



GOVERNMENT HILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

C/O Community Councils Center • 1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99503

Stephanie Kesler, President

Melinda Gant, Vice President

Brian Fields and Arran Forbes, Co-Secretaries-Treasurers

Kyle Stevens, FCC Representative

Mavis Hancock and Donna Rymut, At-Large Board Members

Bob French, Past President

GHCC Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2014

Submitted by Arran Forbes

President Stephanie Kesler Presiding opened the meeting at 6:37 pm

Introductions:

- Customary round-the-room introductions.

School Budget Report: Tam Agosti-Gisler

- Budget for 2015 announced next Tuesday.
- Revenue sources: Anchorage School District (ASD) facing serious budget shortfall. School Board has no power to generate revenue or raise taxes, relies primarily on general fund from State of Alaska Base Student Allocation (BSA). Also contributing: Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) 33%, and federal government.
- BSA deficit is biggest issue. State has not increased BSA in four years.
- Legislative grants (one time money) have paid for some technology needs, but State hesitates to spend one-time money for continuing costs like teacher salaries.
- State also funds capital projects, which School Board cannot choose.
- MOA contributions: state has capped the amount MOA can give to schools. State could amend this law.
- Municipal cost sharing: this year, municipal auditor came in and has fostered collaboration between ASD and MOA.
- Schools are charged a fee every time students use a MOA trail.
- School Resource Officers—officers stationed in high schools that respond to all schools within that area. Been effective for preventing crime, cutting down on delinquency and truancy, and keeping students safe. School Board has paid for 50% of their salaries. Board believes this is a policing activity, not an educational activity, and MOA should be responsible for 100%.
- Last year cut \$18 million from administrative and support positions. 214 positions cut, none of which were teachers.
- Any new funding goes to high value programs:
 - o Destination 2020 Goals: proficiency in reading, writing and math; 90% attendance; 90% graduation; top quartile efficiency; 100% students and staff feel safe at school. (Acronym PAGES)
- Projecting deficit of \$23 million this year and \$26 million next year if funding does not change. Looking at layoffs of 200 people per year, including teachers.
- Asking for requests to increase BSA of \$250 per student. The legislative grants are not sufficient or sustainable.

November Minutes:

- November minutes were unanimously approved

Legislative Updates:*Representative Les Gara*

- Going to Juneau on Sunday. Senator Ellis there now.
- Has KABATA strategy with Senator Ellis. Not sure of the Governor's rationale. Governor Parnell put \$50 million in the budget despite cost estimates of well over \$1 billion. No news on the latest projection report.
- The Chairman of the House Finance Committee is a fervent supporter of KABATA. Caucus members do not vote against the Finance Committee Chair, even at the expense of their conscious and constituents.
- Representative Gara stated that cuts to the school funding are a violation of the Alaska Constitution. All cuts and stagnation have been under the direction of Governor Parnell. Parnell said raising BSA would be a "giveaway", whereas his new Oil Tax was not. Les suspects that because it is an election year, legislators will put a token amount of money into schools simply as a talking point. This will allow the Governor to say that we are putting a record amount of money in schools. This is true a stratement. But because there is a massive retirement shortfall; none of the funding will go into the classroom. Adjusted for inflation, less money is going into the classroom.
- Gas Line: Les is glad that Governor Parnell is in favor of the large diameter gas line as it is better economically. The Govenor wants to rewrite the tax on natural gas. Les asked the Governor to bring in consultants different from those who wrote the Oil Tax Bill. AGIA is being dumped. AGIA included consumer protections and provisions to increase gas company competition. Les' vote will depend upon protections built into proposed law.
- Working with Mia Costello to write bill making a centralized living will registry. It may be that the Affordable Care Act may fund and create that, in which case the bill will be withdrawn.
- Les hates the new legislative offices building. When he spoke out against it, he was moved to a smaller office.
- Working to repeal Oil Tax Bill. Will be on ballot in August.
- Office is always open.
- Elections Matter.

Joshua Spring for Patrick Flynn

- Improving communication around snow hauling: keep cars off streets when neighborhood is due for snow removal. Trying to implement an email system to alert residents
- Wants to improve social media communication between residents and Anchorage Police Department (APD).
- Stephanie: we haven't had any representation from APD at a meeting for a very long time. Joshua made note.
- Working on new way to outlaw "Spice".
- Requesting neighborhood concerns:
 - o Stephanie: Patrick is in the loop on KABATA concerns. AMATS will come into play and the technical committee is uncooperative.

- Melinda: snow has been building on the Government Hill Bridge, and there are no longer two full lanes. Would like to know who the state resource is and Melinda will personally call.
- Kyle: what is the penalty for Spice? Joshua: not sure. Manufacturers keep changing the chemical formula to evade designation as spice.

FCC Update: Kyle Stevens

- Community outreach and improving attendance at community council meetings. FCC is discussing how to better reach minority populations.
 - May be possible to get a blurb on meetings in PTA newsletters
 - Working on social media including Neighborhood Works and Next Door.
 - Resounding “no” to posting a Craigslist Ad
 - Providing some food to attendees.
- How to increase attendance at FCC meetings themselves. Creating easy to use templates on website.
- Berta Gardner made a flier for her constituent community councils; something to talk to Representative Gara and Senator Ellis about.
- Council doesn't need to submit bylaws until February 28, and it is okay to vote on Tract J at the February meeting. Susanne DiPietro looked at bylaws from legal perspective, and concluded they still look solid.
- Fire chief will be speaking at FCC next month, so please give send Kyle your questions for him.

Nominating Committee Proposed Slate: Stephanie Kesler

- President: Stephanie Kesler
- Vice President: Melina Gant
- Co-Secretary and Treasurers: Arran Forbes and Brian Fields
- At Large Members: Donna Rymut and Mavis Hancock
 - Bylaws require a commercial representative at large member. Steve Ribuffo was advised against accepting the position from Port of Anchorage legal council.
- FCC Delegate: Kyle Stevens
- Bylaws require notice of one month, so this vote will be held in February. Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

Tract J Incorporation: Bob French

- Tract J extends from Susan Nightingale Park to Defense Fuels: 48 acres. It is currently not within any organizations' boundary.
- Steve: the whole Port is included within the GHCC by definition. Port has been re-platted.
- Council boundaries are set by the FCC. Planning and Zoning also has to approve.
- FCC needs resolution from GHCC. Bylaws state that a resolution can be proposed and voted upon in the same night.
- GHCC has some potential plans for Tract-J in the Neighborhood Plan. It is currently zoned industrial. There are limits to what could be done with it by the GHCC.
- Melinda would like a map attached to the resolution. Steve has surveyors' plat that he will send.
- Bob French moves to approve resolution to incorporate Tract J into Government Hill Community Council boundaries. Melina Gant seconds. Motion unanimously approved.

Parks Committee: Mavis Hancock

- Parks Resolution 2014 includes: bridge repairs at Alderwood; stump removal and tree replacement at Al Miller; vegetation removal, power washing, and trashcan addition at Brown's Point; tennis court improvements, tree remove, transplants, top soil additions, and trashcan addition at Harvard Park; trashcan replacement, tree and detritus removal, improvements to play areas, water meter replacement, and safety improvements at Sunset Park; weed-eating, transplanting, and debris removal at Suzan Nightingale Park.
- Siberian Pea plants are insidious; despite being removed annual, they return.
- Resolution number will be changed to 2014-02.
- Donna expresses concern that bluff will be clear-cut, compromising the stability of the bluff and subjecting the neighborhood to dust, noise, and visual impacts. Requests that Parks Department representative be a forester or arborist to determine both funding and selective tree removal based upon providing the best view. Mavis will add to the Browns Point resolution "based upon the onsite recommendation of an arborist or forester's opinion of tree removal."
- Need to determine who our Parks Department contact is.
- Melinda recalls that last year the neighborhood rallied to remove the trees, but the Parks Departments did not uphold their end of the deal to woodchip them. Recommends getting Patrick Flynn involved. Mavis states that the representative who made that deal is no longer with the Department. Stephanie recommends having a meeting with Parks Department to address this issue and confirm everything in writing.
- Melinda Gant moves to approve resolution. Kyle Steven seconds. Unanimously approved.

Trash Service Update: Thomas Pease

- Trash Service Committee is called the Trash Talkers
- Since end of October, Thomas has not heard, nor has Stephanie received any complaints from residents regarding the alley pick up service and new trash bin system.
- Paul Alcantar did not respond to invitation to attend this meeting. He was informed that a non-response would mean that things are going smoothly from Solid Waste Services. He non-responsiveness to both electronic and hardcopy letter is taken to mean that SWS has no issues with the current state of the alley pick up program. Another letter will be sent in three months.
- Roger's Park was told by SWS that things were going well in their neighborhood. Success was attributed to thoroughness of snow removal and cooperative of Roger's Park residents.
- Thomas has noted that alley residents are not pulling their trash bins back after collection, which is hindering snow removal vehicles. Melinda will post to social media send FCC email.
- Peter notes that the service comes so early in the morning that residents must put out bins the night before, which may cause problems in the summer with bears. This issue is to be continued...

Alaska Railroad: Tim Sullivan

- He will be attending parts of the legislative session. Last year requested \$41 million dollars to complete federal improvement requirements. Received \$15 at conclusion of last session. If changes not implemented by federal deadline, will be forced to discontinue passenger service.
- Six-episode Railroad reality series was a big hit—even airing in Europe. Producers are asking for a second season.
- No news on KABATA.

Port of Anchorage: Steve Ribuffo

- For the record, Steve showed up for December meeting only to find he was the only attendee. He had to eat all the homemade cookies he brought.
- January 14 Assembly meeting stalled vote on contracting for CH2MHill. Concerns appeared to be based in CH2MHill's association with Veco. Once decided, someone will come to speak to the GHCC.
- Port requesting zero dollars from Legislature. They don't have a design and don't have a cost, so would like to be deliberate in their requests.

KABATA: Bob French

- "It's been a little weird."
- Governor now proposing to do bridge to public financing. Still looking at a TIFIA Loan—a third of their cost. Also looking for \$300 million currently for other State transportation projects, which bridge wants to acquire. And \$260 directly bonded by State. Still saying that toll revenues would cover TIFIA Loan. Tolls currently overestimated at 118% and if went to TIFIA, would not cover maintenance AND bond servicing AND administrative costs.
- Bob attended meeting in Mat-Su discussing community planning. Gist of meeting: if we had city water and sewer in six mini-town sites, you may get population densities in those town sites that KABATA currently has in their projections to cover the necessary tolls.
- Bob testified at the Legislative Open Session this weekend to poke holes in public financing plan. Team is gearing up for legislative session. Will take hard work on our part, but Stephanie believes we are in a better situation this year than in previous years due to budget shortfall, competing plans, and it being an election year. The problem is that they haven't run out of money yet.
- At FCC meetings, multiple community councils have passed resolutions against the bridge.

Miscellaneous Updates:

- Kyle: signage is going up to move your car for snow plowing, but the timing has been bad for residents to heed.

Stephanie adjourned the meeting at 8:58