

NECC

Northeast Community Council General Meeting Minutes October 15, 2020

Call to order: 7:00

- Motion to approve agenda; seconded; no discussion, approved

Board Introductions

- Rachael, Selena, Bob, Donna, Charles, Stu, Liz, Rick
- Not present: Kyle, T'Shalla

FCC Update from Bob

- No FCC report this month

Community Concerns

- Stu: Received email about free facemasks from FCC, and he collected 50 to share with his neighbors. It's also time to get more housing options for our homeless as the weather is getting colder.
- Donna: At next Tuesday's school board meeting, they are considering renaming East High after Betty Davis. A link to her bio and online petition has been posted to the NECC website.

Legislative Reports

- Sen. Wielechowski:
 - A few weeks ago, several legislators sent a letter to Kevin Meyer asking for more ballot drop boxes, using boxes provided by the Municipality. There is one at Begich Middle School, which is great for East Anchorage.
 - Some new updates on voting: The witness signature requirement on absentee ballots was struck down. And the courts also said that if someone makes a mistake on their ballot, Elections does not have to tell the voter.
 - The legislature created a therapeutic courts task force. Drugs and alcohol account for 90% of the crime in Alaska, according to the police. So focusing on helping people battle addiction should help reduce crime and lower recidivism rates. There will be more updates on this effort soon.
- Rep. LeDeoux:
 - It's been a couple interesting months; Alaska has lost leadership over sexting scandals.

- Tomorrow Rep. LeDeoux will attend a joint House and Senate Judiciary Committee meeting to address various election issues.
- Rep. Spohnholz:
 - Please keep wearing your masks and keeping your social bubbles small. Dr. Zink expects case counts to continue to climb, particularly as it gets colder and people move activities indoors. A vaccine is not expected until this summer, and we need to take care of our elders and those with underlying conditions.
 - 120,000 Alaskans have requested absentee ballots. This is a record. You can still request absentee ballots until Oct. 24. No witness signature requirement. You can start voting in person on Oct. 19.
 - You can go to myvoterinformation.alaska.gov
 - There is some additional unemployment support about to come out, but it has been slow partially due to old platforms and databases. If you were unemployed between Aug. 1 and Sep. 15, you're eligible for \$300/week. Unfortunately, the US Senate has not decided to do any more about unemployment ahead of the elections.
 - Question from Stu: I get free testing in Muldoon every week, and it takes 4 days to get results back. Is there any way we can cut the time down. Ivy agreed that time is too long, and the state is working to expand. Gabrielle also agrees, and while the Muldoon location takes a long time, there is no line.
- Rep. Pruitt:
 - Not present

Assembly Reports

- Assemblymen Dunbar and Petersen:
 - The NECC has passed a resolution in support of the rezone for the roller rink off Debarr, and the owner (Mr. Fuller) is present at the meeting tonight. Forrest and Pete voted for the rezoning in the Assembly, but it failed. Mr. Fuller can reapply with a different type of rezone request, or wait two years to make the same request.
 - The taxi industry is still suffering.
 - On Tuesday night, the Assembly passed an ordinance to place the proceeds from the MLP sale to pay some large debts and place them in a Municipal trust. We make more money in the trust than we do paying off small debts, given differences in interest rates.
 - The Assembly approved the release of CARES funding to franchises, which are locally owned.
 - It looks like the Assembly might put police body cam purchase on the ballot (still discussions to be had, including issues of privacy and access to footage; they have until January). It would provide funding to lease them, which is typically what departments do, as the owner company will be available for maintenance.
 - They've started their budget process. There will be two public hearings in November. In general, the budget that has been proposed is a continuation budget, with an increase of less than 1%, which is lower than inflation (2%). So, in real terms it's a budget cut.

- The Mayor's resignation will become effective next Friday. The Assembly meets tomorrow to vote on reorganization. Reorganization may or may not happen. No debate is involved, and it is a process run by the clerk. Whoever is Chair will become the acting Mayor, and the Vice Chair will become the Chair. Another meeting will be required to replace the Vice Chair.
- Question: Have there been any decisions or legal opinions on a special election prior to April. Forrest: He is conflicted out from discussing this. Pete: According to the Charter, we have to have at least 90 days between a Mayor's resignation and a special election. This puts it at January, and if a runoff is needed, then there isn't enough time to deal with that before the regular election. Legal scholars are trying to figure out how to have just one election, as it costs the Municipality \$900,000 dollars to have just one election. It is an interesting quirk of the Charter that whoever is done being acting Mayor, they can return to their Assembly seat. This is unusual.
- Question: Can we check with other police departments about how they've developed their body cam policies? Forrest: Yes, there are a lot of cities with a lot of different policies to review. Question: What does the police department think about body cams? Forrest: The police chief would like them, but argues that they need a budget for it, and they want to be thoughtful about privacy.

Community Updates:

- Andy Holleman (School Board):
 - The Superintendent announced today that students pre-K through 2nd grade, plus special needs all grades, will return to in-person school in mid-November.
 - Food deliveries will not continue, as the buses will be needed for students and food service workers will be needed at the schools.
 - Betty Davis East High School is the new proposed name for East High. We could still call it East High for short. Kind of like the renaming of the airport.
 - Selena: Every school where she grew up was named after a person that students should look up to. Schools shouldn't be named after locations.

<Secretary fielding questions. A few details missed here, but update provided from Jim regarding library>

- Stu (NECC Board)
 - Still planning on doing the 'Doon danglers after Halloween. Please contact him for additional information.

Presentations: None

Old and New Business:

- Parks Update (Donna):
 - Great summer at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. All the season's work has been wrapped up. More plantings will happen in the Spring. The community garden will need volunteers next summer. Fencing will happen next Fall and Spring. Lighting will be complete next

week. It will take two seasons to establish the grass in the dog park. The Indigenous place naming post is being installed this week.

- The link to the Russian Jack master plan is being worked on, and community comments will be solicited this winter, with a goal of finalizing it in the Spring.
- No updates on the Cheney Lake master plan.
 - Stu: We really need to get the community involved with the master plans, as we don't want people surprised.
- Roller rink rezoning:
 - The roller rink rezoning vote had to do with concerns over a lack of affordable housing in Anchorage, and some long term development priorities. The rezoning request was too different from the surrounding area. If the applicant does come back, they would like to see some incorporation of residential uses. Or perhaps educational centers (schools, daycares). The community really does want to see it developed in some way, as there is no advantage to letting it fall further into disrepair.
 - Mr. Fuller: He is not opposed to incorporating housing. They'll have to go through the community notification and input process again. Hope to keep things moving, and be back in less time than 6 months. They just spent \$300,000 on repairing the roof.
- Commentary (Selena):
 - The Northeast Center Board is being dissolved. The Boys and Girls Club will take over management.
 - Stu: What is happening with the Boys and Girls Club within the pandemic? Answer: They're still attending.
- Group conversation regarding pros and cons of dense housing:
 - Concerns over East Anchorage getting too much dense housing, while others highlighted advantages of dense housing (affordability, easy bus access). Petersen noted that the Anchorage 2020 plan written 20 years ago identified East Anchorage as a high density location.
- Gateway Rotary (Sarah Gallt): They look over the strip of land adjacent to Chanshtnu Muldoon Park (the Debarr easement), and do a lot of work throughout Muldoon. They donated six cherry trees to the food forest. They are a small group of about 20 people, with about 10 people who are active.
- Polar Little League (Steve Schaber):
 - Polar Little League completed its maintenance requirement for use of the fields. They are officially off the site for the season now, and will soon be moving their remaining equipment.

No committee updates

Adjourned at 8:37