



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

March 20, 2014

Submitted by Arran Forbes

President Stephanie Kesler Presiding opened the meeting at 6:34 pm

Introductions:

- Customary round-the-room introductions.
- Steve suggests an edit under Port of Anchorage section from February minutes: replace Crowley with Delta Western. Bob French clarifies that Crowley is correct.
- Melinda moved to approve February minutes; Kyle seconds. February minutes approved with all in favor.

Representative Les Gara:

- Education fight ongoing. Believes public pressure will increase education funding, but not high enough to avoid additional cuts next year. Parents have been activated. Majority caucus is split on approach to education funding.
- Gasline issue is hard to explain. Two problems: first, there are no taxes collected, but Alaska collects the gas for selling in Asia and may not be able to make a profit; second, the way it's written it will be difficult to have independent companies outside the Big Three do exploration on the North Slope.
- KABATA: latest strategy is dangerous. They are pretending to not need to much State money and that it will be done on bonding; however, bill does not require they get the TIFIA loan. If we do not receive the TIFIA loan, the State will be on the hook for a project already started. Senator Olsen has been an advocate on the Finance Committee. Decision will be made in the Senate; the House is decided.

Assemblyman Patrick Flynn

- Assembly is deliberately not doing much now to focus on the upcoming election.
- Lots of excitement over Muldoon Park proposal; Patrick has been enjoying the entertainment. He is unsure whether there will be an attempt to override the veto.
- Interruption by cute kid re: cookie.
- Melinda: was there a reason why the Mayor didn't want to go through the normal process of review for the Muldoon Park? Patrick: I would have been more supportive had the Mayor not vetoed park funding for the east side.
- Perhaps the first time the word Kafkaesque was used at a GHCC meeting?

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Matt Moser for Senator Johnny Ellis:

- Education funding is big part of debate; public input has been very helpful and folks should continue to weigh in.
- Proposed Gasline Legislation has just left Senate. Senator Ellis has major concerns regarding the structure of the bill. He is not comfortable with the State being a minority partner and relinquishing our sovereignty over how we get our share of the resources against some of the biggest companies in history. Ellis and his colleagues offered a package of sixteen amendments; hoping that they will shed light on some important issue and maybe be adopted. This deal, upward of \$50 billion, is flying through the Legislature faster than anyone expected or hope. If anyone has concerns, please get in touch with office.
- Operating budget has left House and not is in Finance Committee of the Senate. After leaving the Committee, a seven-day than 24-hour time limit will be in effect. Legislation will really start moving quickly
- Efforts from both parties to reduce the recidivism rate. Senator Ellis working with several other senators on a package to increasing public safety, reducing the corrections budget, and adopting some best practices employed around the country to slow the rate of incarceration. This bill passed senate last week 20-0.
- KABATA is before Senate Finance Committee. There have been great questions from Senator Olsen and Senator Hoffman, and hopefully KABATA will be delayed when the Operating Budget is posed to them.
- Stephanie: when do you believe KABATA will come back up in front of the Senate Finance Committee? Matt: The Committee has been consistently unpredictable this session, which has been a challenge for folks trying to weigh in. He will try to get more details.
- Stephanie: Senator Hoffman has a reputation as a wheeler and dealer; is there a sense he will play the trading game with his KABATA vote? Matt: Senator Hoffman is on the list of folks I would encourage people to speak up to and to whom to provide information. There will not be much money for capital budget in terms of being a tool to build support as it has been in the past.
- Stephanie: what are they other capital projects that are before the Senate that are in competition with KABATA? Matt: much more constrained capital budget. KABATA is trying to find a way forward without requesting much from the budget, such as through bonds. Fairbanks would like a combined heat and power plant; engineering buildings competing for funds; Juneau has slam project; Blue Lake Hydro in Sitka; many projects all over the state.
- Melinda: so it's not just other transportation projects that are competing, but all capital projects are competing for the same funding as KABATA? Matt: current problem with KABATA is that they are counting on Federal Highway funds that will affect transportation projects statewide, as well as the bonding capacity of the State.

Kyle Stevens, FCC Update:

- Municipality is hosting training sessions for Community Council officers. He will let us know the dates.
- Archives Committee has given us choice to archive documents at UAA Consortium Library. If we are interested, we can elect what will be public and what will be sealed.
- Stephanie: the concert association entered into agreement with UAA, and all of GHCC materials dating to 1950 were archived through the UAA archives program. It's an invaluable resource.
- He is trying to find out what is happening to our master contact list, as there is a section within contract between FCC and UAA Library that allows them to sell information for a profit.
- Promotions Committee was given a budget for outreach. Money (approximately \$2500 for all 38 councils, or \$75 dollars) to be given to Community Councils to increase attendance.

- Melinda's idea: Mountain View has flags at the entrance. They had their business partners contribute, in exchange for having their logos on the flag. Government Hill could get year-round flags at the entrance with sponsorships from the business. The Port was volun-told to get on board. Melinda will do an inquiry for the business partners and develop a cost proposal. She will ask Mountain View Community Council how they went about it.
- Promotions Committee developed a template for council presidents to use for events.
- Melinda would like to email out fliers for ballot propositions 3, 4, and 5.
- Kyle would like to know if anyone knows how the parks in the neighborhood are designated. Mavis: the parks put out a book around 2006 that describes each park and its history—available online.
- Stephanie: all Anchorage area parks got a report card.
- Capital Improvements list is due on May 30.

Stephanie Kesler, Bylaws:

- Did some research into the JBER issue. GHCC bylaws define the physical boundaries of the GHCC. We need to update the bylaws to include the Tract J property, which have been replatted from JBER to the POA. There is currently language in the bylaws that specifically exclude that tract.
- Bylaws also state that although JBER is excluded from GHCC boundaries, any resident of JBER can be a member of GHCC. Stephanie found that anyone can be a member of the Downtown Community Council, and believes that set the precedence.
- Bylaws are updated to no longer exclude Tract J, and to explicitly include email as a notification email.
- Melinda would like to clarify that persons 18 and older can vote in the Council. Stephanie confirms.
- Stephanie does not have the bylaws and would like to postpone the vote until next month. FCC Representative states that is okay.
- Donna: are there community councils that continue to use mail as a form of contact? Stephanie: we will use mail once or twice a year. But meeting notification is all email.
- Robert: motion to accept President's mea culpa for forgetting the bylaws. Melinda seconds. Bylaws will return to the agenda in April.

Thomas Pease, Residential Zoning Requirements:

- Property 132 East Cook Avenue is being remodeled from a split-level duplex to a three-story home. Question has been whether they are violating the zoning laws with height restrictions. Zoning states it *just* meets the 30-foot requirement. What enforcement power does zoning have to prevent it from being turned into a triplex? And why was it approved in the first place?
- It has been earmarked to require a final interior inspection before issuing the certificate of occupancy. Property has failed two inspections.
- If anyone sees the third floor being occupied, please alert Thomas.
- There is no exterior exit on third floor, so technically cannot be an independent dwelling. So if anyone sees an exterior door appear on the third floor, please alert Thomas.
- Mavis: word is the owners live on the Westside of the Hill, and their intention is occupy one half, with one other occupant. Rumor is it will remain a duplex. Celeste has heard the same thing.
- Stephanie: zoning was initially not going to do any enforcing. They stated the bank wouldn't close on the financing, so the lending institution would do the enforcing.
- Stephanie: working with an eastside resident, stating trash receptacles from the apartments are being left in the alley. Turns out a few of the structures are triplexes that have been sold multiple times and are not grandfathered in. Zoning was called and stated—again—the lending institution will enforce that.

- Mavis: there have been triplexes on the Hill since the 1970s. She does not believe any more will be prevented from being built if there's no enforcement.
- Stephanie: perhaps we should invite zoning to a meeting to determine how laws are enforced.

Mavis Hancock, Parks Committee:

- Last month GHCC approved resolution for 2014 parks maintenance work plan.
- Robert: questioning where the budget numbers came from for these projects. He believes it is grossly inflated and it should be discussed with the Parks Department.
- Donna notes that special equipment accounts for the high costs of even basic installation and repairs.
- Bob: in 2001, to redo the foundations at the Sunset park playground, the gravel was mixed into the sand layer. The material needs to be sifted to remove the oversize rocks.
- Ron: could some of these go into capital improvement requests? Stephanie: yes, such as the basketball backboards. Others ought to be requests to the parks foundation.
- Melinda: were you given a timeline? Mavis: no. But they intend to do in 2014. Response from the Parks Department was positive.
- Carl: the plaque dedicated to Stu is covered in snow in the winter, and should be raised. Stephanie: that could probably be funded ourselves.
- Donna: it sounded like the Parks Department does not have an arborist. Stephanie: right. Need to consider erosion and eagle habitats when thinning the trees. Robert: under cutting is cheaper than tree removal, and could make a substantial difference.
- Carl: would it be wise to use a hedge trimmer at Suzanne Nightingale Park every year? Mavis: that is done every year.

Tim Sullivan, Alaska Railroad:

- Open house on May 3, 11 am to 3pm, at the downtown depot.
- In the middle of filming season two of "Railroad Alaska."
- Prints have been issued for 557 to raise some funds. The Rasmuson Foundation matches all funds. Art will be available for purchase at the depot.

Steve Ribuffo, Port of Anchorage:

- The Assembly approved contract for CH2MHill, now the project management company for the port expansion. Finally in the process of getting back on track. The PM is currently working in Houston, will be moving up here shortly. First order of business is for them to create a project management plan—will take 12 weeks. After that, look at pile driving for test purposes to examine the soil structure in the vicinity. No shovel turning planned for this year. Lots of outreach taking place to determine a new design.
- From March 27-31, the Port will be getting busy and crowded for the annual Alaska Shield Exercise. This year has a homeland security preparedness focus. There will be an earthquake exercise simulating the same circumstances in 1964 using current infrastructure to project potential damage and plan how to respond. The entire city will be involved. It is a national exercise. FEMA finally wrote an Alaska Annex to their emergency response plan. This is the first time it will be practiced.
- From April 2-5, exercises in recovery operations will begin involving the military. There will be upward of 1,000 military folks down at the Port involved in this effort. The USS Mendonka will be docking at the Port.
- Steve does not expect any increased noise from the exercises such that would alarm the residents. Most activity will be command-post level talks.

- Two tankers delivering fuel for the airport, and a cement ship, will be arriving around the same time.

Bob French, Knik Arm Crossing:

- Bill has three parts: \$300 million from TIFIA loans, \$300 in state-backed bonds, and \$300 million from the federal highways funds that are typically awarded to Alaska. DOT is arguing it will only push some projects back a year or so. Other transportation improvement projects, such as improving road from Tok to Canada, will be set aside. Federal government made it very clear there will never be another dollar to a Bridge to Nowhere.
- First part of toll revenue would go to maintenance and operations; second would go to paying off TIFIA loan.
- Presentation the legislature discussing the State's credit ration and how much more we can bond. This will be a key strategy item.
- There was a public records act to get the traffic and employment projections for the Wasilla byway performed by HDR. Looking to see where the most population densities are expected to increase. Projected 9,400 trips for Wasilla byway, and are projecting 36,000 a day for the bridge.
- Toll is \$5 one-way escalating 2.5% each year. Which is not being discussed. Commercial rates would be higher.
- No plans to put a railroad track across it. They will have it "railroad compatible." The foundation for the bridge would not be compatible, but the grade and curves would allow a separate foundation to be constructed for the railroad.
- Submitted letter to FHWA asking for a supplemental EIS. Stephanie sent it out and copied many, many key players. Have not received a response. Met with a lawyer-friend and he thought the letter well put-together and is likely being received at the highest levels of FHWA. When the bill was introduced to the Senate Finance Committee, the Big Lake Representative spent all of opening remarks justifying the purpose and need of the bridge, which was severely damaged in the letter sent. It is clear the letter is causing some ruffles. We need to be careful about how we play this in the media.

Other Business:

- Kyle: is there any way we can get an update from the treasurer? Stephanie: we don't have a treasurer, but I have access to the bank accounts. Our balance is in the low three-digits.
- Carl: Google "recent earthquakes" and there is a wonderful website showing all those in Alaska.
- Donna: has noticed fumes near house, and called ADEC requesting reports from the last time air quality in the port had been monitored. The fumes are not all the time, but sometimes it permeates into her home.
- Kyle: need picture for FCC website. Stephanie volun-told Melinda to do it.
- Greg with Crowley: not scheduling any new tank work or products at the facility. Flint Hills refinery shutting down has opened some opportunities for others. The government is changing from GP8 to jet fuel. The additives will be put in at the Crowley location here. There will also be some upgrades to the storm drains.