

NECC

Northeast Community Council

Agenda January 19, 2006

Held at North East Community Center Located in Southwest Corner of the Muldoon Mall

Call to order: President Bob Roses, 7:09 PM

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by the Color Guard from Troop 215, based at Parkside Church

Approval: Previous minutes from Nov. 17, 2005: Approved unanimously.

Approval: Agenda: Agenda approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: \$528.76 (given to Executive Board by email). \$13.68 due to Peggy Robinson for copies for the meeting.

Executive Board Report: Bill Wielechowski gave the report. The Board met on January 5 and set the agenda. No action was taken.

President's Report: The Emergency Management Operations Center will have a special joint meeting with all the community councils on February 9 from 7-9 at the Center, 1305 E Street (next to Central Middle School). They want to share information about emergency response plans with members of community councils. All are invited.

Representatives Reports:

Senator Gretchen Guess (teleconferenced):

- ? The Senate passed the methamphetamine and marijuana bill and will go to the House next week.
- ? She is working on 3 bills: juvenile vandalism, sexual assault with a minor, and identity theft

Representative Tom Anderson: Given by aide Eugene Harnett

- ? He distributed budget request forms provided by Senator Lisa Murkowski's office
- ? Representative Anderson is working on funding for Opti-coms for traffic lights that will allow emergency vehicles to control them
- ? He is also working on a bill to support a sports dome that will be built next to the defunct Seafood Plant.

Assemblyman Ken Stout

- ? He briefly discussed the major ordinances on the agenda for next Tuesday: Assisted Living Regulations, Cyclotron, and large animals.
- ? There will also be discussion on a proposed sales tax.

No other elected officials or their representatives were present to give reports.

Community Activities Reports:

- ? **Community Patrols Northeast & Nunaka;** Aaron Pascar of Nunaka Valley Patrol requested volunteers to assist in the patrolling. 223-4630. Or call Michelle Daugherty for Northeast Patrol, 748-7800.
- ? **NE Community Center:** Bob Reupke reported that they received a \$131,000 grant from the Assembly.
- ? **Federation of Community Council:** Bob Reupke encouraged people to look at the "My Neighborhood" section on the MOA's website for information about their neighborhood. The sign ordinance revisions will be at Planning and Zoning on Feb. 13. Dates for the hearings on the Title 21 rewrite were distributed. Four potential MOA bonds and the 2006 Legislative Program were discussed at the meeting on January 18.

- ? **Road Construction Updates:** Bill Coghill with Dowl Engineers provided updates on the projects at Muldoon and 16th, Creekside (extension) at Debarr, and Debarr between Patterson and Muldoon. They are forming a NECC Traffic Calming Study Team and need four (4) volunteers. The first meeting is February 23. Contact Bob Roses by February 1 if you are interested.
- ? **ASD:** Peggy Robinson reported as a community representative to the 1% for the Art Selection Jury for the new Muldoon area middle school. They have selected pieces for the interior of the building and are planning on a public hearing before the February NECC meeting. They were not satisfied with the exterior proposals and are going back out for proposals. These are for the large wall on the front of the building facing east and a 3dimensional piece at the west student/bus entrance to the building.
- ? **No other community activities reports were presented**

Business

(1) Eastview Estates Development. Harvey Prickett w/ Dean Architects

- ? Not present

(2) Teri Peters, Northeast Park District Manager

- ? Her office is at the Dr. Lidia Selkregg Chalet (Russian Jack Park) and covers north to Mt. View and all of East Anchorage
- ? They have increased their programs offered at the chalet, especially for teens and seniors
- ? They are accepting suggestions for parks for their Clean & Green, and Safe & Secure Programs
- ? They also want advisory board members for the NE Park District
- ? The Anchorage Park Foundation has a Challenge Grant Campaign with the Rasmuson Foundation for park improvements. They will match 50/50, with volunteer and in-kind donations counting toward the match. A meeting will be held at the Chalet on February 7 from 6-7 to explain the program.

(3) Muldoon Road Improvements 20th to 36th Ave. Anne Brooks and Art Johnson, USKH.

- ? They have federal highway funding specially for safety improvements on roads where they believe they can reduce the number of crashes.
- ? A public meeting will be held in about 1.5 months, but are presenting to NECC and Scenic Foothills Community Council now to give preliminary information.
- ? A handout with photos and descriptions of projects was distributed. There will be 2 new traffic signals on Muldoon, at 32nd and at Halligan. Some left turns will be restricted. 2 right turn lanes will be constructed. The speed limit north of 36th will be reduced to either 40 or 45 mph.
- ? Plans are to complete the construction this coming summer.

(4) NECC Capital Improvement Plan (Note 2005 Plan is on FCC website, see below)

- ? Ainslie Phillips announced it will be on the February 16 NECC agenda for action. Contact her at ains@ak.net for questions or comments.

(5) Billik Inn Package Store and Dispensary License Renewals

- ? No one representing the Billik Inn or the new purchasers were present. Brown Jug is purchasing the package store license and Dan Sullivan is purchasing the dispensary license. Both are proposing moving the licenses out of the NECC area.
- ? It was explained that the licenses needed to be current before they can be transferred to the new owners. They expire soon.

- ? Motion by Ainslie Phillips: "The North East Community Council supports the renewal of the two liquor licenses held at the Billik Inn Bar and Package Store, providing they are sold and removed from the North East Community Council area."
- ? Motion passed with the vote: 23 in favor, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.

(6) Valley Street Park Plan

- ? Lori Johnson was not present and did not come later in the meeting

(7) Northeast Creekside Town Center

- ? Tim Potter of Dowl Engineers, representing presented a brief history and update of the Town Center plan. This has been worked on for about six years between NECC and Venture Development.
- ? A financial institution and restaurant are interested in buying land at Muldoon and the new Creekside Road extension
- ? The furthest south property is being planned for a higher quality 60 unit development, using special grants and tax credits
- ? Their subdivision application allows the smaller parcels of land to match the outline of the master plan. They are working on planned businesses and at least 100 resident units.
- ? Every project has to come through a public hearing and site plan review, giving the NECC future opportunity to comment on the specifics of the proposal.
- ? Bob Peterson will be the builder of the homes; all will be considered "affordable", but the percentage of different types of homes is not yet decided
- ? This will be presented at the Planning and Zoning meeting on February 6; Comments are due January 27.
- ? After a presentation and discussion of the proposed Tract 1 and Tract 2A Development & Design Guidelines, Ainslie Phillips moved: "The North East Community Council supports the Town Center Development and Design Guidelines as presented, with stipulations that the specific design standards and details be reviewed and approved at a later date with the Design Review Board."
- ? Motion passed with the vote: 26 in favor, 0 against, and 4 abstentions

(8) Wal-Mart Development – Application for Rezoning

1. Jim Sawhill of Lounsbury and Associates presented a Draft Ordinance for rezoning Jack Miller's former property for the development of a Wal-Mart Superstore and Sam's Club. He reviewed the status to date and the steps they have taken with the NECC to get the design to this point.
2. The rezoning request is to change the property that is I-1, R-2M, and R-3 to B-3SL (37 acres) and PLI (1.62 acres). It includes a list of most of the Prohibited Uses and Structures that the NECC had identified in the Creekside Town Center Plan.
3. They have identified 1.612 acres along Muldoon Road north of Fred Meyers as the location of a new fire station.
4. If the R-2M area is not rezoned, either Wal-Mart will build a Sam's Club and sell the rest of the land or give up and sell all the land.
5. After questions and discussion, Rod McCoy made the following motion: "The North East Community Council opposes this (Wal-Mart's) rezoning proposal."
6. The motion passed with the vote: 28 in favor, 0 against, and 4 abstentions.

(9) Wal-Mart Corporate Policies – Postponed motion from November 17, 2005 meeting

? Vanessa Salinas moved to amend the motion by substituting the following motion: "The North East Community Council opposes the efforts of Wal-Mart to build a Superstore and Sam's Club on the north side of Debarr Road between Creekside and Patterson Streets for the following reasons:

5. Numerous Wal-Mart corporate policies that take financial advantage of employees have been successfully challenged in the courts.

- a. As of the printing of their 2005 Annual Report, Wal-Mart faced 44 wage and hour lawsuits. Class-action lawsuits have either been won or are working their way through the legal process in California, Indiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington. [Wal-Mart Annual Report 2005]
- b. A California jury in December awarded 115,919 Wal-Mart current and former employees \$172 million for illegally denied lunch breaks, while Wal-Mart settled a similar Colorado case in 2004 for \$50 million that covered 69,000 employees.
- c. Wal-Mart was recently ordered by courts to pay up to 120 workers in Gallup, New Mexico and 400 workers in 27 stores in Oregon for violating wage and hour laws.
- d. Last May, Wal-Mart agreed to pay an \$11 million civil fine to end a federal probe into the use of illegal immigrants at stores in 21 states, including New Jersey.
- e. The US Labor Department reached the settlement in January 2005 after finding 85 child labor violations at Wal-Mart stores in Connecticut, New Hampshire and Arkansas, involving workers under 18 who operated dangerous machinery, including cardboard balers and chain saws. Wal-Mart settled the investigation by agreeing to pay \$135,540, but it continued to deny any wrongdoing.
- f. An internal memo sent to Wal-Mart's board of directors (as reported on October 26, 2005 in the New York Times) proposes numerous ways to hold down spending on health care and other benefits while seeking to minimize damage to the retailer's reputation. Among the recommendations were hiring more part-time workers and discouraging unhealthy people from working at Wal-Mart.
- g. On January 12, 2006, the Maryland House and Senate overrode the Governor's veto and voted to require all private employers in Maryland with 10,000 or more workers to spend at least 8% of their payroll on healthcare or contribute to the state's Medicaid program. Four Maryland companies employ that many workers; only Wal-Mart is believed to fall short of the 8% threshold.

7. Multiple discrimination class action suits, including one in California and one in Arkansas, accuse the retailer of discrimination against women, minorities, and those with disabilities.

- a. In the largest class-action lawsuit in history, 1.6 million current and former female employees are suing Wal-Mart for gender discrimination. Women comprise 92% of Wal-Mart's cashiers, but only 14% of the store managers. The female store managers earn about \$14,500 less (in 2001) than the male store managers.
- b. Wal-Mart was fined in June 2005, \$188,000 by the California Fair Employment and Housing Commission for refusing to reinstate a woman after she completed her maternity leave.
- c. Wal-Mart's health insurance does not cover birth control. Pregnant women are allowed only one ultrasound.
- d. In Arkansas, a potential class action suit for race discrimination has been filed. Fifteen percent of on-the-road truck drivers in the United States are African-American, but Wal-Mart has from 2-3% among their 7,800 truck drivers.
- e. In 2001, Wal-Mart agreed to pay \$6.8 million to settle 13 lawsuits in 11 states that were filed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, alleging widespread discrimination against people with disabilities. In 2005, EEOC announced they were opening a new investigation to see if Wal-Mart had violated the terms of the 2001 settlement, due to complaints they continued to receive about the stores.

8. Wal-Mart's mission, (from the Wal-Mart web site): "In everything we do, we are driven by a common mission: to improve the quality of life for everyday people and the world," cannot be met in our community at the \$10.77 per hour Wal-Mart average wage for a cashier or sales

associate in Anchorage, who typically works less than 30 hours per week. Nationally, the average pay for a Wal-Mart sales associate is \$14,000 a year.

9. Poor working conditions in the supplier factories have been reported but ignored or covered up, including firing whistleblowers.
 - a. Wal-Mart's global services manager until 2002 was fired after reporting on Honduran factories violating local wage and hour laws, lack of bathrooms and drinking water, and padlocked fire exits. He also reported on falsified reports of factory conditions.
 - b. A *Dateline* segment, which aired June 2005, highlighted a hidden-camera report on the conditions endured by workers in Bangladesh. Workers were forced to work 18-hour days, cheated out of overtime pay, and physically and verbally abused.

Until Wal-Mart resolves the aforementioned issues (including a longstanding opposition to union organizing of Wal-Mart employees) to the satisfaction of this community council, NECC will not support the construction of either a Wal-Mart Superstore or a Sam's Club in its council boundaries."

The question was called and the resolution passed, with 25 voting in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

Neighborhood Concerns: None

Adjournment – 9:56 PM

Other Important Notes and Announcements:

1. Presentations and subjects are timed. Brevity is important. Please wait to be recognized by the Chair.
2. Please sign in when attending meetings. If possible, choose to be notified by E-mail. Send an E-mail to councils@ak.net if you'd like to receive Council information by E-mail.
3. The NECC now has a web page maintained by the Federation of Community Councils. Minutes for the meetings, other NECC documents, and NECC contact information are online on this site at <http://www.communitycouncils.org/Northeast/northeast.html>
4. We are a non-profit organization and receive no funds from the State or Municipality. Our treasurer would be happy to receive your donation.
5. Revised bylaws as approved by the members at the September 15th Meeting are available at the NECC website listed above, and at the meeting.