

# **Rogers Park Community Council Minutes**

## **7 PM Monday, March 9, 2015**

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

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

Iris Matthews, President  
Travis Smith, Vice-President (absent)  
Jim Wright, Secretary  
Treasurer (vacant)  
Janet Bidwell, Past President  
Bob Churchill, FCC representative

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Members were asked to sign in to establish a quorum. A quorum was present, as 15 members were present at the outset.

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

##### **A and B. Minutes: December 2014 (amendment) and January 2015.**

Bob Churchill moved to approve the amendment of the December 2015 Minutes, as well as the January 12, 2015 Minutes. \_\_\_\_\_ seconded. The January 2015 Minutes were approved as submitted, and the December 2014 Minutes as amended.

##### **C. FCC Report.**

Bob Churchill presented the FCC report, summarized as follows. Assembly member Dick Traini presented how marijuana would be treated like alcohol in accordance with the recent initiative. He favors tax revenues going to the municipality rather than to the state.

Natasha Welsh did a presentation regarding APD concerns about firearm related crime, which is increasing. Police academies are planned. APD's emphasis is on street handling before crime escalates. This requires more police on the streets.

Alaska Regional Hospital is competing with Providence Hospital for a certificate of need for more capacity. Fourteen more beds are needed. Jim Wright inquired whether this competition is due to government funding? Bob Churchill explained that it is rather due to regulatory oversight requirements. Alaska Regional would meet the need on decentralized basis, via beds in Eagle River and South Anchorage. Providence would meet the need centrally.

Iris inquired about the FCC's fiscal status. Bob explained that at present the FCC is funded and operating within budget.

### **III. Assembly Reports.**

There were no Assembly reports. Assembly Member Dick Traini was on his way to Juneau to deliver a resolution favoring Medicare expansion. Assembly Member Elvi Gray-Jackson is in Washington, D.C.

Jim Richardson noted that Dick Traini had previously said there would be a proposed alcohol tax to deal with downtown crime issues. That proposal seems to have disappeared, and he wondered why. Marilyn Hauser said it had been voted down. Another member indicated that the vote was close: 6 to 5. Marilyn noted that the Assembly had also voted down enforcement of the leash laws by 6-5, and that such issues could be and perhaps should be brought up again.

Jim Richardson noted that APD seemed reluctant to respond to reports of crime late at night and early in the morning. Others agreed. Bob Churchill said he would raise the issue at FCC regarding; 1) crime prevention and enforcement; and 2) revenue sources.

Ann Lorber noted that there had been a proposal to move the transit center from downtown to midtown motivated by the desire to alleviate crime downtown. Bob Churchill noted that this appears to be a different crime source. Downtown concerns were focused on chronic inebriates.

Iris asked for a voice vote whether the group agreed Bob Churchill should present to the FCC concerns regarding crime prevention and enforcement, and revenue sources. There were no objections and some expressions of support.

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

All legislators being in Juneau, there were initially no legislators present to report at this meeting. A staffer for Rep. Andy Josephson called in later. See below.

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

**a. AWWU Repairs to Tudor & Elmore Road**, presented by Julie Jessen, HDR. Ms. Jessen explained that AWWU will be performing repairs to the Tudor and Elmore intersection. A 30 inch water main broke there in November which requires more than a quick patch. This stopped the flow to APD headquarters. It will cause temporary land disruptions, mostly during weekends. There is low demand in winter but increased demand in spring. This is a roughly one month job that must be done in April or users will have to voluntarily reduce use. Watch for detour notices in media, mail, etc., in the area of Tudor, Elmore and the Martin Luther King bypass route serving Boniface to Elmore. Diane Evans asked whether bike and pedestrian access will continue? Yes. A map of the disrupted areas was passed around.

**b. Potential Privatization of Solid Waste Services**, presented by Iris Matthews. Iris explained that the mayor has a plan to potentially privatize SWS – the collection part, not operation of the landfill. She noted the potential impact on alley services. Jim Wright inquired why? What is the purpose of privatizing SWS collection services? Ann Lorber said it has been described as a fiscal concern. Marilyn Hauser said it was part of the election cycle. Bob Churchill said he is very concerned about this. Jim Richardson was reminded of the Tom Fink administration, which gave rise to concerns about contracts to cronies, and corruption. Iris reported that there is a public hearing on April 28. Those concerned should attend. Bob Churchill, Diane Evans and Claire \_\_\_\_\_ volunteered to take part in a committee to look into the issue.

Mayoral candidate Ethan Berkowitz was present and addressed the issue. He characterized the issue as involving “kleptocrats risk.” He agreed with Jim Richardson’s comments about the risk of corruption. If elected mayor he would not be inclined to support this move.

## **VI. Other Business & Announcements.**

**a. Proposed Resolution re: Invasive Plant Removal with Herbicides**, presented by Marilyn Hauser. Marilyn proposed a resolution against the use of certain herbicides to eradicate bird cherry trees. She researched the negative effects of the products to be used. The negative effects are as set forth in the resolution. Invasive species in the Anchorage Bowl include Elodea, Shasta daisies, etc. The concern includes the use of different herbicides to address each, and their interactions and cumulative effects. Marilyn favors manual eradication rather than chemical treatment. Bob Churchill moved to adopt. The motion was seconded by Dave Evans.

Iris invited Tim Stallard of MOA to speak to the issue. Tim said herbicides have risks but they are relatively small and short term compared to the risks of invasive species crowding out native species. One member noted that: 1) these herbicides cannot be used on private properties; and 2) inquired what notice would go out to advise the public and in what languages, noting that ethnic groups gather plants and mushrooms, so they should be made aware of the risks. Tim said the Municipal Code only requires English. Ann Lorber asked whether such trees (bird cherry) are for sale in the Anchorage Bowl? Tim acknowledged that they are for sale here. Ann opined that it seems premature to do herbicides if the Municipality is still allowing businesses to sell the same species. Ann said her brief research suggested this herbicide is dangerous to dogs and that its residual presence extends for about 2 years. She feels public education is needed before using herbicides. Tim agreed that outlawing sales is a good idea. The municipality used to use these plants in landscaping, but about 10-15 years ago stopped. He said its encroachment would get worse if not managed now. He said Marilyn Hauser’s information is of questionable reliability, by those with an agenda against herbicides generally. Marilyn responded that the same is true of the Dow research relied on by the municipality – it has an agenda to promote herbicides. Tim said Dow’s research is peer reviewed. Marilyn encourages manual removal by volunteers rather than chemical eradication. Dave Evans

asked whether manual eradication efforts have been successful? Tim said they are if caught early. Jim Wright asked who sells the bird cherry? Lowe's, Home Depot, and Dimond Greenhouse all sell it. Tim said Northeast Community Council passed a resolution to ban sales in the Anchorage Bowl. Marilyn said she didn't include such language, but it could be added to her draft resolution.

Bob Churchill as maker of the motion proposing the resolution accepted the proposed amendment and Dave Evans (second) concurred. The following resolution was put to a vote:

**Whereas** the European bird cherry tree (*prunus padus*) was a popular landscaping tree for many years on private property in Anchorage neighborhoods and in Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) plantings as the tree grows quickly, has early-blooming, fragrant flowers and produces berries attractive to Bohemian Waxwings, American Robins and other birds, and

**Whereas** *prunus padus* has quickly spread, due in part to the berries being an avian food source, and has been studied and identified as an invasive species since at least 2007, with the riparian zones of Chester Creek and Campbell Creek having the highest density of these trees in Anchorage, and

**Whereas** the Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) in conjunction with MOA Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has engaged in *prunus padus* control efforts that have included public education, elimination of the availability of tree stock, and yearly manual removal of trees, and

**Whereas** APF with DPR is proposing use of herbicide Garlon 4 Ultra in spring/summer 2015 for *prunus padus* eradication along Chester Creek from Seward Highway to Maplewood Street to coincide with the closure of the Chester Creek trail for scheduled trail renovations, and

**Whereas** Garlon 4 Ultra, manufactured by Dow AgroSciences, is toxic to fish, is mobile in permeable soils thereby a possible contamination hazard to groundwater, and has documented negative effects on frogs, beneficial insects and spiders, small mammals, and non-target plants including mosses, lichens, and beneficial mycorrhizal fungi,

**Now therefore, be it resolved** that Rogers Park Community Council supports ongoing public education and ongoing manual control of *prunus padus* along Chester Creek but is opposed to the use of herbicide on public municipal park land due to the inherent risks and unlikely success of eradication efforts. Furthermore, RPCC encourages manual removal of *prunus padus* in outlier areas where it has begun to appear.

RPCC further supports a ban on the sale of European bird cherry (*prunus padus*) in the Municipality of Anchorage.

The vote was 13 yeas, 0 nays, and 2 abstentions. The resolution passed.

**b. Proposed Resolution re: Northern Access Road into U-Med**, presented by Diana Evans as spokesperson for Citizens for Responsible Development. She said her group has been tracking this issue, which has been of considerable interest to RPCC in the past. They ask that money appropriated for the access road be pulled due to Alaska's present fiscal crisis and because it is not needed nor favored by the community councils most directly affected. There are also safety concerns. Bob Churchill moved to adopt. Marilyn Hauser seconded the motion, whereupon the following resolution was put to a vote:

A RESOLUTION OF THE ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RPCC) REQUESTING THAT FUNDS FOR THE NORTHERN ACCESS ROAD INTO THE U-MED DISTRICT BE WITHDRAWN FOR COLLATERAL, FISCAL, AND SAFETY IMPACTS.

**WHEREAS**, should a Northern Access Road project into the U-Med district be developed, it will extend Bragaw Street south at Northern Lights Boulevard to connect with Elmore Road,

**WHEREAS**, should a Northern Access Road project into the U-Med district be developed, the project's 2011 traffic study predicts significant traffic along the section of Bragaw between the Glenn Highway and the U-Med District (both to access U-Med and using the North Access Road to cut through the District),

**WHEREAS**, according to the AMATS LRTP, the Bragaw Street and Northern Lights Boulevard intersection was over capacity as of 2002, and the Bragaw Street and DeBarr Road intersection was at capacity as of 2002,

**WHEREAS**, this corridor was not planned as a major thoroughway, so there is no remaining right-of-way (ROW) available to expand Bragaw without using eminent domain to acquire ROW,

**WHEREAS**, the value of properties along the Bragaw corridor (>\$50 million) will make any road project both extremely expensive and also remove significant property value from the Municipality's revenue stream,

**WHEREAS**, the project had a low priority on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan when funded, and U-Med peak congestion has already been significantly improved by the UAA Drive/ Northern Lights intersection improvements constructed in 2014,

**WHEREAS**, additionally, the increased traffic along Bragaw has caused significant concern to the Airport Heights Community Council for safety of area

students (East High, Russian Jack Elementary, and Alaska Native Cultural Charter Schools) who need to cross Bragaw Street to reach their schools,

**WHEREAS**, a letter from Page & Turnbull (the consulting company hired to assist in the 2015 U-Med District Plan) states that high percentage of public input they received was related to the Northern Access road and “overwhelmingly those who participated at their public meetings were against the road and those that were not were resigned that it was going to happen whether they wanted it or not,”

**WHEREAS**, \$20 million from the State of Alaska plus \$15 million in donated Right-of-Way land from the University equaling \$35 million for 7/10 of a mile of road is fiscally irresponsible, and proposed facilities originally promised in exchange for University-donated land (including roundabouts, a 10’ separated trail and 2 pedestrian overpasses for trail connection) are not supported by project budget (Transportation Fair presentation 2/4/2015),

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the RPCC requests that funding be withdrawn for this project, since the project need is currently not critical or desired, the project creates safety hazards and significant burden on the fiscally-constrained State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage taxpayers.

The vote was 15 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

**Legislative Reports (Continued).** John \_\_\_\_\_, on the staff of Representative Andy Josephson, called in from Juneau to report as follows. There will soon be a hearing on HB 14, a proposed ban on the use of “micro-beads” in cosmetics. The concern is that these “micro-beads” get past the treatment plants and are picked up by birds, animals and fish. These plastics absorb toxins and carry them to the consuming wildlife. Also, the state’s operating budget will come to the floor this week. Iris advised John of the two resolutions just passed: 1) against herbicides to eradicate bird cherry; and 2) to remove funding of the U-Med road. John noted that there is already some talk of clawing back that money.

## **VII. Announcements.**

- a. **The Rogers Park Elementary School 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** will be on March 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00.
- b. **The Mayoral Forum** is coming up soon, so watch for that.
- c. **The annual RPCC elections** are coming up, and a new treasurer is needed. Elections are in May. Peter Mjos is the nominating committee chair, so anyone interested in serving should contact Pete.

The meeting was then adjourned.