



GOVERNMENT HILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Stephanie Kesler, President

Bob French and Dan Lowery, Co-Vice Presidents

Diane Miller and Mark Musial, Co-Secretary-Treasurer

Wendy Lindskoog, Mavis Hancock, and Kathleen King, At-Large Board Members

Robert Atkinson, FCC Delegate; Harriet Shaftel, Alternate Delegate;

Susanne Di Pietro and Thomas Pease, Past Co-Presidents

MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2005

The October meeting of the Government Hill Community Council was opened at 7:10 p.m. with Co-Vice President Bob French presiding. Introductions were made by all those present. Chair Bob French informed the military personnel who were in attendance that they are all eligible for membership in the community council and urged them to become active members.

Minutes from the September 15, 2005 meeting were approved as distributed.

Legislative Reports - Senator Johnny Ellis, Representatives Les Gara and Nancy Dahlstrom deferred their reports due to the very full agenda.

4 A's Update – Due to illness on the part of Linda McDevitt of Catholic Social Services, this report was not given.

Government Hill/Elmendorf AFB Base Closure – Colonel Scotty Lewis, 3rd Wing Vice Commander at Elmendorf, discussed the reasoning behind the military's decision to close the Government Hill gate. Because of a private contractor building approximately 150 new military housing units near the gate, this gate will not be a secured entrance onto the base. Instead a fence will be installed around the housing area, further inside the military reservation which will act as a barrier between the secured area and the construction area. This action will allow construction vehicles to enter the area without security at the gate. This in turn will alleviate the need for security personnel manning the gate. Colonel Lewis explained Elmendorf is facing an extreme shortage of security manpower at this time. Because of ongoing deployments, some departments are now only 65% manned, in some areas, manning is at 35%. It is hoped more manpower will be available in the spring.

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Residents expressed concern that the area businesses will suffer without the traffic coming onto the base and asked why the Muldoon gate could not be closed instead. Again, Colonel Lewis cited a manpower shortage and the fact that the Muldoon gate could also be closed because it lacks the facilities that the Boniface and Government Hill gates have. When asked about opening the East Bluff at Plum Street gate, Colonel Lewis said it lacked lights, heat, phone, etc. Since the Defense Appropriations Act is hung up in conference between the U.S Senate and the House, funds are not available to hire private contractors and put them through the stringent training necessary.

Base residents expressed concern about after-school programs at the on-base elementary schools. Also, those military families who have children attending Government Hill School will be faced with a much longer drive if they use the Post Road gate, then come up Government Hill.

The issue of safety was also brought up. Large trucks working on the construction site will be traveling across the bridge and up the hill during the often-treacherous winter road conditions on the A/C Bridge as well as the “curling club” curve. Colonel Lewis said he would talk to the contractor about our concerns.

Current plans are to close the gate effective October 29th and reopen around July 1, 2006. Colonel Lewis said if the construction goes smoothly and it is possible to open the gate earlier, he will certainly do so. He assured the group that in case of an emergency, there would be an evacuation route for residents. He also stated the hours for the Muldoon gate would be extended during this time.

Also participating in the discussion were Colonel Mark Douglas, 3^d Mission Support Group Commander; Lt. Colonel Halbig, Public Affairs, 3rd Wing Mission Support; Colonel Dave Curtis, 3rd Wing Public Affairs; and Major James Law, Alaskan Command Director of Public Affairs.

Alaska Railroad – Ship Creek Intermdal Project – Wendy Lindskoog deferred her update to a future meeting because of time restraints.

Hollywood Vista Update – Dave Shaftel updated the group on the progress being made on this project. The request for proposal has gone out to developers with a due date of December 15th. It is hoped development can begin next summer.

Knik Arm Bridge Committee Report – Bob French discussed the formation of an independent group of individuals interested in working on this committee. A tentative name of Friends of Government Hill (FOGH) was suggested. The purpose of this group would be to ensure we have proper dialogue with all parties in order to protect the integrity of our neighborhood. A sign-up list was available for those people interested in working with this group.

Discussion with Edrie Vinson – Ms Edrie Vinson, Project Manager with the Federal Highway Administration in Juneau, discussed the process in which the Knik Arm Bridge project is moving. Scoping meetings were held this past summer, public comments were taken, and the draft EIS was submitted. Because of the many questions that have arisen from this process, including the fact that various alternatives were not included she offered to take the project off the table and reevaluate all the options. The draft EIS which was due to be released in mid-November, will now be delayed till next spring. Ms Vinson said all alternatives will be studied and she urged us to brainstorm ideas. She also offered an opportunity for the council to meet with her and a team of Context Sensitive Design Specialists in November.

Dale Paulson, with KABATA, also reviewed the process that has occurred thus far with the draft EIS. He stated that once a draft EIS is reviewed, then more public hearings would be held and all concerns would be addressed before a final EIS would be released.

Neighborhood Concerns/Issues – Because of the lateness of the evening, the meeting was adjourned at this point.

Adjourned at 10 p.m.

Diane Miller

Co-Secretary/Treasurer