

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes
7 PM Monday, April 11, 2016
Rogers Park Elementary School Library

Board Members:

Iris Matthews, President
Clare Boersma, Vice-President
Jim Wright, Secretary
Marilyn Pillifant, Treasurer
Bob Churchill, FCC Representative

I. Welcome.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. with Iris Matthews presiding. A quorum was apparent, with 16 members attending from the outset.

II. Community Council Business.

A. Minutes: Minutes from the March 2016 meeting were reviewed. Bob Churchill moved to approve them. Marilyn Pillifant seconded. The Minutes were approved.

B. FCC Report. FCC representative Bob Churchill reported that the FCC is in the process of nominations for new officers. The position of treasurer is open because the prior treasurer is “termed out.” The secretary is willing to step aside if anyone is willing to step up. The vice chair is staying on. The present chair, Bonnie Harris, will remain and in Bob’s estimate is doing a good job. The FCC is seeking more community council representatives to attend its meetings.

The FCC has been asked to take a political stance on issues, but declined to do so. Assembly members Amy Dembowski and Dick Traini spoke, primarily about proposed amendments to Title 21. It was noted that there are limited funds as the community councils are called on to weigh in on the Capital Projects Survey now circulating. The local NAACP seeks FCC and community council support.

Bob Williams asked whether the FCC had addressed megaprojects funding. No, said Bob Churchill, the focus has been on the adequacy of funding for education. There exists a sense of hopelessness as respects the legislature.

Marilyn Pillifant asked whether the proposed Title 21 amendments addressed the subject of cell towers. Bob Churchill said no. Dick Traini said Amy Dembowski’s proposed amendments deal with the building codes, and have met with spirited opposition.

C. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Marilyn Pillifant reports that RPCC funds total ~\$202.

Iris Matthews indicated that we would take the **Merrill Field Master Plan Update** out of order, before the Assembly Reports, due to scheduling issues. See V.a. below. The Legislative Report might also be done out of order, via call-in report from Juneau.

III. Assembly Reports.

Congratulations were offered to Assembly member Elvi Gray-Jackson, who is expected to be the next Assembly chair, succeeding Dick Traini. Elvi affirmed that she and Dick will continue to work closely together. She reported as follows:

- The Mayor has advised the Assembly that the 2015 Fund Balance projection is \$14M.
- There will be one-time expenditures as follows:
 - Vote by Mail;
 - Homelessness;
 - Attorney Fees; and
 - Utilities & Facilities.
- The Mayor's recommendation is to hold in reserve \$11-12M for a combination of:
 - A Property Tax Rebate;
 - Additional measures to secure/enhance bond rating;
 - Potential AK Legislative Bills (PERS, Revenue Sharing);
 - Saving for the Future; and
 - Other.
- The Legislature is hearing a bill that will affect MOA finances:
 - a. SB 210 on Revenue Sharing: will cut \$3.58 million from the \$9.2 million budgeted for in 2016.
- 1st Quarter Budget Revision resolution will be introduced at the April 12th Meeting and the Public Hearing and approval will take place at the April 26th meeting.
 - a. A work session is scheduled for Friday, April 15th at 1:15 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room.
 - b. A work session will be scheduled to review the Assembly's proposed amendments – Date and Time TBD.
- The Mill Levy ordinance will be introduced at the April 12th meeting and the Public Hearing and approval will take place at the April 26th meeting.
 - a. ASD Mill Levy - 6.73
 - b. General Government Mill Levy – 8.16

- c. Total Proposed Mill Levy – 14.89
- d. Taxes on a \$350,000 home - \$5,211.50

Next meeting: April 12th.

April 19th – Certification of Election, Swearing-in elected Assembly Members, and re-organization of the Assembly (required by Code).

Assembly chair Dick Traini also presented, addressing the evolving marijuana ordinances. He expects there to be another code enforcement officer with the marijuana tax, and another fire inspector as well.

Dick noted it will cost if we (MOA) do vote by mail. But it will also cost if we don't. He also noted that Assembly member Jennifer Johnson wanted to do Title 21 amendments without review by planning and zoning. This is likely to be denied. The amendments must go through P&Z.

Marilyn Pillifant asked whether the cell tower issue is scheduled to go before P&Z yet. Dick said not yet. She also asked if the 27th Avenue alley is to be paved, and why that alley seems to have been adopted as a priority. Dick said he didn't know yet.

Jim Richardson thanked Dick for coming regularly to our meetings.

Howard Levine noted that, for those following the cell tower issue, there will be a joint workshop at the Mayor's Conference Room on April 14th, from 11:30-1 p.m., and a P&Z hearing on April 18th at 6:30 p.m. in the Assembly chambers. A draft ordinance on the topic was issued today.

IV. Legislative Report.

All of our representatives are in Juneau, but an aide to Rep. Andy Josephson, Jonathan Church, called in. Presenting via I-phone speaker, he reported that, despite considerable controversy about the expense of the Legislative Information Office (LIO), so far there is money in the capital budget for it. Meanwhile, the budget is being negotiated between the majority and minority. While they hope to be done on Sunday (the end of the session), an extended session is of course foreseeable. Work is also proceeding on SB91, an omnibus crime bill.

Elvi asked about the status of SB210, the revenue sharing bill. Mr. Church advised that it is stuck in Senate Finance.

Jim Richardson asked why megaprojects are still on the table? Mr. Church said that is the case because the funds were previously allocated – i.e., in prior years.

Bob Williams asked how much is set aside for the LIO. Dave Evans asked whether funds were re-appropriated from U-Med to other projects. Mr. Church said that was unlikely, but that the road is not moving forward, so funding is on hold in any event.

Nora Morse of the Mayor's office spoke up, noting that the legislature's pending position on SB 210, the revenue-sharing bill, is expected to result in a \$5 million loss to the city this year. MOA is looking at a \$6.8 million loss of revenue due to the Proposition 8 tax cap. *[Note: it was unclear to the secretary whether Nora meant a \$6.8M loss due solely to Prop. 8, or due to Prop. 8 in conjunction with the loss of revenue-sharing from the State.]* Nora spoke about various programs, including Vision Zero, with its goal to reduce pedestrian deaths, and Gateways for Growth, part of a strategic plan to become more welcoming to incoming groups, that might be cut given the projected loss of revenue. She said that on May 12 a new class will graduate from the police academy, with further academies planned and nearly 900 applicants. The Mayor's push is for 400 officers on staff by the end of the year. To stay up to date she asked the members to subscribe to Mayor Berkowitz' newsletter.

Dave Evans noted multiple RPCC resolutions against the U-Med road project, and asked whether the Mayor also opposed that project. Nora said there is no change in his position - he wishes to use the U-Med funds to instead improve the Port, an older and more vital project that needs further funding.

Elaine Baldwin asked what we can do to keep officers employed by the MOA. Nora responded that the State dropped the defined contributions retirement plan, adversely impacting police benefits. Without a good retirement plan, and then AO37, Mayor Sullivan's position relative to public employee unions, police were in effect driven away. But morale is now increasing with the size of the force. We need to offer increased benefits, including scheduling options and child care services. Elvi noted her impression that the prior mayor didn't care about MOA employees. Dick Traini noted that MOA is now taking state troopers in as lateral hires, because troopers can avoid village service by coming to work for MOA. Marilyn Pillifant noted that the same dynamic is happening with teachers. She asked if APD recruits would be devoted to traffic duty, given what she perceives as heightened danger due to more red light runners. Nora said yes, with growth that would occur. At present staffing levels there are competing priorities. Bob Churchill expressed praise for APD leaders doing recruitment above and beyond.

V. Presentations and Discussions.

A. Merrill Field Master Plan Update. Paul Bauers presented with regard to the Merrill Field master plan. With him were two people from HDR Consultants. The FAA requires a 20 year Master Plan, which serves as a blueprint for development and handling over the next two decades. They do 5, 10 and 20 year reporting as to the Master Plan.

It was said that Merrill Field Airport supports: 600 direct and indirect jobs and \$27 million in direct and indirect employee wages; \$64 million in economic output into the Alaska economy, including \$58 million going into Anchorage; service to more than 20

communities, supporting small off-road communities in Southcentral Alaska; and an average of 3 patient transports per month, with direct access to Alaska Regional Hospital, saving precious time during medical emergencies. Merrill Field also provides pilot training opportunities for Anchorage and substantial tax revenues to MOA through a wide range of small businesses.

Carl _____ of HDR said they are reaching the conclusions stage of the process. They wish to advise of their findings and get community council feedback. A handout was distributed indicating that the 20 year forecast is for medium growth based on the anticipated growth rate within the Municipality (MOA). It assumes take-offs and landings will grow by 0.78% annually through 2035, representing an 18% increase over that 20 year period. The forecast is presented in greater detail in the draft AMP (Airport Master Plan) Chapter 3 – Aviation Demand Forecasts, found at www.merrillfieldmasterplan.com/Documents.html. The handout included information about contemplated capital improvements at and around Merrill Field over time. It was noted that the list of recommended projects may change over time due to changes in airport demand, funding availability, or other changing conditions. They encourage our comments on or before May 31, 2016. Comments should be sent to them at contact@merrillfieldmasterplan.com, and/or by calling Paul Bauers at 343-6301.

Jim Richardson, an economist, noted that their reported jobs and revenue attributable to Merrill Field is not direct data, but is instead application of a model.

Peter Mjos asked about projected lease lot development where L3 and L10 of their plan overlap. Mr. Bauers explained that this area's use is for snow storage. It is leased to Parks & Recreation pursuant to a sweetheart deal at 5 cents per sq. foot west of 15th Avenue in a 5 year incremental lease. It is a matter of revenue diversion, leasing it at less than market value in order to meet FAA requirements. Any re-designation for other uses that might be a perceived threat is very unlikely to occur, he said.

Peter Mjos indicated that this area (where L3 overlaps L10) is a designated greenbelt and used for recreation. Mr. Bauers explained that it is 35-40 feet below the airport gradient, so has little development potential for the airport, but might conceivably be designated as future hospital lands in 10-20 years.

One member asked who will pay for the expansion of 15th Avenue to accommodate increased office use in that area. Mr. Bauers said it is very speculative that this will even occur. The only other area to dump snow would be much more expensive, and an alternative site would be needed.

Jim Richardson asked whether it shouldn't be designated as wetlands, and observed that Merrill Field users (pilots) had decreased by an estimated 50% over time, debating the growth projections in their plan. Carl agreed that there had been a decrease in tie-downs and take-offs and landings since 1984, but said they "generate a demand curve" based on available data. Paul Bauers noted that the last two years showed stabilized numbers.

Bob Williams noted that university programs are a user group. He asked what the trend is with regard to students. Carl said pilot training is increasing. Paul Bauers noted, however, that the university is facing budget cuts.

Peter Mjos asked for clarification of L3 (where it overlaps L10). Mr. Bauers said it is a contiguous taxiway option. Pete said his inquiry is focused on the area south of 15th. Paul and Carl explained that it represents a prohibition on land use or construction off the end of the existing runway. Pete said that as to L10, Parks & Recreation is planning trails there. Paul Bauers said that projected use and prohibited use does not preclude trails. He is communicating with Parks & Recreation.

B. “Anchorage Talks Transit” People Mover. Whitney Tillman presented this topic. She is in marketing with Anchorage People Mover. She joined MOA in October.

Anchorage Talks Transit is the first step to align our bus system with the needs of people living, working and recreating in Anchorage. Its goal is the ideal bus system. Public transit in MOA includes Share Rides, Anchor Rides, and the People Mover bus system. The People Mover is the focus here. There will be a kickoff event on May 5th at 6:30 p.m. at the Anchorage Museum’s Rasmuson Center. RPCC members are encouraged to attend, and further to provide input by viewing www.PeopleMover.org/TransitTalks, and commenting to transitplanning@muni.org. Nora Morse of the Mayor’s office underscored that members should weigh in even if they don’t use the bus system. MOA wants to know why. Input is the key.

A handout indicated that we presently have 14 bus routes, 1,075 bus stops, covering 6,364 miles per weekday, carrying 3,649,698 passengers during 2015. Sample choices include: More frequent buses, or more buses in more places? Direct travel, complex routes, or easy transfers, simple routes? More bus stops, slower buses, or fewer bus stops, faster buses?

Ann Lorber asked whether there is any coordination with snow removal, as snow is an inhibitor of travel to bus stops. Whitney didn’t know but would pass that thought along, as will Nora.

Peter Mjos asked whether there is any coordination with Valley Movers. Whitney didn’t know. Pete asked if bus rapid transit was being considered, as by dedicated lanes. Whitney didn’t know, but encouraged e-mail input with that suggestion. Nora noted that MOA had consultants brought in who rode buses all day as part of their study.

Elaine Baldwin suggested that smaller buses might be used to transport passengers to routes with bigger buses. Elvi responded that smaller buses don’t work. They’ve considered it before.

VI. Other Business & Announcements

Iris noted that RPCC officer elections will be held in May 2016. While all positions are open, we especially need volunteers for the positions of secretary or treasurer. Iris will be retiring as president, too. Peter Mjos is the nominating chair, so members are encouraged to contact him.

Iris next provided the Alley Update. She reminded members that Government Hill had taken certain positions about alley pickup (garbage and recycling) service, which we disagreed with. Government Hill had a bear traffic issue, which their representatives inferred would decrease if they dropped alleyway service. We felt that was not the case. Some people at Solid Waste Services continue to oppose alley service. Iris encouraged members to stay atop this issue. Elvi noted that Paul at SWS is now gone. There is no new director yet. She is hopeful for the future. Iris noted that MOA dropped the SWS Advisory Commission. Without that vehicle for citizen input, once Paul was gone darker voices at SWS rose again. Accordingly, public vigilance and input is needed.

Turning to the GCI/Cell Tower Update, Iris asked Annette Cartier to advise of progress. Annette advised that GCI's application to change the law to allow its proposed tower(s) would go to Sonnett at MOA Land Use. Sonnett reportedly said no. We've asked for a recent update, but Sonnett didn't get back to us. Iris said that she expects GCI to apply in June when the community councils "go to sleep" for the summer, so as to avoid pushback to its proposal. GCI may not need a conditional use permit from Planning & Zoning, which typically involves public input, if Title 21 is amended in GCI's favor.

As to the Anchorage Police Department Community Survey, about 45 responses have been gathered so far. The focus seems to be on transients, homelessness, and the greenbelts – all connected concerns. Iris proposes a coordinated workgroup with MOA personnel and community council folk. Nora Morse felt this is a good idea. She said the Community Action Policing team doesn't work on Mondays or before 2 p.m., and that Nancy Burke should be involved as well. Jim Richardson said he observed 13 abandoned sites with impressive garbage accumulation. He reported 8 camps in sight of the bike path. He said there are thievery issues, with stockpiles of bikes and bike parts, propane tanks, and other items. Elaine Baldwin lives along the greenbelt and sees tarps and tents. She does not feel threatened but feels saddened. Her daughter took in a 54 year old man. He had no residence and so without an address he could get no benefits. He couldn't get a job and the shelters were full. Now he has a job and a bus pass. He's moving along with his life, but simply needed help. When the trailer parks were removed, many folks couldn't move up so they had to move out. Nora Morse said the CAP team is trained to address these concerns. Elaine Baldwin said that mobile libraries would help. Local libraries closed down years ago. Peter Mjos noted that there is a new program collecting kids' bicycles at Russian Jack, working with Off The Chain bike cooperative to gather and repair them.

Iris next turned to the RPCC Capital Improvements Project Survey. As in years past, past-president Heather Ireland is working on this. She asks that we limit our preferences to two choices, due to the limited budget in the coming year.

Elaine Baldwin wished to make an announcement. MLP is burying electric lines. She characterized this development as a nightmare. Jake Moe is in charge of the project. MLP has trenched backyards without advising GCI and ACS in time. So poles remain up in spite of the undergrounding goal. There has been no landscaping, leaving yards scarred. Trees are cut without being replaced. Iris noted that the process went smooth for her and that they did revegetate. Jim Richardson concurred that MLP should work with the citizenry.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.