

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, March 10, 2021

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Council Members Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Dan & Sherry Wright

Council Members Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Hedy Eischeid, Kim Paulson, Louis Imbriani, Renea Miller, Fred McLeary, Sonia Lipker, Edgar Blatchford, David Wahlberg

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm. Roll call was taken to ensure all participants were included in our list of attendees.

1. Chair Kendra Kloster welcomed everyone and made a land acknowledgement of the Denai'na people and a request for those on ZOOM to sign in via the Chat room with name, RJCC address and contact info.

2. Anchorage Police Report – no report given.

3. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

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

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - Juneau is also getting snow. Almost 2 billion deficit has dropped a bit due to the rise of oil prices. Easiest pool of money is PFD. Governor doesn't believe there's room for significant cuts in the budget. 1.7 billion dollar deficit. Oil and Gas S Corporation taxes bill submitted - SB 107 introduced today. S 106 would tax the legacy fields by changing tax credit deductions. DHSS is being reorganized (largest Dept in the state) was done by Executive Order. There are hearings on this which is preferred than by Executive Order. General Obligation bond – recent testimony for deferred maintenance items. We could take advantage of low interest bond rates at this time. Working with staff on projects that should be on this list, send to Kendra so they can at least be in the pool.

Louis Imbriani question – trying to find the rules for the legislators, concerning COVID. Senator Begich could better answer that question. Primarily Legislative Council sets the rules and there have been only slight changes. He can provide copies via chat room.

Louis Imbriani question regarding income tax bill. Basically the state would be paying our income tax. Bill Wielechowski stated he doesn't believe we are getting what we should be getting from oil revenues (to around \$1 billion). Almost everyone has a different idea and he is hopeful to get hearings on his ideas. Senator Tom Begich added a bill for oil & tax property tax bill that would have generated money. The oil industry needs to pay first. 1.4 billion dollars could be generated (many out of state workers that don't pay taxes here). Oil industry credits have been in place for years. There was an income tax in 1975.

Sen. Tom Begich - Income tax bill is a move to try and get legislators to understand the need for revenues and get the discussion going. Monies coming from COVID that can be used for education. Bill on Trusts that will have a hearing this week. Reinforcement of COVID rules.

Rep. Geran Tarr - Capital projects interest. HB 5 priority – Alaska leads the nation in domestic violence and we would love to see that changed. 1000s of Alaskans have been denied justice. Most crimes go unprosecuted, leaving criminals to perpetrate again and again, because the laws are broken. Partnership have been good with meeting times that work for families. Trying to get more men involved in the issues as well. Economic justice bills and restorative practices will be things they will be working on. Disappointed with legislators inability to work together. She came to session with new energy with a mindset of a public servant because otherwise no work gets done. The pandemic has worsened children living in poverty. Repairing relationships with Speaker Stoots to have a working legislator group. She is committed to working for Alaskans. Link for registration for the 27th-

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_igBEyh4_Ty6mx1DsuHb_KQ

Louis Imbriani – HB 5 has good ideas – anything to strengthen the sentencing guidelines? Many of those released victimize again. Geran responded she would like to have a more in depth conversation with him. The sentencing portion is not part of this bill. Rewrite of the definition of consent, rape kit timeline, 10 year age gap are components. Age of consent is 16 so that they don't criminalize a bunch of high school students. There have been abuses of those with knowledge of the age of consent at 16, so that's where the 10 year gap comes into place. The attempt is to put social conscience appropriateness between relationship of people. There are also varying levels of sexual assault (by degrees).

Louis Imbriani – any other Anchorage reps sponsoring the bill? Sponholz, Fields and one more. There are a couple of rural legislators also sponsoring. Public safety is something most legislators desire to help with and significantly reduce the number of incidents.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (Rose Foley provided report) Ways & Means Committee control state spending, efficiency in current departments and new revenues. HHS Committee split was rejected. Let them know if you have any needs.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

4. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen – Public safety committee meeting - Fire & Police chief are retiring, so new leaders will be needed. Election is coming up April 6 with ballots anticipated mid-March. 343-VOTE is the number if you have not received your ballot. ASD budget was postponed until March 23 to get additional input. You can call in or attend in person. Announcement by the Governor regarding vaccinations for all Alaskans age 16 and over. Middle school and High school students are returning to school, so it is hoped that this push for vaccines will be effective.

Forrest Dunbar - \$35 million of funds – mortgages, small businesses will be the hopeful gap filler needed by residents. Some of the measured passed is suspension of the plastic bag ban (used an ordinance that keeps in place till the end of August). Assembly role is pretty limited in regards to the School board budget (yes or no vote). Last two meetings were relatively quiet. Named Little League field in Girdwood after an Alaskan (played for the Bucs) that died in California. Army National Guard vaccinated soldiers.

Louis Imbriani – When will EO 19E be updated? This directly affects my work, community and family. Forrest responded he was assured that it will be changed by the end of this week.

Question how the current mayor has protected civil liberties. This is the first time in his life that he has been faced with someone telling him how to work, where to work, how to dress when I work, who I can associate with. Forrest – mayor has been following code, constitution while facing a deadly pandemic. Numbers are coming down due to vigilance of the people. Also, if we can get the vaccinations we will also see more tourists this summer.

Louis Imbriani – spoke out against many of the things that have been done and lack of scientific vetting of many of the rules that were implemented. He is currently required to wear a mask, even when he is by himself at his job, because of the mandates.

5. School board report (3 minutes each) – no report

6. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – Assembly training put together by the Federation. Officer training is going to be offered this year. Starting a new park zone called PR for MOA parks – small groups at a time. Didn't see any for East Anchorage in the initial list. Paint the Town was the last item.

Kendra will follow up on the Zoom training we discussed last month.

7. Review & Update Capital Improvements Project list

Fred provided comments in the Google doc that was sent out. Community Gardens is something we can put on the list (\$4000 NeighborWorks grant) working with Lyndsey. Fencing is one of the bigger costs. Beautification at RJSP may be a use of those funds.

Sherry Wright, Kathleen Plunkett and Kendra spoke about their favorites which included – Northern Lights Blvd at Bragaw St Pedestrian Crossing Improvements; Wonder Park Elementary School area lighting; Traffic Calming; Russian Jack Springs Park; Community Garden Site Selection and Design and Management Standards; School Safety which includes lighting and cross walks in RJCC area.

There is a safe route to schools manual that can be referenced also. Ed Leach made a motion to approve the discussed CIP List. Lindsey Hajduk 2nd. Motion approved.

8. Presentation for a resolution submitted by community member related to emergency order – Louis Imbriani was given an opportunity to speak to his resolution. He has attempted to present this to six other councils and we were the only one that allowed it. A copy of the resolution was provided to FCC to post with our agenda, but apparently they did not post the DRAFT resolution.

Kendra spoke about becoming a new chair in January and getting lots of requests for items on our agenda, appreciates everyone's patience as we work through all of it.

Lindsey Hajduk spoke about some of her concerns with the language of the resolution. Sonja Lipker followed up – she is supportive of the Acting Mayor of Anchorage response, this resolution is full of generalities. Hedio concurs with previous speakers.

Fred asked if we had the opportunity to hear from the MOA regarding this issue. They can be scheduled for the next meeting. Sherry suggested the opportunity for everyone to have the chance to review the resolution, bring in the MOA to speak and then we can vote on this next month. The item will be on next month's agenda for further discussion.

9. Mayoral candidates introduction (3 minutes each)

Bill Falsey – Best days are still ahead. Went to Central and Dimond. He has MOA and private business experience and is a dad. Anchorage is a place where people want to be.

Bill Evans – did not stay on Zoom meeting

Albert Swank – did not stay on ZOOM meeting

Joe Westfall – Closures have created a lot of damage to businesses. Government has not been as adversely affected.

School board candidates

Carl Jacobs – spoke at February meeting.

Pat Higgins – 2008 – 2017 school board member. He spoke about many of the things they accomplished. He is interested in academic excellence. Frustrated with inactivity of the board. School board has to hold the administration accountable if we want to help kids.

Judy Norton-Eledge – Gave some of her Alaska experiences in rural villages. Been in Anchorage since 2003. Running because she is upset about the school closures. MatSu schools and private schools were up and running. Union control is a problem that contributed to lack of school in Anchorage. Low reading scores is a high concern. Want to see high academic achievement for all students, parental involvement, and not every new social idea that comes out regularly becoming part of education.

10. Neighborhood/Community Announcements Lindsey – NeighborWorks is taking nominations for the Paint the Town event here: <https://www.nwalaska.org/programs-events/paint-the-town> This will be the 15th year in Alaska. If you have a neighbor that you think could benefit please send in the nomination.

Follow up on the Community Survey (grant opportunity). Community Gardens is one of the items discussed which may be able to be done at one of the schools.

Joy Boston – JBER Community Partnerships – came to answer questions.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 14th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary