

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes

7 PM Monday, January 12, 2015

Rogers Park Elementary School Library

Board Members Attending:

Travis Smith, Vice President¹
Jim Wright, Secretary
Janet Bidwell, Past President
Bob Churchill, FCC representative

I. Welcome.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Members were asked to sign in to establish a quorum. A quorum was present, as 24 members were present at the outset.

II. Community Council Business.

a. Minutes: December 2014.

Bob Churchill moved to approve the December 8, 2014 Minutes. Marilyn Pillifant seconded. The December 2014 Minutes were approved as submitted.

b. Cheryl Forrest Remembrance.

Cheryl Forrest, RPCC Treasurer, passed on January 5, 2015. Iris, Travis, Jim and Bob attended her memorial service. Bob Churchill spoke to the group as follows. Cheryl passed away at Providence Hospital surrounded by her family.

She was employed by RuralCAP Head Start for over 25 years. In this position she traveled to many communities in Alaska off the road system. She enjoyed the time she spent in those communities and loved the people she met. She had many friends across Alaska. Some of her fondest memories were about the people she met in those communities and the deep friendships she had.

Cheryl was an exemplary community member, serving on boards and otherwise volunteering to help out. She was never too busy to help in any way she could contribute. She served as the board chair for the Program for Infants and Children in Anchorage. This group serves children up to the age of 3. Her contributions to this organization will be missed.

¹ Iris Matthews, President, was an excused absence, Travis Smith presiding.

Cheryl and her husband Charles E. Forrest had many happy years together sharing ministerial duties at their church. Cheryl was an important part of her church community, encouraging the youth group, starting a women's prayer group, visiting the ill and providing comfort to those grieving.

Cheryl came to Alaska when she was 23 for a teaching job in Tyonek. She saw an advertisement for this job in her local newspaper in Ohio. She thought that AK stood for Arkansas and felt that wouldn't take her too far from home. Although her family missed her, they quickly realized that Cheryl had found a new home.

Her sister, Jane, shared many stories about what an adventurous and fun person she was growing up on a dairy farm.

Those of us from the RPCC who worked most closely with her appreciated her willing to work hard, contribute to the effort to make this the best community council it could be and while doing so add humor to almost any situation.

III. Assembly Report.

Assembly Member Elvi Gray-Jackson presented, as follows:

- The Assembly reorganized with Mr. Traini elected Chair and Ms. Gray-Jackson, Vice Chair.
- At the December 16th Assembly meeting, the Public Hearing on AO 2014-148 prohibiting the operation of cultivating, manufacturing and testing marijuana facilities was heard. There were 67 persons who testified with nine supporting the ordinance, and 58 in opposition. The ordinance failed 9-2.
- Chairman Traini established a committee on Regulation and Taxation of marijuana chaired by Assembly Member Hall. Members include Amy Demboski, Paul Honeman and Pete Petersen. The Committee will develop and recommend new Municipal Code to the Anchorage Assembly regulating and authorizing taxation of the cultivation, manufacture, and commercial sale of marijuana within the Municipality of Anchorage.
- At the January 13th meeting, the Assembly will approve the annual resolution recognizing January 19th as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service encouraging volunteerism and community service projects.
- A public hearing will be held at the January 19th meeting on an ordinance requiring the display of the USDA food guide icon in all food service facilities located on property under the control or ownership of the Municipal of Anchorage. This is an effort to reach goals within the Let's Move! Program.

Next Assembly Meeting: January 13, 2015

Assembly Member Dick Traini explained that the January 13th meeting is expected to end early in the evening. The voters decided that marijuana is to be regulated like alcohol, and so we'll try to apply the same penalties. There will be a hearing in two weeks on that.

Bob Churchill asked about the status of the Uber ride-sharing issue, as there has been controversy over whether it should be governed by the taxi regulations. Dick will discuss this with City Manager George Vakalis and get back to us.

Bob Churchill went on to thank Dick for his work on the towing ordinance. Dick advises that it appears to be working well but subject to some resistance or displeasure by some towing companies.

Janet Bidwell asked how medical marijuana will be treated, as it is not like alcohol. Dick assured her that MOA will not tax medical marijuana. It is different. MOA is sending folks to Denver for an upcoming conference regarding that issue. He will update the group later, after the Assembly has had a chance to consider what they learn there.

IV. Legislative Reports.

Noah spoke for **Sen. Berta Gardner**, as she is on her way to Juneau for the session. She looks forward to working with Governor Walker. Her focus is on the budget, trimming mega-projects while attempting to maintain spending on education.

Bob Churchill noted that Berta and Bert Stedman both favor amending the oil tax structure to raise the low end of the tax spectrum from the current 4% floor to 15%. He also asked whether the future of the U-Med expansion will be part of the focus. Noah indicated it may well be.

Bob Williams asked whether the Legislature would finally drive a stake through the heart of KABATA (Knik Arm Bridge And Toll Authority). Noah said that events seem to be moving in that direction.

Travis indicated that **Rep. Andy Josephson** and **Rep. Harriet Drummond** are getting set up in Juneau and are unable to attend. They will more to tell us after the session is underway.

V. Presentations and Discussions.

APD's Electronic Crime Monitoring And Notification Websites/Databases. Jennifer Castro of the Anchorage Police Department addressed the electronic crime monitoring and notification websites/databases available for community use. Nixle is an e-mail and text alert system to advise subscribers about crime activity and other police response data. Examples include road closures, shootings, etc. Users get the information at the same

time as it becomes available to the media. APD also has Facebook and Twitter pages for those who use these functions.

Another tool is found at www.raidsonline.com. It provides a map of crime incidents, available on line and as an app for your phone. It is based on responses by APD. The user can look at the map and see where clusters of crime activity have occurred within the selected time frame. Privacy is protected in that addresses, personal data and victim identities are not disclosed. It provides crime density maps and you can sign up for e-mail alerts. The user can choose among various filters/buffers – e.g., daily, weekly or monthly statistics, as well as the chosen area. The user can, for example, ask for crime within a 2 mile radius. Or there are layers for community council districts or political districts. In the RPCC area crime tends to concentrate around Fred Meyers, the neighborhoods themselves being fairly quiet. In the Airport Heights area there is a more diffuse spread of responses, probably reflecting domestic assault callouts. These were given as examples of what can be learned on the website. Such data can be used to track trends in criminal activity and motor vehicle accidents, DUIs, etc. For a time there were many DUIs in midtown, but they seem recently be clustered downtown. The user can tell the types of crimes from the information provided. It is updated every 24 hours.

Users can also provide input via the site if you have information that might assist in the investigation of a crime or accident or incident. Information can be provided anonymously if you prefer.

Julie Bieler spoke about her experience reporting criminal activity on her street. Kids were going through cars in the night or pre-dawn hours. She notified police. Police questioned the kids who said they were delivering papers, but they were not the paper carriers for the neighborhood. Police nevertheless released them and Officer Fletcher reported incorrectly that they were paper carriers. This was upsetting, so she reported it to the Anchorage Daily News (or Dispatch). Jennifer responded that she should not let a frustrating event keep her from reporting to APD. And when a misstep occurs, she recommends reporting it up the chain of command, so that corrective action can occur. She recommends neighborhood networking, and using cameras for evidence. Work with APD and do not drop out of participation.

If a crime is in progress, call dispatch at 786-8900 extension 0 to go straight to an operator. Raids On-Line is better for contributing information after the fact – i.e., after the crime is no longer in progress.

Nixle is accessed by 888+777+zipcode.

One member related that she encountered a woman emerging from bushes near Woodside East, which was of course suspicious. Later the same woman was discovered trying doors in College Village. Jennifer said “Trust the gut” – if it seems suspicious, call.

Bob Churchill suggested people remember that their cell phones often have camera functions and it helps to get photographic evidence. He was informed of a study

indicating that stolen goods are often fenced within 30 minutes, so immediacy is important. Jennifer noted that there is rising heroin use, and therefore rising crime (thefts) driven by the need to get a fix. Heroin users will desperately seek opportunities, targeting cars and their contents. Keep proofs of valuables, so that you can establish that stolen goods are yours. Photos and serial numbers are good. Pawn shops are monitored for stolen goods. Cash America is good working with APD, providing serial numbers of goods brought in, and has security cameras recording those who bring items in, which helps identify wrongdoers.

Jennifer also spoke about evolving marijuana issues, noting Colorado's experience. Concentrated forms of THC, as in candies or food items, can pose greater dangers. Overuse of THC can be harmful. There are serving size and packaging concerns. If a package labels the dose per serving, but contains ten servings and one eats it all, this can cause serious health issues.

Currently 3-4 DUIs per week are based on marijuana use. There are different problems of proof in such cases. The poor driver blows 00 for breath alcohol, but fails field sobriety tests. Tests for THC are problematic as it lingers in the system much longer than alcohol.

Children are a big concern. E-cigarettes and inhalers have been used to ingest pot. Vapor only is harder to detect.

Bob Churchill noted the benefits of www.raidsonline.com while traveling. He would want to know if a hotel or B&B is in a high crime area. Jennifer agreed, if local law enforcement uses this service, as many do.

Chugach Access Plan. Helen Nienhueser presented this issue to the group. The author of *55 Ways To The Wilderness* explained that ~~when~~^{since} she first started hiking the Chugach Mountains access was not a problem. That has been changing. We have been losing access to the Chugach State Park and have been doing so for a long time. The access points are fewer and more crowded, in no small part due to property development growing to and around the boundaries of the park. ~~The issue has been an area of focus for about five years-state DNR developed an access plan five years ago and the plan~~ has gone to the Assembly in the past year. Access points have been identified. Planning and Zoning studied the issue for about two years, then sent it to the Assembly.

Controversy exists because the Assembly was asked to adopt the state plan, established in 2010. The state plan identified potential access points, and set forth a process to address access if an owner plans to subdivide.

Two competing ordinances were proposed at the Assembly level, one sponsored by Jennifer Johnston and one sponsored by Bill Starr. Planning and Zoning seeks input from the community councils before recommending a course. Johnston's proposed ordinance would require platting to consider the state Chugach Access Plan but not be bound by it.

Instead, a series of factors to consider are set forth. It provides for a public hearing and a fair balance of property rights vs. public interest in access to the park.

The ordinance proposed by Bill Starr is a more rigid and, Helen feels, designed to kill it. This proposal starts from the assumption that owners want to block access. It provides for no right of appeal if access approval is denied. [STUDY BILL OR GET COPY OF HELEN'S NOTES. I COULD NOT FOLLOW THIS PART] In addition, requiring access at the time of subdivision of a specific parcel would require multiple approvals from state and borough officials in addition to that of the Platting board.

Bob Williams asked who is the driving force to deny access? Helen said her impression is that it is Bill Starr, because his constituents are concerned about the red dots in the state plan, many of which are in the Eagle River and Chugiak areas. She noted that Dick Traini supports Starr's version. (Mr. Traini had already left the meeting and so was unavailable to address his perception of the controversy.)

Janet Bidwell asked if the process was only triggered by a sale? Helen said it is not triggered by a sale. It is triggered by subdivision.

Helen moved to adopt a draft resolution she presented, as follows:

**Draft Rogers Park Community Council Resolution re Chugach Access Plan
1/12/15**

Whereas access to Chugach State Park is important to the quality of life for many current and prospective Anchorage residents;

Whereas existing access points are often overcrowded;

Whereas in some parts of the Municipality of Anchorage there are few official access points and considerable acreage in large parcels that are privately owned and either undeveloped or have limited development;

Whereas it is anticipated that over time many of these large parcels will be subdivided;

Whereas the Alaska Department of Natural Resources has adopted the Chugach Access Plan which identifies needed and feasible access points to Chugach State Park;

Whereas there has been controversy over a request that the Municipality adopt the Chugach Access Plan;

Whereas two ordinances have been introduced in the Anchorage Assembly to address this issue:(AO 2014-140(S)/ PZC 2014-0211/Johnston, Evans and AO

2014-147/PZC 2014-0210/ Starr,Traini,Hall) and referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission;

Whereas the Rogers Park Community Council has reviewed and compared these draft ordinances;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Rogers Park Community Council supports AO 2014-140(S)/PZC 2014-0211 (Johnston/Evans) as a reasonable compromise that does not require that the Municipality adopt the Chugach Access Plan but does require that the Municipality's platting authority consider the Chugach Access Plan in the review of and action on subdivisions at or near the Chugach Park boundary, thus ensuring that the opportunity for access will be considered. The Council recommends that section 21.93.100E (2) of this ordinance be amended to read "The issuance of a land use permit....shall be subject to the permit applicant providing the easement, dedications, and improvement required for a subdivision....*except that dedicated access to Chugach State Park is not required.*"

Further, the Rogers Park Community Council opposes AO 2014-147/PZC 2014-0210 which does require that the Municipality adopt the Chugach Access Plan and requires a process so complex and difficult that official access is unlikely to be created.

Travis seconded the motion, noting that time is imperative due to a Planning Commission meeting in early February.

Jim Wright asked if either ordinance contains any attempt to pre-empt public easements established through court proceedings? Helen did not think so.

Bob Williams called the question, and it was put to a vote, which was 20 yeas, 0 nays, and 3 abstentions, so the resolution passed. Jim Wright asked who it should be distributed to, and the consensus indicated all Assembly members as well as the Planning & Zoning Commission. Elvi noted that this issue will come before the Assembly on March 3rd, later noting that the correct date is in fact March 24th.

VI. Announcements.

Travis Smith noted that the Park Foundation's neighborhood park grades were not yet available as all report cards were not yet in.

Marilyn Pillifant reminded the group of their recent resolution supporting Great Alaska Schools and sustained education funding. She alerted the members that:

a) Great Alaska Schools supporters meet on the third Tuesday of each month from 5-7 p.m. at Kaladi's on Tudor (6901 E. Tudor Road); and

b) February is Visit Our Schools Month. Every Tuesday in February the schools will make tours available to the public. She indicated they would be initiated upon contact with the Principal of the given school.

The meeting was then adjourned.