

## RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, October 14, 2020

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Renea Miller, Fred McLeary, Ed Leach, Frank McGuire, Kathleen Plunkett, Kathi-Jo & Bob Skaats, Sonia Lipker, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chair Ed Leach.

1. Anchorage Police Report - no report. Will invite them again for November meeting.

### 2. Legislative report

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (Keith Bauguess) –report submitted electronically (attached)

Sen. Bill Wielechowski (Nate Graham) – no report

Sen. Tom Begich (Brix Hahn) report submitted electronically (attached)

Rep. Geran Tarr (Magdalena Oliveros, Simeon Bearden) – Early voting – drop box locations information was provided that will add some convenience. Recommended to request an absentee ballot no later than October 20<sup>th</sup>. Traffic calming list came out – for Russian Jack area – E 24<sup>th</sup> from Boniface to Glacier, Kenai Avenue (Pine St to Bunnell). Dr. Zink said they expect 500 new cases per day in the near future. Testing rate is 5.5 positive. Getting more people tested will help reduce the number of cases.

Question about Contempo Condo parking displacement from the new bike path on Pine. No complaints have been heard, but some complaints about the new blacktop on Pine have.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (Meagan Holland provided a report) State is going in the wrong direction with COVID cases. 4 deaths today, with one of those in their 20s. Reminders about voting and social distancing. Mail in ballot deadline is coming up for absentee ballots. AK Supreme Court recently rescinded the need for a witness of ballot signature. November 3 is election day. Unemployment benefits from federal government will begin the additional \$300 payments retroactively. Frank is a poll worker and expressed some concerns – asked about security funding for poll workers? There is no mask requirement for people going to vote. Also wondered what he could/should do if someone that is armed comes in to vote.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) - no report

### 3. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – Got email concerning mayor's resignation yesterday. Then got several more emails. Chair of Assembly serves as interim mayor which is currently Felix Rivera. A Resolution to reorganize the Assembly failed 8-3, but they intend to reorganize in a meeting on Friday so the interim mayor has some time to learn the job. Interim mayor normally serves for 90 days. Lawyers are looking into the issue of needing to have a special election and then the regular election, with the possibility of both sets of ballots being in the election office at the same time. If we have to have 2 elections, that is to the tune of \$900,000 per election.

Assembly Budget 2021 meetings began. Voted to give taxis a break on fees and driving requirements. Owner's are driving 18 hours per day to try to break even. Closing on MLP sale before the end of the month. Distribution of some of the money into investment savings with APU funds. Added franchises to businesses allowed to file for CARES ACT funding in the amount of 10 million dollars. They weren't allowed initially because the Assembly was misinformed.

Old Roller Rink property on DeBarr was purchased with the intention of making it a security facility. Planning & Zoning would not allow it. Assembly also voted down rezoning the property, so now the owner has a property he can't use. It would be good for Planning & Zoning to explain why they make the decisions they make.

Extended mayor's emergency declaration until November 30<sup>th</sup>. Funding for police body cams will be on the budget for next year. Leasing body cams is an option. Fire department also talked about leasing. Customer Services at MLP will be shut down during transfer.

Forrest Dunbar – no report

4. School board report – Margo Bellamy – no report

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett - no report

6. NeighborWorks Census Recap – Ed provided a report. Survey from St Anthony's / Pine / 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue / Bragaw. Was surprised by the variation of the quality of the homes in the neighborhood in some areas. Sunset Park appeared more like middle class neighborhood. Totem on 6<sup>th</sup> seemed more run down. The point of survey was an assessment of various properties.

7. Rick Phillips, from NE Community Council came to talk about Ballot Measure 1 – encouraging a YES vote for Alaska's Fair Share. The measure seeks to increase the amount that Alaska receives in oil revenues. Ring fencing is a method of using funds on oil fields, rather than paying taxes on the revenues. There is a need for transparency in their reporting. Oil companies have spent around \$20 million dollars to encourage voters to vote no on this ballot measure. Much of their advertisement is misleading and funded from outside interests. When Senate Bill 21 passed in 2014, the state lost billions. The Constitutional Budget Reserve is getting depleted. They are pretty big on making promises, but not keeping them, as in jobs. If this ballot measure passes, it will actually increase jobs. The state is currently going broke. The city increases its revenue from property taxes, when the state budget gets cut.

Since Alaska hire provisions were gutted, there are fewer Alaskans working in the oil field jobs. Many of those companies are transcontinental. They make more profit in Alaska than anywhere in the world. The oil field companies also own the pipeline, so cost of getting the oil down the pipeline is going back to them. We are getting less than when the big corruption scandal came out. Profit and keeping the legislators in their pocket is their main aim.

Public comment – if people vote no on Ballot 1 – they will be laughing so hard in London, they will fall off their chairs.

8. Zoom meetings discussion - The church has internet access so we can provide a Zoom link for anyone that would like to meet via Zoom for future meetings. One concern is the ability for those on Zoom to hear the conversation in the room, based on the microphone available. We will have the link provided with the agenda.

State of Alaska Disaster Recovery Plan – has to do with earthquakes and costs associated with it. Department of Commerce, Community, Economic Development.

Ed provided updated COVID-19 data for Alaska and for the United States in a state by state report. Ed also wrote a letter to the editor in response to Alaska's failure of leadership on COVID-19.

Next meeting normally would be November 11<sup>th</sup>, which is Veteran's Day. Sherry moved that we delay it to the following Wednesday, which will be November 18<sup>th</sup>. Bob 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Sherry Wright, Secretary