

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes

7PM Monday, March 4, 2013

Rogers Park Elementary School Library

Board Members Attending

Janet Bidwell, President
Dave Methany, Vice President
Cheryl Forrest, Treasurer

Absent: Iris Matthews, Secretary (excused)
Dave Morgan, Past President
Bob Churchill, FCC representative (excused)

Minutes

I. Welcome.

Janet Bidwell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes.

Approval of February 2013 meeting minutes was postponed due to lack of a quorum.

III. Assembly Report.

Elvi Gray-Jackson noted that Title 21 rewrite was approved by the Assembly, including some amendments presented by Elvi, Dick Traini and Pat Flynn. The amendments proposed by Dan Coffey were not approved.

There was substantial discussion of the 11th hour inclusion of a provision approving mother-in-law apartments or units for lots exceeding 10,400 sq. ft. in areas zoned single family residential (R1 and R1A). This provision was presented by Mr. Pollock of the Anchorage Community Development Authority, through Assembly member Jennifer Johnston. There was no real notice and opportunity to be heard afforded to the public, for their input, so Elvi and Dick Traini will seek to re-open the issue in the near future. Peter Mjos asked whether the mother in law unit provision is part of Title 21. Elvi and Dick advised that it passed into law as part of Title 21. Their strategy will be to present a new ordinance changing just that provision, rather than seeking reconsideration of the vote that already occurred.

There was also substantial discussion of Mayor Sullivan's push to change the way the Municipality of Anchorage negotiates with its public employees. Public hearings on this issue are ongoing. The Mayor and certain Assembly members (Ernie Hall and Jennifer

Johnston) seek to achieve the change before March 12, so that it will apply to certain upcoming contract talks. Dick Traini and Paul Honneman have sought to elongate the issue so that the public can reasonably weigh in. Both Elvi and Dick expressed their disapproval of the measure, noting that the Mayor's proposal allows and promotes outsourcing, which is generally a bad idea for city services. The example was given of dispatching. This would not be well done from, say, India, even though labor is cheaper there. There was some discussion of outsourcing legal opinions and other services. The Mayor's office can already do so up to \$30,000 without full disclosure to the Assembly. Dick had some ethics concern about this practice, but the ethics board is appointed by the Mayor, suggesting that such review is less than independent.

Elvi and Dick underscored that the Mayor's position will predictably have the effect of weakening the public sector employee services, including police and fire, by stacking the deck against them. Historically, binding arbitration was the tradeoff warranted because police and fire services cannot strike, by law. The Mayor's proposal would drop binding arbitration, so that any impasse would be resolved by the Assembly ... and if the Mayor doesn't like the Assembly's decision, he can veto it. In these circumstances, management's hand is unbalanced (i.e., too heavy), and public sector employees will look for other opportunities, whether in different locales or in different service (e.g., APD officers crossing over to the Alaska State Troopers).

There was some discussion of the announced early resignation of Anchorage School Superintendant Browder, who has put in less than a year of his three year contract. The reason initially given was medical issues involving a family member in Florida or Georgia. However, Jim Wright noted that it was soon reported that he had already been applying for a position in Iowa, which seemed a long commute from Florida. Elvi noted that there was a meeting in which the Mayor took a decidedly anti-school performance position which Mr. Browder did not agree with, as he is tasked with radical budget cuts to education, and that this may have been the prompting for Mr. Browder's decision. Jim Wright asked whether, if this is a 3 year contract, the public will have to pay beyond his resignation date? Mr. Traini said he is looking into that question, adding that there is a further concern the public might have to pay his moving expenses. Elvi and Dick wondered aloud if the contract might not have the unintended effect of encouraging departure, and whether it would not be more prudent to give preference to "home grown" candidates, as former school superintendant Carol Comeau was.

Attention was also given to the Solid Waste Service (SWS) alley service issue. Undergrounding utility lines is being considered, which would alleviate one of the concerns expressed by SWS (i.e., sufficient overhead clearance to operate their trucks in the alleys). Another step to alleviate SWS concerns is paving the alleys, although this should logically follow any undergrounding that is to occur. The alley service issue is ongoing. Dick Traini stepped in to elaborate on this issue. He pointed out that there was recently a meeting to address this with the utilities. Chugach Electric was in attendance, but it has no alleys in its areas. Municipal Light & Power (MLP) has all the alleys, but it did not appear at the meeting. Elvi noted that this was not MLP's fault, but a clerical error in scheduling and invites; that Chugach Electric was helpful and MLP would likely

provide the same basic information had it been in attendance. A follow up meeting is contemplated.

Dick Traini noted that he is proposing an ordinance providing that alcohol may be served until 3 a.m., after which the bars may stay open until 5 a.m. so that people can wind down and get home rather than be unleashed abruptly onto the street. He noted that the serving industry supports it. Jim Wright asked whether bars close at 2 a.m. now? Mr. Traini responded that they close at 3 a.m. on weekends.

IV. Legislative Report.

State Representative Andy Josephson and his aide, Megan, appeared remotely from Juneau, via teleconference with a limited visual component. Andy explained that he had a short time before returning to the floor to address a complex water rights bill. In the meantime, he noted that there is significant debate about taxation of legacy wells, principally in the NPRA, and otherwise addressed the work of the Finance Committee which is in the process of vetting requests for funding. Rep. Josephson noted that a number of legislators are leaving in mid-session to attend a national energy discussion in Washington, D.C. He will not be going, as he is too busy with legislative business.

Josephson announced that he is proposing legislation to extend the school year in Alaska by 10 days, but that it would not take immediate effect so as to not interfere with existing contracts of educators.

Mr. Traini asked if the Anchorage Caucus recently met with any MOA Assembly members. Josephson indicated that he thought there was such a meeting with Jennifer Johnston, Mr. Traini noting that the Assembly did not request it, suggesting that this may have been an improper meeting.

V. Presentations.

A. SWS Alley Service Issue. The committee chair, Iris Matthews, was not present, although member Dave Evans was available to discuss the status of the committee's efforts. He deferred to the comments of the Assembly member attendees regarding 1) undergrounding utilities, and 2) paving alleyways, as steps in the needed direction. Janet Bidwell commented that a good deal of progress had been made generally since the SWS folks engaged with RPCC on this issue.

B. Police Report. RPCC president Janet Bidwell presented this topic. She noted that her communications with APD indicated that the police force had no one available to attend our meetings due to limited staffing or resources. However, she urged members to 1) be sure to report incidents of concern, because that feedback tends to direct police resources to where they are needed; and 2) consider Neighborhood Watch volunteer organizations, which deter crime by simply cooperatively watching our neighborhoods. Folks who wish to break the law do not wish to be watched, so they tend to go elsewhere. Matt Gill commented that there are Neighborhood Watch signs in his area, even though

the volunteer organization may not be active. The mere presence of the signs may be a deterrent. Jim Wright likened this to the house with burglar alarm stickers on the windows – the burglar doesn't want to test to see whether the alarm is on, so that the sticker has a deterrent effect with or without the alarm.

C. Street Lighting at Cottonwood & Zarvis. Matt Gill presented this issue, which was not part of the Agenda as posted, but added late on the day of the meeting via e-mail announcement. Mr. Gill has sought a street light at this intersection, which is dark, bordered by woods in part, on the approach to Rogers Park Elementary School. He approached MOA Transportation, but there seemed to be a miscommunication as that department sought increased funding for six lights at ~\$350,000 rather than one light, which was what he requested. He is concerned that the higher requested appropriation is more likely to be denied. Megan, with Rep. Andy Josephson's office, confirmed her understanding that one light installed costs ~\$50,000. Mr. Gill brought a proposed resolution in favor of the requested light at Cottonwood & Zarvis. Input from attendees generally favored this effort, but there were only 14 members present so the issue was deferred to the next meeting. President Janet Bidwell preferred this course in any event so as to give all members better notice of the issue and an opportunity to be heard. Dave Evans suggested an amendment to the language of the resolution to say that this is the only dark spot along that approach. The resolution was deferred for now.

Claire Boersma inquired whether the state provides funding for safe routes to schools. Megan, with Andy Josephson's office, said she will look into that and get back to us.

D. The Chugach Access Plan. Helen Nienhueser could not attend the meeting, but presented this issue by way of an open letter to the members, presented by president Janet Bidwell. The letter, attached to these Minutes, advocates for designation and protection of public routes into the Chugach Park and mountains. It was noted that the MOA Planning & Zoning is presently dominated by development interests, which appear to consider this issue a low priority, so that public education on the issue is warranted, and public support is sought.

E. April Elections. President Janet Bidwell noted that the annual election of board members and officers is coming up in April. Due to the lack of a quorum, however, the members could not properly vote on a Nominating Committee Chair, contemplated in the RPCC Bylaws. She expressed her willingness to serve a renewed term as president, but properly seeks to open the opportunity to serve to others who may be so disposed. The positions include president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Volunteers are encouraged to step forward and submit their names to the existing board so that their candidacy can be announced to the general membership well in advance of the April meeting.

VI. Federation of Community Councils Report.

Bob Churchill was absent due to a conflicting commitment. However, he proffered a written summary and Minutes of the last FCC meeting. The summary, attached to these

Minutes, was read verbatim by Jim Wright. Among FCC proposals was funding for remote conferencing equipment to be kept by the FCC for use of the community councils, particularly when legislators need to attend remotely. There were no questions.

VII. Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer Cheryl Forest announced that there has been no change in the amount of RPCC funds.

In closing, Elvi Gray-Jackson reminded all attendees to vote at the upcoming MOA elections on April 2nd.

The meeting was adjourned by president Janet Bidwell at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jim Wright, sitting in for secretary Iris Matthews.