.** The proposal deletes the list of types of persons who compose the council because it seems to duplicate Article VI on membership and it is better not to try to define membership in two different places (in case they accidentally become inconsistent). Mark Butler moved to add “neighborhood” before “association.” Bonnie seconded it, and the change was approved without objection.

**Article IV. Purpose.** The proposal adds a reference to Municipal Code section 02.40.020 from which the “purpose” language comes. It also deletes the sentence “The Council exists to afford citizens an opportunity for maximum involvement and self-determination.” [Note: this language appears to come from the first sentence in Article VIII, Section 8.01 of the municipal charter, which states: “The assembly by ordinance shall provide for establishment of community councils to afford citizens an opportunity for maximum community involvement and self-determination.”]

**Article V. Function.** The proposal deleted this article because it is mostly redundant, duplicating other articles in the bylaws. Also, some references, like paragraph A on “the Anchorage comprehensive plan” are outdated. Andre also noted that this article is basically mostly cut and pasted from the municipal code on community councils (Chapter 2.40), and that his review of the bylaws of other councils showed that some do not include such a section. However, Gordon Glaser argued that it is important to say what the community council is supposed to do and that it doesn’t have to be in the bylaws, but it needs to be somewhere. He said it would be particularly helpful to have this information available for new members. Matt said he would like more time to review this. Gordon made a motion to put the “Function” section back in the bylaws. Mark Butler seconded it.

Bonnie pointed out that the paragraph A reference to a single comprehensive plan is not current. Gordon and Mark accepted that as a friendly amendment, changing “plan” to “plans.” Matt said he thought we should only discuss the membership and voting sections because he doesn’t think there is time to adequately consider all the other proposed changes. After further discussion, the group voted 7 to 5 to reinstate the “Function” section, changing “plan” to “plans.” There also appeared to be some sentiment in favor of other changes in this section. The final vote, as with all other sections, will be at the March meeting.

**Article VI. Membership.** Andre explained that the proposal rewrites this section to clarify it. It also adopts “sign-in register” as the name of the sign-in sheet (replacing “membership voting register”). The current bylaws are rather inconsistent in what they call that document. The proposal also clarifies that dues are voluntary. Mark mentioned a question about membership that had come up in the past. The question was: can a business owner be a member if his business is just outside the council’s boundary but he leases parking spaces for the business just inside the council’s boundary. The group discussed this at length. Various suggestions were made for language which would answer this question in the negative (options included adding a requirement that the business be licensed, requiring a person to be present at the business for at least 8 hours a day, and specifically stating in the bylaws that leasing parking spaces does not qualify). None of these options gained overwhelming support. It was suggested that the point could be argued either way under the language of both the current and the proposed bylaws and that if our membership policy is supposed to be “open,” perhaps we shouldn’t worry about it. In the end, no change in the proposed wording was adopted. It can be discussed again in March if the group wants to.

**Article VII. Meetings.** The proposal made no significant change in this article, but a member of the group suggested changing “should” to “shall” in the sentence in paragraph A concerning the minimum number of meetings required.

**Article VIII. Voting.** The main change in this article is in paragraph B. Instead of saying members can vote if they have attended “at least one prior meeting in the 12 months,” the proposal says: “In order to be eligible to vote, a member must have attended and filled out the sign-in register at a previous meeting in the 11 months prior to the month in which the vote occurs.” The purpose of this change is to avoid the debate we had at last May’s meeting about whether “the 12 months” meant 365 days (in which case it would have included the previous May’s meeting) or something else. Gordon raised a possible problem with requiring attendance at only one previous meeting: people who had never attended a meeting before could attend a meeting at which a vote was scheduled to occur and, because they would not be eligible to vote, they could ask for a one-week postponement and thus be eligible to vote at the second meeting. The group did not think it was necessary to change the proposed language because of this. Harriet pointed out that to avoid this outcome, the group could designate the meeting one week later as a “continuation” of the original meeting and not a second meeting. Mark said he has seen only two or three attempt to stuff the ballots in his lengthy experience with community councils. Sharon Schlicht mentioned that at previous discussions the group had talked about

requiring attendance at more than one previous meeting in order to encourage more participation in council activities. No motions were made to change the draft.

**Article IX. Vote Reporting and Official Contacts.** The proposal simplifies some of the language and deletes a requirement that contacts by governmental officials must be reported as “old business.”

**Article X. Officers.** The proposal improves some of the language in this article. In addition, in section 1.C, the proposal adds a two-term limit for officers. In section 2.C, it eliminates volunteering for officer positions. It requires candidates to be nominated and allows nominations to be made in May, as well as March and April. In section 3.C.6, it adds to the secretary’s duties by requiring the secretary to provide a copy of the sign-in register to the FCC. In section 3.E, it adds that members-at-large (of which we currently have none) will “have duties assigned by the President of membership.”

Members of the group suggested two changes in section 1.C. of the proposal, which stated: “Officers may serve only two consecutive terms.” Gordon suggested adding “in the same office” even though that might be redundant (as Bonnie stated it is). There was no objection. Gordon then suggested that the term limit should be three or four years so officers can finish projects they may have started. Mark moved to change it to four years. John O’Hara seconded the motion. The group voted 7 to 2 in favor of that change.

Gordon then pointed out a problem with current section 3.B.1 which requires the Vice President to “be parliamentarian for each meeting.” Gordon said the vice president has to act as president when the president is absent and shouldn’t be parliamentarian when he is president. Also, someone mentioned that the vice president may not feel qualified to be parliamentarian. Gordon suggested adding language allowing the vice president to designate a parliamentarian. This idea was approved with no objection.

Bonnie noted that section 5.A of the current bylaws requires the officers to meet at least monthly at meetings open to the general membership. This has not been happening, and Bonnie suggested to Matt that it should happen. The group briefly discussed how this had been handled in the past.

**Article XII. Finances.** The proposal added “savings and loan” as an alternative to “an established bank” as the place where the council’s funds must be deposited. This was a mistake. Sharon Schlicht pointed out that our money is currently in a credit union, and Bonnie said there are no savings and loans in Alaska. We all agreed to change “savings and loan” to “credit union.” A member of the group suggested “banking institution” as an alternative, but there were objections about the meaning of that term, so we did not adopt it. In paragraph B, the proposal also deletes the \$250 limit on gifts the council can receive. Harriet thought the municipal code might require this limit. She later checked and confirmed that it is not in the code.

**Article XIII. Amendments and Additional Procedures.** The proposal adds “electronic” notice as an option for giving notice of proposed bylaws changes.

**Distribution Prior to March Meeting.** Andre agreed to revise the draft to make the changes the group had discussed, send it to Susan and Bonnie for review, and then send it to Mark for distribution to council members through the Federation of Community Councils (FCC) email system. Mark agreed to this.

- b. Election of Federation of Community Councils (FCC) Delegate. At last November's meeting, Matt reported that the council's FCC delegate Kim Wetzel had resigned due to a scheduling conflict and that the council needed a new delegate. Apparently at some point Gordon Glaser agreed to be the new delegate, but the council had not voted on this. Mark moved to elect Gordon as the FCC delegate. Barbara Pepek seconded the motion. Bonnie Jack asked for unanimous consent, and it was granted.
- c. Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) Opportunities. Mark Butler reminded the group that the national NUSA conference will be held in Anchorage on May 25-28, just over three months from now. He said one of the conference groups will be touring the North Star area and will need to be served dinner (perhaps as many as 60 people). The visitors will travel by motor coach on a pre-programmed tour of the neighborhood and surrounding places of interest from 4:00 to 8:00 on Thursday, May 26. Dinner will probably be served around 6:30 or 7:00. Mark is looking for a place to hold the dinner, and he will need food for it. He said there will be lots of volunteer opportunities for this event and that it is a chance to meet some "incredible" people from around the country. Call Mark at 276-6017 to volunteer or find out more about this event.

6. **Presentations.**

Barbara (Xefirah) Pepek briefly described the Emergency Watch meeting she and Matt attended. She said both she and Matt had signed up to be coordinators in their neighborhoods and that she was working on defining her neighborhood. She said Dawn Brantley at the municipality is the person in charge of this program. Susan mentioned that the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue neighborhood had organized an Emergency Watch group about two years ago but that it isn't particularly active currently.

7. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 9, 2011.

Minutes Written By: Susan Miller