

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, September 11, 2019

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Fred McLeary, Ed Leach, Michelle Scaman, Kathleen Plunkett, Tammy Hanson, Sonia Lipker, Bud & Tiger Gish, Renea Miller, brother-in-law of Rep Josephson (Phillip), Lloyd Stiassory, Kathrine & Vassalisa Hope, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by Chair Ed Leach with a moment of silence to remember those whose lives were lost during 9/11.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - Special session may be October/November or not at all, unless there is some general agreement beforehand. Cuts to the budget from legislators was \$380 million – Governor had another \$300 million. Impacts directly to Anchorage include UAA, Medicaid (Dental service), Community patrol. We'll see what happens. Comment from public – many of the top executives at UAA are highly overpaid. Credits earned are not always transferrable, even between Anchorage and Fairbanks. UAA allows no credits for work experience.

Response – that work credit, especially for military service has been changed. Also, the issue of transfers between various Alaska Universities has also changed when the concerns are brought to their attention. They are actually three separate universities under one budget item.

Sen. Tom Begich (Joshua Spring) – no report

Rep. Geran Tarr (Magdalena Oliveros) – no report

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (Ted Madsen provided a report) Health care transparency comments are being accepted on those regs by DHSS (due by Sept 27). Coffee this coming Saturday at Presbyterian Church from 10 am to 11 am. Medicaid patients who have to get mouth and teeth inspected prior to chemo are being impacted by the dental cuts.

Rep. Andy Josephson – provided a report of a trying year. About 200 days in Juneau that is mostly an ongoing power struggle. A few more moderate Republicans chose to work with the Democrats. There was a delay in the initial Governor's budget. He discussed the legislation body when he first began in 2013 and some of the differences now. The PFD was the most difficult issue to deal with. Any law other than an appropriation law requires a 2/3 vote to over-ride. Where they are now – looking at the data: what pops up is Senior Adult dental Medicaid. Without that program they only get treatment if they have something like an abscess. Whenever they gavel in, they have five days to over-ride, but they don't have the votes. The Governor may call them back on finishing the dividend payment, but we'll see how that goes.

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen - Plastic bag ban is going into effect September 16th. If you don't have a bag with you, retailers are required to charge you ten cents per bag, but can't charge more than 50

cents per transaction. Cell phone ban in school zones between 6 am and 9 pm. It is in effect anywhere there is a school and a 25 mile per hour zone. Exceptions are that you can use a hands-free device or call 911. Legal age to possess tobacco has been changed to 21. This did allow exemption for employees that are not 21 to sell tobacco (to keep 19-21 year olds from losing their jobs). An ongoing issue is the on-sight consumption of marijuana and will probably be October before a final decision is made on that. The Assembly is taking comments on that during their public meetings.

Public comment – there has been an increase in drug related deaths, wondering if anyone is taking that into consideration in their discussion of on sight consumption.

Forrest Dunbar -Firefighter Ben Schultz was keynote at the 9/11 presentation and gave a very moving speech. Emergency Declaration regarding homelessness is expected to expire September 24th. Additional funding for Brother Francis was passed with additional beds now available and other funding was restored. Emergency Operation Center was also set up. These brought together a lot of the active community participants dealing with Anchorage homelessness. Assembly passed a 5-year tax abatement for developers that subdivide a property. They want to improve the amount and stock of housing lots in Anchorage to allow for building.

MLP Sale - RCA hearing is hoping to be approved by the end of the year with another 60 days to finalize. Looking at April 2020. MLP customers wondered if they would get any credit for their years of business. One item of agreement was no rate increase to long time MLP customers.

Storm drain work timing was pretty poor. Pine Street south of Debarr was closed for quite awhile, but they responded fairly quickly. They had to dig up part of Pine Street to connect with San Roberto. Seems like San Roberto is the area of most disruption. Forrest will look into this.

Public question regarding the Governor veto's effect on the bond debt / property taxes getting raised. Response: School debt is not getting reimbursed, so Anchorage property taxes will go up (about \$60 per \$100,000).

Jason Bockenstedt, Mayor's office – bag ban goes into effect September 16th Partnered with AEDC, Visit Anchorage, and the Downtown Partnership with Red Apple offering bags 5 – 7 pm on Bragaw and Town Square Park from 11 am – 1 pm. One thing to remember is that meat can leak onto cloth bags, so make sure to keep them clean.

Storm water utility update – about 18 months ago, city hired a consultant to review storm water structure maintenance and capital projects. The level of deterioration is included in the 300 page report (includes a 30 page executive summary). Couple of big ticket items over 6 – 9 months are – what are the rates going to be? Don't know level of service, level of repairs necessary. MOA only owns about 60% of the infrastructure, some is state owned, some private owned. Plan to have robust, public participation as they proceed.

Public question – will this include Chugiak / Eagle River? No. Girdwood, Chugiak and Eagle River are in different water shed areas. At some point in the future it could be expanded, but currently this only applies to the Anchorage bowl. Storm drains have several agencies that would be involved – including street maintenance, city official (new Storm Drain System department). It's the plumbing for the city – and sink holes have been a direct result of failing

storm drains not draining properly. AWWU new billing would include water, waste-water, storm water. There doesn't need to be a vote of the people, but there will be a citizen's advisory group created.

3. School board report – Margo Belamine reported that schools were up to a very smooth start until the first swim meet. Schools are also in the midst of open houses. New meeting date for school board is on the first and third Tuesday – with the public portion of the meeting at 6 pm. Public testimony is limited to 3 minutes. Public involvement is a focus for the new school board. There is no limit on topics to share. Staying connected cards are available with ASD. Website is www.asdk12.org Community meetings for strategic planning will begin and Margo will keep us informed when they will be. Equity, Compliance, and Family Engagement position is new. Volunteers are always needed. Paula is the volunteer coordinator and can be reached at 742-4418. They need help in classrooms, events, etc.

Box tops are very important – Wonder Park doesn't have a PTA. There is a huge number of children in transition in our area.

4. Principal report - Alana Haider, Wonder Park (Tammy Hanson) – no report

5. FCC report - James Smallwood – no report

6. Pebble Project – Mark Hamilton, Pebble Partnership – Executive VP – wanted to talk about something bigger than Pebble Mine. Alaskans need to pay attention to the fact that Alaska is a resource extraction state. We need to develop our natural resources well. Every development project is met with the narrative of fear. And this works. Humans generally have a negativity bias stemming from a need to react to warnings quickly. More likely to remember it, repeat it, and act accordingly. He cited the pipeline as an example of the narrative of fear and that nothing has happened. He spoke about the complicated process of project proposals in Alaska. Federal, State, Tribal and third-party consultations are part of the process. It is costly even just to see if you can meet all the rules. Public comment is also part of the process. Requests for Information are also part of the process and available on the Pebble Project website. Many of these are very technical questions, but they must be addressed. Environmental Impact Statements also are part of the process – and another round of public comment. There were concerns whether or not the public comment period was long enough, although there were 210 days allowed. If all the requirements are met, you get a statement of approval. The EPA can still reject the project if there is any environmental irreversible damage possible. He encouraged us all to be comfortable with the system that is in place to take care of us. The main argument regarding the failing of Mt Polly in Canada is that Alaska regulators and the system in place is much better than that system.

Pebble is a copper mine, but they have also found gold, Radium, Molybdenum. Pebble is not qualified to extract rare earth elements.

Ryan Rupert – Habitat for Humanity – they are trying to grow their board and have openings. Ways to get involved include: the Gingerbread Showcase November 23-24; ReStore, now located at the old REI location; 1000 Women Strong event October 1, 2019 – January 8, 2020; SEED Lab; Combined Federal Campaign (CFC); United Way of Anchorage; they are recruiting

for board members and volunteers. For more information, contact Ryan at 301-1736 or email cryanrupert@gmail.com.

Pastor Victor Marbury – serves as a liaison with APD on the Anchorage Community Police Relations Task Force. This group is inviting the community to Friday 13th at 12 noon at Fairview Rec Center (meets the 2nd Friday of each month). Hate Crimes Forum will be meeting Saturday, September 21st from 1 – 5 pm at the Loussac Library.

Ed stated he had received a call and found that there was still \$2000 for Russian Jack community council patrol. This has been allotted to other community councils that have an active patrol.

Russian Jack Springs Park has updated the Master Plan and invites the public to provide more comment and input at a meeting being held at the Lidia Selkregg Chalet on Saturday, September 28th from 12 pm – 3 pm. There will be food, kid activities, greenhouse tours, a model railroad demo and guided nature walk. For more information, go to the MOA – Parks and Recreation web page.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright