



GOVERNMENT HILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

c/o Community Councils Center • 1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99503

Jody Sola, President

Stephanie Kesler, Vice President

Peter Partnow, Secretary

Susanne Dipietro, Treasurer

Bob French, FCC Representative

Pete Murphy, Greg Miller, Ron Clark, At-Large Board Members

GHCC Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Peter Partnow

Meeting conducted via Zoom called to order at 6:33 p.m. by President Jody Sola.

1. **Introduction of Attendees:** Attendees identified via Zoom appearance and noted on the virtual sign-in sheet provided with these minutes.

2. **Approval of agenda:**

Motion to approve agenda: Stephanie Kesler

Second: Austin Mann

Motion unanimously approved.

3. **Approval of October 15, 2020 meeting minutes**

Motion to approve: Stephanie Kesler

Second: Pete Murphy

Motion unanimously approved.

4. **Legislative update:** **Senator Tom Begich** emphasized seriousness of Covid 19 situation and encouraged all to try to mitigate holiday gatherings. Noted the transmission rate is at 10 % should be at 3% or less. Reminded all to wear masks, socially distance, etc. He hopes the governor will call the legislature into session to avoid legal issues regarding efforts to limit spread. Reported that the November 3 election vote count is complete and that we had highest turn out in state history at around 60% turn out. Only about 43% of voters actually voted on Election Day. Legislature will be 13-7 Republicans in senate but may be a coalition. Perhaps a coalition in house as well. Upcoming legislation includes making the pre-kindergarten bill stronger and bill to provide support for first line workers significantly affected by the pandemic with low interest loans, etc.

Representative Zack Fields indicated the House majority is not yet organized but likely will be essentially the same as this past session. Big issue will be protecting the Permanent Fund since the state now primarily funded by the Permanent Fund rather than by oil revenue and the fund is a “renewable resource” that needs to be protected. Regarding the pandemic, emphasized the same concerns and warning as expressed by Senator Begich, noting USA is the worst performing developed country along with Spain. With no overriding State mandate, response has been largely left to local choice but some localities don’t have the authority to act as needed Hospitals on the verge of being overwhelmed. On other issues, looking a legislation involving crime and transportation issues.

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Noted work with Japanese counsel attempting to reestablish direct flights. Also, efforts to expand trail network in Anchorage.

5. **Assembly Update: Chris Constant** noted municipal budget passed this week. There should be a slight reduction in tax—not including the school district. Reported that vaping has been added to Muni tax thus adding \$800,000 in revenue plus health benefits for minors. Discussed establishment of a new “no help/first responder” team because police cannot do everything. Enhanced fire department’s responsibility by having primary response where high risk/weapons not involved. Prioritizing shelter and abating camps. Allowing storage for individual’s property to avoid legal issues. Discussed the need for housing and shelter –includes putting up people in some hotels as well as Fairview rec center. There are around 640 unsheltered people in Anchorage. Strong implementation effort for a multiyear initiative but the covid pandemic complicates efforts. Discussed political division over response to pandemic, noting it has become a point of rebellion. Argues that references state constitution mandates individual responsibilities to each other as well as individual rights. Tom Brennan thanked Chris for his efforts and thoughts. Chris responded to question that is unclear if there will be another shut down—notes the shortage of hospital beds, with situation exacerbated by the lack of hospital beds in the Mat Su.

6. **JBER Update: Denny Hostetter** not present. Peter Partnow reports he did not contact Denny since the last council meeting, but will endeavor to do so before the next meeting.

7. **Community: School Board President Elisa Vakalis:** Jody Sola reported that due to conflict of meetings, Elisa would call in when her other meeting concluded (but our meeting adjourned prior to her calling in).

Kelly Lessens—School Board Candidate: There are three seats up at the spring election. She would seek new direction and leadership. She has two young kids. She lives in House district 25. She is a co-founder of ASD 360. Focus on lunch and recess which help optimize learning. She wants holistic leadership. Her educational background is as a historian. She conducts weekly “Kelly Lessens Listens” programs on Sundays. She has a web site. She has not previously run for office. Her resume is part of the packet for this council meeting and can be obtained from Jody Sola. She has not yet identified the specific seat for which she will be running, and is working with two other candidates (Dora Wilson and Carl ____). Her web site is www.kelly4anchoragekids.com and email kellyforanchoragekids@gmail.com

Solar Farm on greenbelt/buffer—Steve Gerlek/Steve Ribuffo Steve G and Jody met with representatives of the Port and Parks and Rec to review history of the land, the safety buffer etc. as well as ideas for redevelopment of the flat area. Steve G thinks uses are compatible but we need to determine the Port wants/needs to do. Steve R agrees. The Port is in early in the development phase for the property. Notes plan also will include an emergency egress route. Steve R reports a need to of the DEC examine the terrain to make sure that soil is safe, which cannot be done until spring. Also notes the need to obtain agreement from the Department of Defense due to some contingencies in the transfer of the property. Responding to question from Thomas Pease, noted the existing paved road cannot be the emergency egress route due to possible issue cause by the tanks along that route. The egress route would be a dirt road that would lead to a gate if need arose. Steve R notes the egress route will not impact the plans the community hopes to pursue, and Steve G agreed. Steve R noted the solar

farm would be a partnership with JBER. A solar farm would not impact the approach to the base airfield.

8. Treasurers report: Suzanne DiPietro reported \$669.30 in checking and \$2,266.09 in savings with no transactions.

9. Business Reports: Alaska Railroad--Tim Sullivan no news to report. A quiet month. Just hoping things change for the better this coming year once the pandemic abates. Bob French asked about the possible repair of gaps in the fence on the East Side. Tim indicated he would follow up on this issue and report at our next meeting. .

Crowley: Greg Miller was not present.

Port of Alaska: Steve Ribuffo displayed photo of the work done this year. Construction done for the year. Supply barge and big cranes are gone. The work this year completed on time and in budget. The same contractor will be doing the work to complete this project next year including catwalks, tower, plumbing etc. Long lead items are being ordered and the first bonds for the project will close December 3. The tariff structure for the financing has been place since January. Noted that despite the issues caused by the pandemic (cruise ship cancellations, etc.), Port revenues for the year actually were up due to large amount of petroleum for the Airport Cargo operations.

10. Committee Updates: FCC/AMATS Update: Bob French reports FCC mostly involved 4 proposed changes in zoning codes. The various changes should not directly impact the Government Hill Community. Should not directly affect us. Bob believed the various changes appeared reasonable. Bob reported he was unable to attend the AMATS meeting but understood that nothing of great significance has occurred.

Parks Committee: Bob French noted it is time to start planning for next year and he may request for ideas for activities to be undertaken. Noted there was no discussion at the FCC of Solarize Alaska, an initiative allowing home owners in an area to join a buying club to obtain lower price on purchasing and installation of solar. Thomas Pease asked about plans to resume re trail work, specifically for the East Side connector. Steve G indicated work will be addressed this coming spring/summer/fall.

Comprehensive plan—Jody Sola reported there was a meeting of 7 or so to discuss what the master park plan should look like. Steve Raffuse of the Municipality was involved. Another meeting with Steve R and the individual assigned to this project is planned after the first of the year. Hopefully by next fall, we can present plan to the Parks Commission. We also may also need to discuss the Neighborhood Plan and how it fits with the Comprehensive Plan. There will be public notice and meetings regarding these matters.

11. Community Comments: Masks—Jody Sola has 100 packs of 5 masks each for the community provided for free by the FCC. Email Jody with requests for same. Melinda Gant suggested that a supply be provided to the liquor store that has apparently experienced some problems with mask less customers.

November 19, 2020
Minutes

December meeting: Council normally doesn't meet in December. Stephanie Kesler moves to cancel December meeting. Second by Steve Gerlek. Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8: 02 p.m.