

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes

7PM Monday, November 12, 2012

Rogers Park Elementary School Library

Board Members Attending

Janet Bidwell, President

Cheryl Forest, Treasurer

Bob Churchill, FCC Representative

Board Members Absent

David Metheny, Vice-President

Iris Matthews, Secretary (Minutes recorded by Jim Wright)

Minutes

I. Welcome

Janet Bidwell called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Bob Churchill moved to accept the September 8, 2008, meeting minutes. Claire Boersma seconded the motion. Toward the end of the meeting, a vote was called of all RPCC members present (only those signing in can vote). A quorum was present. The motion passed.

III. Assembly Report

Elvi Gray-Jackson was present and provided the information set forth in her notes, attached as Exhibit A to these Minutes. Her oral presentation covered: 1) budget items under consideration by the Assembly and the contrasting positions of the Mayor and the Assembly; and 2) the upcoming reapportionment of Assembly district boundaries.

Dick Traini was also present. In response to questions put by Senator Berta Gardner and by Jim Wright, Mr. Traini clarified that contemplated reapportionment pertains only to Assembly districts and seats, and not to community council districts. The law establishing community councils does not provide for automatic reapportionment at any set period, and no such effort is presently on the horizon.

Mr. Traini addressed the status of the Port of Anchorage, including construction delays and failures related to what he described as improper installation of sheet piling, all of which resulted in budget overruns and the need for further funding, part of the recent bond proposition which passed. Ms. Gray-Jackson noted that RPCC member Dr. Arndt von Hippel raised questions about the port in the past, and that in retrospect his concerns appear to have been well placed. Member Dave Evans inquired about the CH2M firm's Power Point presentation and the 2000

page report of the independent investigation of the port issues. Mr. Traini noted that the report had been withheld at the instruction of the Mayor until after the election, and that he has not as yet seen it. He will provide copies upon request once he gets these materials, which he hoped would happen by Wednesday, November 14.

Member Bob Williams inquired whether we might also find out the status of the other side of the inlet (Knik Arm). It was noted by Mr. Traini that shoals at Point McKenzie are inhibiting the flow of ship traffic into the Port of Anchorage, so that ships now have to engage in complex maneuvers to land at port. He will try to get further information in response to Mr. Williams' request.

Member Bob Williams also inquired as to who among the Assembly voted for and against private review of designs (as opposed to MOA review), posing the concern that this would allow for self-interested results? Mr. Traini noted that this was how it used to be done and that the provision was limited in scope. It was reported that Elvi Gray-Jackson and Harriet Drummond were the only Assembly members to vote against this provision.

IV. Legislative Report

Senator Berta Gardner provided her legislative report. Her focus was on constituent flooding issues. She also discussed the outcome of the recent election, which led to her transition from Representative of District 24 to Senator subject to new boundaries set by the recent redistricting. In her new role she will still be representing a part of the RPCC area. The election in effect did away with the Bipartisan Coalition in the Senate.

Representative Les Gara was also present, noting that as a result of redistricting he will be representing a part of the RPCC area, but not the Rogers Park subdivision, as before. He provided his assurance that he will continue to serve the interests of RPCC. Representative Gara submitted that the redistricting was gerrymandering. It is legal in Alaska, but it is gerrymandering. He noted that some states have redistricting by an impartial tribunal, but that Alaska law allows the party in power to draw the lines. He will pursue impartial redistricting for the future, but notes that such a proposal is unlikely to pass in a legislature dominated by those who benefit from the present system. Rep. Gara underscored Governor Parnell's success in ridding Alaska of the Bipartisan Coalition, and that the Governor wants to decrease taxes on oil with no agreement by oil to develop or increase production. He noted that this approach had been tried in the past and did not work. Rep. Gara went on to critique the budget and budget overruns posed by the Port of Anchorage project, noting that it was originally cast as a \$200 million project by former Gov. Sheffield, the port director, but has grown into a \$1.2 billion expense.

Member Jim Wright inquired about the post-election status of Backbone, an organization with support from members of both political parties, and which publicly supported the Bipartisan Coalition. Rep. Gara noted his understanding that Backbone was still in existence but that its mission status post-election was unclear, given the defeat of the Bipartisan Coalition. He noted that corporate money permitted as a result of the Citizens Coalition decision of the U.S. Supreme

Court had poured into Alaska in the last two weeks before the election, and that Backbone simply could not compete with that degree of unlimited funding.

Member Marilyn Pillafont spoke in favor of increased education funding for the base student allocation. Rep. Gara agreed, and noted that the trend has been to increase class sizes, to decrease summer school availability, and to otherwise erode education resources and opportunities in the public schools of Alaska. Ms. Pillafont and Rep. Gara both spoke up in favor of inflation proofing the base student allocation, Rep. Gara noting by comparison that the salaries of the executive branch of government are inflation-proofed.

RPCC past president David Morgan inquired whether Rep. Gara's minority status would impair his effectiveness as a legislator, suggesting it would. Rep. Gara noted that most of his career as a legislator had been in a minority role, and gave a number of examples of constituent goals met, such as the Northern Lights sound barrier, funding of which was passed on repeated occasions.

Member and FCC representative Bob Churchill inquired about the status of foster care, an issue Rep. Gara has focused on in the past. Rep. Gara noted his support for reforms and increased funding of opportunities for foster kids.

Zack Mannix, staff for Senator Johnny Ellis, was present, promising Senator Ellis' expectation to be represented at every RPCC meeting, and to continue to work for this neighborhood's interests in spite of the change in constituent district borders.

V. The University District Master Plan Update.

Presenters included John Faunce, Lonnie Mansell, Wende Wilber (CRW), and a representative of ECI Hire. A map of projected changes was distributed, and Ms. Wilber discussed **the UAA plan** for future development, while Mr. Mansell presented as to **the U-Med District Plan**. Ms. Wilber explained that they are presently in the information gathering phase to predict where we need to grow in the next 10 years, and the next 20 years. So far, interviews heavily leaned toward the goals: 1) to "densify" the campus; and 2) create a sense of community on the campus. She noted the contentious issue of the Elmore/Bragaw extension through the campus district, so that her work group must develop plans with the extension, and without it.

Several members inquired about traffic, parking and covered walkways. Ms. Wilber noted that the college was presently tied together by a "spine" of covered or enclosed walkways from one end of the campus to the other, with subsidiary spines emanating outward to tie buildings and parking together. Mr. Faunce added that there was also a shuttle bus between UAA and the University Center, which is physically separate from the main campus.

Member Jim Wright noted that the university historically seems like a commuter campus, reflected by the discussion about parking and auto traffic. He inquired whether the focus on "community" would include increased campus housing for students and development of a student community or village? Ms. Wilber answered in the affirmative, assuring that her group is looking at that. They have in mind the prospect of both more housing and retail of interest to students and eateries. Rep. Gara agreed that there is too little dorm space; that the focus on and

encouragement of cars on campus equates to increased expense to students (e.g., car insurance, gas, maintenance, parking, etc.).

Member Bob Williams inquired whether revenue enhancements from the new sports arena would be used to offset added costs related to traffic and the like. Ms. Wilber indicated that the planning group was not to that phase yet. Mr. Faunce said that this is part of their business plan to pay for part of the operating expense of the sports arena. He said traffic concerns would largely be in the evening, as high volume (5000+ attendees) events would occur at nighttime.

Member Bob Churchill asked whether Providence Hospital employees have been asked their feelings about the impact of these changes? Mr. Faunce represented that they had spoken with Providence, but clarified when pressed by Mr. Churchill that they had spoken to designated management only, rather than the employees below management level.

One member pointed out that the map handout lacked a legend to explain the meaning of various markings. Ms. Wilber explained that red dotted lines are UAA boundaries, and that letter A, B and C labels are wetlands designators, C being developable and A being most valued as wetlands. She noted that there is a 65 foot setback for development on all lakes on campus.

Member David Morgan noted that he works in the U-Med District, underscored traffic congestion in the area, and suggested that greater communication and coordination among UAA, Providence Hospital, and Tribal interests including the Native Hospital and health care centers, is in order. He noted that \$80 million in new construction is contemplated, with increased traffic, and expressed his concern that increased development and traffic can obliterate adjacent neighborhoods if not done right. Ms. Wilber responded that this kind of coordination is contemplated but not yet happening. Mr. Mansell reported that a blogspot is now being set up to facilitate dialogue.

VI. The Alley Pickup Issue (garbage and recycling pickup in alleyways).

President Janet Bidwell had appointed Secretary Iris Matthews to chair a committee to look into the alley pickup issue. By way of background, Solid Waste Services (SWS) has expressed its desire or intent to discontinue alley pickup of garbage and recycling, in favor of requiring residents to place their garbage and recycling at the street curbs on designated days. For those members historically served via alleyways, this posed changes considered by many to be unacceptable. SWS offered to work with the aggrieved neighborhoods to identify problems and seek solutions so that alley pickup might be continued. Claire Boersma presented this issue as co-chair of the committee. Her meeting notes are attached as Exhibit B to these Minutes.

Ms. Boersma reported that there have been walk-throughs to identify concerns, and that SWS is to convey a list of conditions or standards to be met. She believed that Ms. Matthews recently received this list, but Ms. Boersma as yet had no copies to hand out. It was suggested, apparently by SWS, that a larger joint committee be formed with two representatives from each of the affected community councils, including Rogers Park, Airport Heights, Government Hill, the South Addition, Fairview, and Downtown, all of which have alley pickup concerns. Sen. Gardner suggested that an FCC presentation might help to draw in other councils. FCC

representative Bob Churchill indicated that he would be happy to propose that this be done, if the RPCC committee provides input on that score. It was expressly contemplated that Iris Matthews and Claire Boersma, as co-chairs, will inform Mr. Churchill.

Ms. Boersma noted that utility obstructions appear to be an issue but that the biggest concern for SWS appears to be snow removal. RPCC president Ms. Bidwell underscored that service on the committee will foreseeably entail a good deal of work and persistence, including efforts to coordinate with the various private and public utilities about the height and/or placement of wires, etc.

Member Dave Evans said that he does not like the name of the committee. He objects to the suggestion that he or people like him are opposed to recycling, noting that he has supported and taken part in recycling for a long time. Ms. Bidwell responded that there really is no formal name for the committee and no offense was intended by calling it anything. RPCC supports the work under whatever name. Mr. Evans wants to know how the co-chairs are to coordinate with others who have expressed an interest. Ms. Boersma noted that there is an e-mail list being used. Mr. Evans asked what had happened to the Resolution passed by RPCC about alley pickup. Ms. Bidwell responded that it is in the Minutes and that our Assembly representatives are aware of it, as they were in attendance at the meeting at which it passed. Mr. Evans pressed the point, noting that the Resolution is to be executed and has historically been sent to various municipal government addressees. He thought the RPCC Bylaws speak to this, and that the Board is collectively responsible to see that this occurs. Member Jim Wright, a past president, noted that the Bylaws do in fact provide that the President and Secretary are charged with this duty, and that it is important to make such a record, as it must be maintained on file at the government, whose responsible members may then be held accountable for record notice of it. He offered to assist, noting that resolutions typically went to the Mayor, Assembly, and City Clerk, but also might go to other persons at state or local government depending on the nature of the resolution.

Mr. Evans also expressed his desire to fight the SWS conditions or standards. Ms. Boersma submitted that we should see the SWS standards first, then decide how best to address them from an informed standpoint.

Ms. Bidwell noted that this is a standing committee, so that it will present the status of the issue every month to the group as a whole, to inform the members.

VII. Other Business: Crime Concerns and Community Watch Patrols.

Ms. Bidwell advised the members that there had been several reports of a prowler or prowlers in the area of 27th Avenue and on Crestwood. APD had been contacted for heightened watch in the neighborhoods. Member Arlen De Yong was skeptical of APD's efficiency in that regard. Dave Evans noted his understanding that there have been thefts of studded tires from yards this year. Sen. Gardner and member Bob Williams discussed the local practice by which community action patrols do follow-up on such reports, as well as APD, so that it appears worthwhile to report to APD. Rep. Gara noted that: "The squeaky wheel gets the grease" and tax cuts mean decreased money for community policing. Ms. Bidwell and others discussed the fact that neighborhoods can voluntarily form Community Watch groups as well, noting that there has been one in the

area of Bannister. Bob Churchill discussed the FCC's refusal to pass a resolution against Community Watch groups carrying lethal weapons, which influenced the FCC president to step down rather than risk personal exposure from a possible legal claim should a "Zimmerman/Martin" scenario ever occur. Rep. Gara and Jim Wright, both lawyers, discussed the ramifications of this concern, including the need for self-protection on the part of the Community Watch participants, the risk of a participant going beyond that legitimate concern, and the possibility of risk management steps (e.g., limited liability status such as incorporation, liability insurance, warnings, training, etc.).

VIII. Treasurer's Report

- Cheryl Forrest, RPCC Treasurer, announced that RPCC has ~\$171 in the account.

IX. Federation of Community Councils Report

- Bob Churchill provided the FCC report.
- Darrell Hess is the new municipal ombudsman.
- The FCC's understanding is that the reaction of the Anchorage School Board to the new superintendant is so far largely good.
- The Mayor's office did not attend the last meeting, which is their standard practice.
- The police officers' union representative attended, and spoke in favor of the Mayor's "B" Budget, which had fewer spending cuts. He said that the Mayor's "A" Budget, if passed, would destroy future recruiting, because recent hires would be cut, after relocating to Anchorage from elsewhere. It would be difficult at best to persuade new hires to come here if they might simply be cut the following year or two.
- Ernie Hall and Barbara Jones are proposing a protocol to handle community council resolutions.

Sen. Gardner suggested that the FCC consider adopting a structure to train new officers with mentors and a written protocol.

Meeting Adjourned

Minutes submitted by Jim Wright, past board member, sitting in as Secretary *pro tem*.