

**Airport Heights Community Council Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**January 21, 2021**

**Attendance:** Chelsea Ward-Waller - 16th Avenue; Barbara Karl; Andy Erickson - Sunrise Dr; Felix Rivera; Brianna Beswick - Demeure Pl; Brix Hahn (Staff to Sen. Begich); Emily Becker - E 20th Ave; Ed Brewer; Joni Wilm - Talkeetna (Guest, MoA DOTPF); Karen Walker - Eastridge; Margo Bellamy - Wintergreen; Mark Sabel; Meg Zalatel; Megan Davey - Birchwood; Rayette Sterling - Sunrise; Renee Whitesell - Birch Run (Guest); Alexander Kelly (Staff to Rep. Tarr); Jena F - Kuskokwim St; Genevieve Mina - E 20th Ave; Rep. Geran Tarr - 18th Ave; Sen. Tom Begich; Brita Mjos; Kelly Lessens

Call to Order. A quorum was present.

**Agenda and Minutes** - Barbara Karl moved to accept the agenda. Chelsea Ward-Waller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Barbara Karl also moved to accept the minutes from November. Chelsea Ward-Waller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Assembly Member Meg Zalatel** - Updated on Airport Heights Elementary School. PTA has a new website (<http://ahpta.org/>), where they are also selling t-shirts and sweatshirts; the ice skating rink is also filled and open, but only for general skating, not hockey. Ms. Zalatel also sits on the Committee on Homelessness, which will be renamed to the Committee on Housing & Homelessness, and shared an update on increase in homelessness due to unavailability of temporary shelter (full presentation [here](#)). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has funded Community Development Block Grants for non-profit entities to respond to COVID-19. Public comment will occur from January 26 - February 5 by 5:00PM (more information on public comment can be found [here](#) from the Anchorage Health Department). The assembly is currently assessing competing proposals on IT upgrades and funding towards the Anchorage Police Department towards computer dispatch and policy body cameras.

**Assembly Member Felix Rivera** - Discussed that the assembly will extend the current emergency order unless it is revoked or replaced. Currently addressing proposals to temporarily fill the empty West Anchorage seat on the Anchorage Assembly. Discussed bond packages on the upcoming ballot; public testimony and deliberation will occur on the Tuesday, January 26 meeting. Assembly Members Zalatel, LaFrance, Weddleton working on transitioning the current COVID-10 Emergency Orders to Assembly Ordinances (e.g., requiring masks, temporary on-site consumption licenses, suspending plastic bag ban enforcement). Mentioned threats to select assembly members, and that any threats to assembly members have been referred to APD.

**School Board Member Margo Bellamy** - Last meeting on Tuesday and began discussion on ASD budget. ASD lost approximately 5,000 students throughout COVID-19. Hoping for Legislative relief and additional CARES funding. Ms. Bellamy addressed flawed assumptions that less kids students warrant less funding, but asserted that the needs of kids continue to be the same. School Board will soon bring forth a budget for community input. Next School Board meeting is on Tuesday, February 2, and will

continue discussion on the budget and Governance Committee's Anti-Racism & Instructional Equity Policy, which will be finalized by February 15. Updated on ASD COVID-19 vaccination clinic, which robustly delivered all of its supply of the first dosage of Moderna according to the State of Alaska Vaccine Distribution plan, with the second round of dosages continuing around February 2. ASD is continuing to send pop up COVID-19 testing sites, which will be free until January 30th. Answered questions on vaccines for teachers, and ASD will eventually vaccinate all employers according to the State plan. Board also sent a letter of appreciation to staff. Also held a virtual Legislative priority event with attendance from legislative staff, discussing ASD's newly adopted goals and guardrails. Ms. Bellamy explained 5,000 , later noting that around 1,300 moved out of the district, and with COVID-19 recovery, ASD hopes to see the remaining 3,700 students return. Addressed teachers teleworking, saying kids will still have an option for virtual learning, gradual increase in in-person teaching since November for small groups, and teacher's union supporting teachers who choose to telework.

**Representative Geran Tarr** - Discussed Capitol insurrection, Inauguration and impact. In Alaska State House, hoping to organize into a majority, especially if additional Federal COVID would change current reorganization status. Addressed Governor Dunleavy's significant PFD commitments with potential cuts to the safety net, and emphasized her commitment to public service and low-income constituents in the district. Rep. Tarr is also introducing a bill updating Alaska law's consent definition.

**Senator Tom Begich** - Worked hard to organize a bipartisan coalition in the Senate but was not successful. The Senate has a 14-member majority with moderate Republicans in leadership. Sen. Begich expressed concerns on voting reform legislation (SB39), which would revoke PFD Automatic Voter Registration and eliminate the power of the local community with election procedure. Sen. Begich recommended community councils to put together their own ad hoc committee discussing small capital projects to submit to the Legislature, which may impact the capital budget and/or general obligation bond. Also legislation related to oil and gas property taxes. Sen. Begich is introducing legislation on frontline grocery workers, colorectal coverage, and establishing an Alaska Constitution Day on April 24th.

**AMATS' Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (Joni C. Wilm)** - Ms. Wilm presented on the plan, detailing the history of the trails plan, and the various components of the plan (e.g., Existing Conditions, Public Involvement, Network Development, Project Prioritization, Implementation, and Design Guide). Funding for the plan is reliable due to approximately 20% of AMATS budget allocated to bike and pedestrian projects. Public comments will be accepted from January 4 through March 5. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.anchoragenonmotorizedplan.com/>.

**President's Report:** President Ramsay reported on the Council submitting a letter of concern on the current R-4A proposal to rezone the area of Tikishla Park through Nicols Street from PLI ( Public Lands and Institutions district) to R-4A (multifamily residential district). Area is also classified as Class A and Class B wetlands with salmon redds in Campbell Creek. Requested Council approval to speak at the upcoming Assembly meeting on behalf of the Council and the work Assembly Member Felix Rivera has accomplished for the Airport Heights Community Council.

Barbara Karl moved to support President Ramsey speaking on behalf of the Airport Heights Community Council at the next Anchorage Assembly meeting to attest to Chair Rivera's contributions to the Council,

and in opposition to Resolution No. AR 2021-34, a resolution of the Anchorage Assembly submitting the question whether to recall Felix Rivera at the Regular Municipal Election on April 6, 2021, for the voters of District 4. Emily Becker seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

**FCC Report (Chelsea Ward-Waller):** Ms. Ward-Waller reported on a recent presentation on property appraisal. If individuals want to make sure they have the appropriate property exemptions or appeal appraisal sent in the mail, go to [muni.org/pa](http://muni.org/pa). Assembly Member Zaletel also answered that updated mil rate will be set after First Quarter Budget Revisions during the spring, most likely during the second meeting in April.

**Community Concerns and Announcements:** Kelly Lessens is a current candidate for Anchorage School Board. Ms. Lessens discussed her background as a parent of two children in the Anchorage School District and volunteer work leading an advocacy group called ASD 60, which calls for equitable policies for lunch and wellness. Running on a platform of child-centered decision making: wellness, equity, and learning.