

NECC

Northeast Community Council General Meeting Minutes January 16, 2020

Call to order: 7:03

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of the Board

- **Board members present:** Rachel Boudreau, Donna Mears, Stu Grenier, Charles England, Carla McConnell, Bob Reupke (FCC delegate), Rick Liz Snyder
- **Board members absent:** T'Shalla Baker, Selina Metoyer

Approval of the January Meeting Agenda

(Secretary addressing technical issues; individuals who motioned to approve not noted.)

Treasurer's Report

Bank balance: \$1779.46

Community Concerns/Announcements

- Robin C. : Happy MLK! Citywide celebration this Sunday, 1/19, West High, 3-5 pm, youth presentations

Legislative Report: (Summary of statements made)

- **Representative LeDoux:** Budget passed last year added back in some of the things that were originally taken out; most of the air in the room will be taken up by budget questions. Gov. announced the Reading Act -- thinks it's going to be a good bill (similar to a bill she proposed in 2013 and 2015; and again last year); she worked with the superintendent of the schools to develop her version; wants to see the Gov's bill passed

Senior facility on Baxter is open and looks good.

Another issue is private prisons -- she doesn't support it; doesn't think private prisons are appropriate; nor is sending people out of state with no family support and where they get connected with out of state gangs is a bad thing.

Disagrees with the gutting of the Alaska apprenticeship programs; would end up taking

jobs from Alaska residents and Alaska companies; doing things not up to the standards we are used to. Has signed a letter opposing this. Not just workers, it's also the unions, construction companies and legislators who oppose these new regulations.

Comments: Rick: Concerned that if 3rd graders can't read at the 3rd grade level, they'll be held back and not allowed to move to 4th. Answer: No one has actually seen the bill yet. Her version of the bill doesn't hold the students back.

Bob: Concerned about the Ferries. Answer: Yes, this is a problem.

- **Representative Spohnholz:** Supposed to be in Juneau, but flights were cancelled. Excited to have Zoom (online videoconferencing option now).

There are many ways to stay involved as session begins: you can call in to meetings; there will be a Feb. 22 Anchorage caucus meeting people can attend; second Saturday of every month -- Emanuel Presb. Does coffee chats (bring canned goods to donate if you'd like).

The budget is going to be the big issue again. Has a 1.5 billion dollar fiscal gap. Her caucus is committed to passing a balanced budget. Gap could be closed with a \$750 pfd, but that probably won't fly. Some of the highlights of the budget to be thinking about are: this year's budget is really a flat budget (adult preventative dental, senior benefits programs, public safety money, trooper included this time; but some cuts to VPSO). The administration is looking to ship prisoners out of state, but last year her caucus put \$17 million in the budget to open the Palmer prison, but the administration seems to have other plans. Shipping prisoners out doesn't really save us any money, and increases recidivism rates. Also ends up sending money and jobs out of state. There is a big supplemental budget, which will cover the fires and Medicaid costs -- will be fast tracked. (Gov. thought he would be able to do some cuts to Medicaid, but turns out he didn't have the authority to do that.) Wants to get the supplemental budget quickly, so they can get to the capital budget quickly.

Also examining the sale of BP to Hilcorp. Concerns about health and safety track record of Hilcorp.

rest Focused on reducing healthcare costs -- we're spending more on healthcare than the of the US, and we're not getting better health outcomes. Working with Von Imof to establish a healthcare administration council to assess the cost of healthcare in Alaska -- we don't know what specifically money is being spent on (e.g., preventative care versus treating disease). Also working on a bill to allow dental hygienists to practice independently (can improve care in rural Alaska) -- dentists support this.

Question: Are we going to be able to watch gavel to gavel? Answer: Yes, still on.

Question: Are you running again? Answer: I haven't filed yet. Stay tuned.

Question: Are you working with Mukowski on Medicare issues? Answer: There is a rule where whatever provider you see three times in a row is counted as your primary care provider. One issue we want to work on.

Question: Can you clarify your pfd 750 comment? Answer: We don't have the votes to take it that low. I don't support taking it that low.

- **Representative Pruitt:** Has to leave early because there's a morning event where he's helping feed middle schoolers. Re: pfd -- even more important than the absolute value of the pfd, is putting something in place long term for determining the dividend. In terms of other legislation: happy to join the Gov., Ed Commissioner, Sen. Begich on education legislation. Not just about money, but about results. Hasn't yet seen the legislation, but glad that it is coming out. Glad to be looking at the results of education, as opposed to just funding.

In the last two sessions, he's introduced legislation to improve land transfer to the University -- needs to be approved by Congress. DNR still needs to identify lands that are appropriate. Fogle is working with the University to help identify land, and get a federal delegation to work this through. Provides another source of income to the University of Alaska.

Question: What can we do to bring revenue into the state and deal with the budget?

Answer: Even before revenue, we have to deal with the pfd, and we have to have a decision about how to limit government spending and keep taxes from being jacked up every year. A 4% sales tax won't cover the gap without it having to be increased every year.

Question: Isn't it true that we've cut the budget for the last five years? Answer: We cut it last year, and the governor made more. The last two Walker years the budget increased. The increase happened in the capital budget. The operating budget did increase.

Question: Could we ship gas or water to other countries as a way to generate revenue?

Answer: There's been work through a legislative grant to allow shipping out of water. There is also a group looking at liquified natural gas -- this is probably where we're headed in the future. We're getting to a point where that's possible. A contact in Hong Kong acknowledges there is a need to reduce pollution there -- and the possibilities of LNG are immense. They're still building coal plants, but less quickly.

Question to LeDoux: (See comment on FB Live: regarding lack of assistance addressing safety on a road in her district). Answer: She's called back multiple times and left messages multiple times. There is a light at the corner of Dominic and Boundary and (unheard) and Boundary. A private citizen owns the property in this area -- and they are trying to get in touch with him. She's been trying to deal with the woods owned by him. (Community member disputes that it's privately owned.)

- **Senator Wielechowski:** Not present
- **Senator Kathy Geissel:** Not present

Assembly Report (Peterson and Dunbar): (Summary of statements made.)

With respect to previous question regarding Boundary, Pete has talked with MLP in the past, but it would be expensive to get a light there -- reason why it's not there now.

The Assembly did NOT vote to approve gambling in Eklutna (what you might have heard on the radio is not right). Some folks thought an agreement made with the Eklutna Tribe meant that a casino could be opened. That, however, is a Federal issue. The Muni has no control over this issue.

There have been extended debates over Muni revenue measures; last night addressed two alcohol tax proposals (one with a flat tax in perpetuity to support a variety of services; a second one has a sunset date). Also discussed was a 3% sales tax, which would expire after a few years. Thinks the sales tax is more likely to pass. Last night took public testimony; will be taking additional public testimony on Jan. 28th at Loussac. Even if it passes the Assembly -- it then goes to the public for a vote.

They've voted to increase the tariffs at the port. Some of those haven't been increased in over 9 years. This has been agreed to by the user's group. When they heard tariffs might be coming, they formed a group in opposition, but now they agree with them.

82 million dollars -- school bond. Money for Inlet View, Aquarian, 12 school earthquake recovery projects, rebuilding Greening Middle school and Eagle Rover school. This passed unanimously in the Assembly, and will go to the vote of the people in April.

\$450,000 bond approved for Phase II of Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. Also money for Dave Rose Park.

The road bond has to be pulled back for a substituted version. \$39.3 to 49 now (million)

Passed a resolution against sending prisoners to outside prisons.

Dunbar and Quinn-Davidson had a meeting recently in which they discussed FEMA funding for the earthquake. They are on track to get the first installment, but not sure if they will receive the full amount. For certain kind of FEMA money to rebuild buildings, have to get insurance -- but it is prohibitively expensive in Anchorage. Need a letter from the state insurance commissioner to say it's uneconomic -- and send to FEMA in hopes of getting the money.

Question: School bonds: is the state going to kick in any money? Answer: No -- don't think with any of the new school bonds there is a requirement to pay them back. Reply: Yes, but there are old school bonds? Answer: These questions should go to Legislators.

About 30 million school bonds will be retired over what is being issued this year. The debt should go down.

Question: Nordstrom left, but held onto the lease. Are there any plans for Nordstrom or the parking garage? Answer: Forrest didn't know, but Cook Inlet community member noted that Nordstrom's lease doesn't end for 4 years, and they're choosing not to sublet it. Forrest: Assembly has done things in the past to make it more difficult to leave a building empty, but not sure if it applies here. He'll bring it up with Chris Schutte. They still have to pay a property tax on it.

School Board (Margo Bellamy): (Summary of statements made.)

If you have kids in school, you would have recently gotten a newsletter giving updates on the school district. Thank you to those who attended strategic planning forums and who took the online survey. Phase 1 (of 4) is done. Phase 2 is data synthesis.

Thankful to the Assembly for passing the school bond. Will provide capital improvements to 16 schools. They will not be putting forth anymore bonds for several years -- no new requests for a while. Retiring 111 million dollars in bonds.

Earthquake insurance costs 1+ million/year for 25 mill of insurance for the school district. In same boat for FEMA money.

Margo is excited about the Reading Act. It's a shiny object right now -- hasn't seen the bill. But very glad to see focus on early reading. It's brought together folks on both sides of the aisle. Will be reading the small print.

There are upcoming opportunities to visit our schools, and will be sharing the dates soon. Ask yourself how to connect with the schools. Would like to figure out a way to strengthen connections between community councils and school principals.

Comment: Yes, please do read the fine print. Concerned that students with dyslexia could be held back? Margo: Yes, she'll be reading the fine print. Yes, addressing reading outcomes is an urgent matter, but we need to make good decisions on how to move forward.

Comment: Since the legalization of marijuana, I've noticed ads in publications. He's heard from people at Barlett that there's an increase in usage. Does the school board have any opinion on the legalization of marijuana? Answer: Yes, school policies reflect Muni policies. Students may not be under the influence on campus. Does not know offhand the rate of kids being disciplined.

Muldoon Public Library: (Summary of statements made.)

Very hopeful for the Reading Bill.

Still on the hunt for a new librarian.

As of Jan. 1, the public library has gone fine free. And overdue fines will be wiped away. Let him know if you have any questions. Will continue charging for damaged and lost books(?) Will be in Muldoon mall for the next five years. Landlords have finished the upgrades -- fresh paint, new electrical, charging stations. New flooring and carpet. Also new safety lighting. Looking forward to Job Shop to come back -- to support job seekers Anchorage wide (working with YWCA).

Yes, they have pdf paper forms at the lib.

Also starting classes on Saturdays on how to get online and do it.

Not Present: Mayor's Office, JBER, Muldoon

Presentations:

- **Development Plans at the Corner of Debarr and Muldoon (next to Krispy Kreme)**
Note: The designer of the proposed buildings was asked to return and provide additional opportunity for community members to ask questions about the plans. (The following is a summary of the conversation.)

Developers been trying to get it developed for the past 16 years. The new design involves drive-throughs. Placed so they aren't right next to the roads to make it more palatable to the community.

Questions: If you look at all the Cook Inlet buildings, the parking lots are on the opposite side of the buildings and off of the road. This new design has the parking lot along the road and near the park. Could you flip the parking lot so it's not ruining the view of the park and Muldoon?

Answer: Yes, it would be possible, but it would require redesigning the building. Cook Inlet was

done that way to avoid placing Seniors and other residents right along the road; built so there's no difference between back or front. But when you go to commercial buildings, you need an obvious front.

The proposed building was designed to avoid showing the park the ugly back workings of a commercial building. Also trying to facilitate pedestrian traffic to the trail, and cars to the drive-through.

Question: Are you stating that the drive-throughs (which require Assembly approval) will go between the creek and the building? We don't like that there's a road between the creek and the building of Burger Fi. Is that going to happen again? Answer: Yes. Only option for traffic flow.

Question: If we pass a motion not supporting this plan, could you come back with a different plan? Answer: I can always come back, but doesn't think he can come up with a better site plan. If we flip the side of the drive-through, then the pedestrians will have to access the building on the other side, and the building will end up turning it's back to the street. The current plan combines all vehicle traffic inside, and allows a better stormwater system.

Question: Can you speak more to the vegetative screening between the parking lot and the road? Answer: Yes there will be landscaping between the building and road. And vegetation on both sides of the trail. It's a zero runoff design -- full infiltration design, so it doesn't negatively impact the watershed. Wants to do it with vegetation and lower areas, to avoid conveying to the creek.

Question: Where will manholes go? Answer: They are already installed from previous site development when the creek was built. Nothing new going in.

Question: Is the space in the lot conducive to appropriate snow storage? Answer: Yes. Plan is that you can move all the snow towards the interior of the site (lower areas of the site) and not haul it away. Melt and infiltrate in the middle.

Question: Where are you in the process? Answer: The only movement since November is that the project may expand to include the vacant lot between Krispy Kreme and Walgreens. Signatures for this movement haven't been obtained. This project is not yet inked, but the desire is to get it started this year. Question: No plans have been put into the Muni yet? Answer: It's codified that they come to talk to the community, so that's where we're at now. Next come a P&Z review, and the Assembly has to approve drive-throughs. Neither of these steps have started.

Question: Is a resolution needed, one way or the other? Answer: Not at that point in the process yet. He hasn't formally requested yet. He might in the future.

Comment: Don't forget the tunnel under Muldoon! Or the walkway overpass!

- **Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Update (Kristi B.):**

Sharing some of the future garden markers made by kids at Begich Middle. They will be plot markers.

Orchard (40 trees; 50-60 shrubs; all edibles; have all the plants and trees they need), plus 42 10x20 plots. Spring 2021 for planting. Supportive infrastructure going in this year.

Question: Where is it located? Answer: Phase 2 of Chanshtnu Park.

Needs someone who can drive a small excavator when it's time to plant the trees. Carla: Her husband can do it.

Parks and rec will ensure it's a clean slate.

- **Master Plan Updates (Carla):**

Parks and Rec is doing an update of the MP for Russian Jack Spring Park. It is a regional park, which means it belongs to all of us (even though it's not in our community council boundary). Please be involved in the planning and attend open houses when they're advertised.

- **1% for Art (Gideon):**

Gideon from 1% Art: 1% of municipal construction goes to public art. The Ship Creek remodeling/reno projects are now available for public art. It's the very beginning of the public art aspect. He needs to form a selection jury -- soliciting people from our council.

Art is important to economic development -- employing artists and fabricators, and drawing visitors to our cities.

Question: What will the impact be for the general public since it's a restricted area? Answer: It will benefit workers and those touring the building. Question: No option to move the artwork? Answer: No, has to be at site of construction.

Note: Important to keep vegetation back so art stays visible.

The NECC can decide how to pick someone.

Old Business

- **Traffic Calming Resolution (Kyle):**

Kyle read Resolution 2019-04, renamed 2020-01 (available at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NortheastCommCouncil/files/>)

Donna moved to approve. Community member seconded.

Questions/Comments: Donna: The Muni will be here in Feb. to discuss a project that they are planning along this area. They will have questions for the council and will be asking for feedback.

Donna: Thank you to Kyle for working on this. With respect to Ptarmigan Elementary and Edwards -- the corridor changes its name to Statum.

Carla: Encourages folks to vote in favor.

In favor: 13 Objectivions: 0 Abstentions: 4

Motion passes

November Minutes Approval:

Donna moves to approve; Kyle seconds;

Passes

Business Between NECC board and the Muni:

Rachel talked with Burke to come talk to about homelessness; and a judge will be coming in the future.

Stu talked with the guy who wires the green light poles. Some poles don't have power.

Committee reports:

Alcohol and Marijuana: Emailed Will at Catalyst to find out more about permitting.

Stu: has the assembly approved their permit? Pete/Forrest: No. Stu: They're already building and looking to hire people.

Catalyst came in Oct. in 2018 saying he was looking for a location. He hasn't been back.

Dave: Has to be 500 feet away from the front door of the church.

Carla: It's only 300 feet if you run across the road, and the Muni put in medians to accommodate pedestrians.

Parks: They are talking about the ball field in Centennial park/dog park. There are makeshift gates now. Steve suggested putting up formal gates and locking it, and having groups pay a fee to get access.

Community Patrol: DAvid: With the cold seeing a bit of a bump of property crime -- as people are leaving to get away from the cold and leaving houses empty.

FCC Update (Bob R.):

A church will be put up behind Ronnie's II on 7800 Old Harbor Road. 2900 square feet. Want to convert a 2-car garage to a church. There is no public hearing on this.

FCC purchased insurance for all community councils -- need to let them know if we ever change dates or location

Open house Jan 23, 4-6 at City Hall about some sort of development

Question: Has NECC received our \$75 outreach money? No, but Rachel will follow up.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:38