

# **Rogers Park Community Council Minutes**

## **7 PM Monday, December 8, 2014**

### **Rogers Park Elementary School Library**

#### **Board Members Attending:**

Iris Matthews, President  
Travis Smith, Vice President  
Jim Wright, Secretary  
Cheryl Forrest, Treasurer  
Bob Churchill, FCC representative

#### **I. Welcome.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Members were asked to sign in to establish a quorum. A quorum was present.

#### **II. Community Council Business.**

##### **a. Minutes: November 2014.**

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

Capt. Mike from the Anchorage Fire Department Station No. 4 came to see if we have any questions for him. He invited members to visit the station, but to call ahead.

##### **b. Treasurer's Report.**

The fund balance remains essentially unchanged.

##### **c. The FCC Report.**

RPCC representative to the FCC Bob Churchill reported as follows. The last FCC meeting included a presentation by Superintendent Ed Graff and School Board member Tam Agosti-Gisler. Their focus was the \$22 million surplus issue. These are unexpended funds at this point. The question was how to use this money to improve classroom and student performance. Cuts to administration had been maximized already. If we cut facilities we are at the tipping point economically. It could cost as much as or more than is saved. It is especially hard to recruit special education teachers.

Tam Agosti-Gisler, school board member and RPCC member, spoke up at this point. \$8 million of the surplus was attributable to senior teachers retiring and being replaced by younger teachers at lower compensation. Some of this money exists because we've been

unable to fill positions, particularly SPED (special education) teachers. Viewed in context, \$22 million is the amount of annual inflation measured at 3%. Long ago it was proposed that we fund an Educational Endowment that would've protected our schools from the deteriorating effects of inflation. The Municipality has taxed to the cap or nearly so. Of 53 school districts, only 13 local governments contribute and only 3 tax to the cap.

Bob Churchill continued. The FCC members wanted our community council's resolution supporting schools. Ed Graff got a copy. Others expect to pass such resolutions at their community councils.

Marilyn Pillifant expressed her hope that the Anchorage School Board will go to the Legislature to lobby for a return to a defined contribution approach to retirement for teachers.

Bob continued, noting that at the FCC meeting Bob Ruepke of Muldoon said he wants to see a park and farmers' market next to the Boys & Girls Club. The FCC favors revisiting dog park policies. With Dick Tremaine's resignation as FCC chair, there is a new slate of officers which includes Jeff Landfield (Taku-Campbell) as chair and Bonnie Harris (South Addition) as vice-chair.

Marilyn Pillifant asked if we can get a list of the other community councils who pass a resolution to increase school funding? Bob thought this do-able.

### **III. Assembly Report.**

**Assembly Member Elvi Gray-Jackson** presented, as follows:

- The Mayor's 2015 General Government and Utilities operating and Capital budgets were submitted to the Assembly in October. Highlights of the Mayor's Proposed General Government Budget are as follows:
  - The Administration faced a \$1.8M Budget Shortfall.
  - Majority of Services reduced to cover shortfall were within other services i.e., contracts, travel, supplies and equipment.
  - Total Budget - \$471.4 million.
  - Funds acquired through attrition will allow for two police academies.
  - Positions in both Police and Fire are static.
  - Seven full-time vacant positions eliminated within the following departments: Chief Fiscal Officer, IT, Community Development, and Health and Human Services. One position in the Mayor's Office will be eliminated in July 2015.
  - Seven full-time positions added within the following departments: Employee Relations, Finance, and Public Transit.
  - Senior Center Funding reduced – Anchorage (\$67,207) and Chugiak (\$41,190).

- One full-time position (filled) is eliminated in Parks and Receptions.
- The Assembly held a special meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup> and approved all budgets. Highlights of the approved GGOB budget follow:
  - Senior Center Funding was reinstated.
  - Vacant Senior Planner position was reinstated.
- Assembly proposed several amendments. The Mayor accepted 95% of the proposed amendments. It was one of the most amicable budget processes during the six years of the current Administration. Total budget: \$473.7M – almost \$200,000 under the tax cap.
- Chugach Access Plan (CAP) first public hearing was held on September 9<sup>th</sup> and continued to the meeting of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Forty-eight persons testified – 38 in favor of immediately approving the plan and 10 concerned about property rights. The Assembly held two work sessions. The CAP approval was postponed until the meeting of November 5<sup>th</sup> to allow for the Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board the opportunity to review the Plan as required by Code. The Board requested that the Assembly postpone approving until its concerns are addressed. At the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Assembly approved postponing action on the Plan until the meeting of March 24<sup>th</sup>. At the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Assembly heard AO 2014-147, an ordinance providing for implementation of the Chugach Access Plan through Title 21 changes submitted by Mr. Starr and Mr. Traini. The ordinance was forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Public Hearing will be continued at the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Evans had an ordinance also revising Title 21 regarding the Chugach Access Plan – AO 2014-140 - and the Public Hearing was continued to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- At the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the Assembly heard an ordinance submitted by Assembly Members Demboski and Evans to elect to allow permanent registration of certain motor vehicles and trailers within the Municipality for vehicles eight years or older. The cost would have been \$6M in additional property taxes or a reduction in services. The Assembly approved allowing only trailers at a cost of \$210,000.
- The Let's Move! Program is moving along well. Anchorage has received all three medals (Bronze, Silver and Gold) within three of the five Goals. Mr. Traini and Ms. Gray-Jackson will introduce an ordinance at the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting to provide for display of the USDA Food Guide in all food service facilities located on property under control or ownership of the Municipality.

Next Assembly Meeting: December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Assembly Member Dick Traini** added that he and Elvi proposed an Ordinance to make charter schools tax exempt. We don't tax public schools so we ought to not tax these other schools, he said.

He added that he's interested in turning the old fire station at Lake Otis and Campbell Creek into a park and/or parking space there, to complement the playground across the street.

Bob Churchill offered thanks to Dick for never missing a meeting of the FCC or of the RPCC. Dick noted that the Mayor's office now has a staffer attend community council meetings and that this is in the budget now, so we'd like to get her reports.

Jim Richardson expressed thanks for attention to parks and parking space and recognizing the desirability of these places.

Another member asked for attention to protecting the Coastal Trail and Goose Lake, saying there has been a chipping away of greenbelt in these areas. The moose get crankier, charging people. Dick noted that UAA has been slowly building up to Goose Lake.

#### **IV. Legislative Reports.**

**Sen. Berta Gardner** was unavailable due to travel, but Noah from her office noted that the legislative session starts January 20<sup>th</sup>, and asked us all to watch for her newsletter (Berta's Briefing) on the first week of the session.

**Rep. Andy Josephson** was also unavailable. John from his office spoke, indicating that most pertinent news was addressed at the last meeting. Andy now has a seat on the Labor & Commerce Committee, and is an alternate on the Legislative Budget & Audit and Legislative Ethics committees. Chris Tuck will be the primary Ethics member.

Bob Churchill noted certain efforts by Ray Metcalf (an FCC delegate and former legislator) regarding ethics proposals. Bob highly recommended to the membership a movie titled *The Empty Chair*, addressing the Japanese-American evacuation from Alaska to Idaho.

**Rep. Harriet Drummond** was not in attendance on this occasion.

#### **V. Presentations and Discussions.**

Jennifer Castro of the Anchorage Police Department was scheduled to speak on the electronic crime monitoring and notification websites/databases available for community use. Unfortunately she was unable to attend this meeting due to illness. President Iris Matthews expressed the intent to reschedule for a future meeting.

Elvi reminded the members that Nixle is accessed by 888-777+zipcode, and recommends that we all give it a try.

## **VI. Announcements.**

All members are encouraged to sign up for The Next Door social media site. The boundaries have been changed to merge Rogers Park and College Village (previously set up for Rogers Park only).

Elvi Gray-Jackson asked what is Next Door? Tam explained that it is a sort of “neighborhood crier” function – a social media website and application. See [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).

Marilyn Pillifant noted there was much chatter about the 36<sup>th</sup> and New Seward intersection project and its foreseeable impact on LaTouche. Iris noted that it is still at the 10% design phase with two key issues noted by us in recent developments: 1) northbound access from 36<sup>th</sup>, which we seem to now have as part of the plan; and 2) the noise reduction issue. Tam noted that there would only be northbound access from 36<sup>th</sup> if one is traveling westbound. Dave Evans asked if we can have ongoing RPCC involvement in the process. Bob Churchill, who has been working on the issue, said we can apparently have ongoing involvement so long as we initiate the process. Otherwise they’re likely to overlook our input.

Marilyn Houser said the LaTouche issue is big. It includes impacts on the Stephens Apartments and the school crossing near there. Ann Lorber noted that Berta Gardner said the 36<sup>th</sup> project is unlikely to be funded this session. Iris said she’d be sure to get the project website into the Minutes. See [sewardand36th.com](http://sewardand36th.com). Marilyn Pillifant said this would calm some nerves among Next Door subscribers.

Iris invited members to suggest topics or issues for future meetings. Marilyn Houser said she would like there to be discussion of Dept of Parks and Recreation’s plan to use Round Up herbicide to control bird cherry trees on Muni park land. The Anchorage Park Foundation, working for Parks and Rec, was planning to use the herbicide in August 2014 but the project was put on hold for public education and input. Had the Muni or park foundation been in touch to get on the agenda? Iris said there had not been any contact yet.

Jim Richardson responded by asking what MOA is doing about homeless camps? They seem to be flourishing. Marilyn Houser concurred with this concern. There is a camp near her home on Ingra. Elvi recommends they contact APD Sgt. Gillian or Sgt. Ryan.

Dave Evans would like to see project representatives provide us with a U-Med District Northern Access update. See [umednorthernaccess.com](http://umednorthernaccess.com), and [dowlhkm.com/projects/northernaccess/index.html](http://dowlhkm.com/projects/northernaccess/index.html).

The meeting was then adjourned.

