

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, September 8, 2021

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Fred McLeary, Keelin Baughman, Howard “Bud” Gish and Helena “Tiger” Gish, Kathleen Plunkett, Terry Cummings, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Lisa McGuire, Stephanie Taylor, Leighan Gonzales (Rep aid), Lori Pickett (AK Literacy Program), Megan Holland (Rep aid), Nicolette Dent (Parks & Rec), Aqik, Lindsey Hajduk (Neighbor Works), Helena Jacobs, ALP Teacher (Crowberry), Dora Wilson (School Board), LG Tobin (Sen aid), Van Le (R & M Consultants)

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

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

2. Approve Minutes

3. Anchorage Police Report - no report

4. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

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

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – Big issue is PFD and it’s the same annual fight. Believes it should be put in constitution so they can do other business.

Sen. Tom Begich (Luky Tobin) – Constituent Zoom call re: redistricting will happen tomorrow night. She’ll add the link in the chat. 5 pm.

Rep. Geran Tarr - Congratulations to Kendra on the citation. Considering what is possible based on the makeup of the legislature and who the governor is. Question on what is the broad-based revenue –warming to the idea of a sales tax. 50/50 plan for dividend would be \$2350, which is more for families. Sales tax would have exemptions for food, medicine, heating oil, and feminine hygiene products. 20% of our workforce are nonresidents. 2.26 million visitors come to Alaska and lots of Alaskan’s travel and have to pay taxes when we travel. Similarly, we can ask those travelling to Alaska to contribute. We have a bed and rental car tax, but usually family stays with family. We need a foundational plan that would bring in revenue and offer economic fairness. Oil tax adjustments are needed. They’ve been having lots of conversations and ideas are being shared, trying to balance low income and rural family taxation. Another idea is a rebate – 2% tax rate with a rebate based on your income would help level out taxation and would only be valid for Alaska residents. The most regressive action is cutting the PFD. Alaska is experiencing an outward migration.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – Special Session ongoing – \$1100 PFD passed in House, and is under discussion in the Senate now. Legislative Citation to present for Kendra Kloster recognition for efforts for her community. Congratulations also from Rep. Chris Tuck, Bill Wielowski and many others. Kendra thanked all the people she works with and appreciates the recognition.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

5. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen – Authorized MOA to relinquish additional funds through AK Housing for renters. Created a committee of people that have experienced homelessness in an effort to reduce homelessness. Mayor vetoed the creation of the committee and the Assembly over-rode the veto. Department Directors are approved except the Public Library appointee. Report from Board of Equalization (appraisal too high on properties) – has a shortage of individuals on that committee. They meet in late spring (15 – 20 hour commitment).

Lori Pickett – AK Literacy Project has been working to help people apply for the renter assistance. (online only or paper copies available?) AHFC link for rental assistance program is <https://www.ahfc.us/blog/posts/topic/3744/covid-19>
Immigrant's also should be included in the homeless issue, as they may not qualify for some of the assistance or programs.

Forrest Dunbar – Received 120-day report from Administration (1st step in the budget process). 5% cut to operating budget (not specifying where that will come from). Has some questions about the budget process this year. Late November/early December hoping to have a budget passed. (On the homelessness committee) – bill that was proposed but not introduced. Short term need for shelter space in the winter and longer term solutions. Sullivan Arena may continue to be used if no other space is found. There were 30 locations noted in today's paper of potential sites with 3 in East Anchorage. Former native charter school is one place that sustained damage during the earthquake. Native Charter school is now at East High School. Looking forward to hearing plans in the upcoming week. General Revenue showed police and fire running higher, alcohol tax is bringing in revenue. Garnishment to PFD will reflect a lower amount if the PFD is lower.

6. School board report (3 minutes each) – Dora Wilson provided a report. Fairview Elementary is being renamed Dr Davis Elementary School. Bus route suspensions are due to lack of bus drivers. Training should be completed by mid-October with routes coming back on then. ASD responded to requests from the community to share COVID numbers. Can find those on the web site by each school with numbers being updated daily as they learn of new cases. Thanks for community partners that supplied backpacks and school supplies! Distribution were held at Fairview Rec Center, Clark Middle School, and Northway Mall. Next School Board meeting with Assembly is this Friday and next School Board meeting is Sept 21. 742-HELP can direct you to resources ASD can provide.

Ed recommended folks interested in helping with school supplies can find those items while they are on sale. Religious schools have stayed open for the past year and Ed wondered if they had found any COVID mitigation measures they were taking.

7. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – no report. They meet next week.

8. Report from JBER Public Relations – Denny Hostetter (673rd Airbase Wing) Boniface gate is operational. Visitor's Center will be ready next spring. Muldoon gate are opening ½ hour earlier than normal (5:30 am) on weekdays which will continue to September 20th. AK Airline Center grand reopening Sunday September 19th 2-4 pm will include a performance by the 9th Army Band. Post Road gate is open.

9. Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan Report – Van Le (R & M Consultants, Inc) provided the update. Thanks for those that participated from RJCC. Process began in 2017 with lots of meetings once the committee started up. The parks and trails helped many weather the COVID

shutdowns. Nicolette Dent continued the presentation (she grew up on the East side of Anchorage). Parks are part of the critical infrastructure of Anchorage. Re-paving multi-use trails, improve sight lines on existing trail, add lighting, benches, wayfinding, develop singletrack trails, restore width and tread on selected surface trails, upgrade or repair bridges, develop a multi-use trail and another connection north to south. Natural Resource Management Goals to promote and protect natural resources, protect the water quality. NW and NE Gateway, 20th Avenue neighborhood gateway and S Boniface gateway, Lidia Selkregg Chalet areas overview was provided, as well as parkwide trail and amenity improvements. Kendra asked if the presentation can be emailed so we can post it on RJCC Facebook page. Timeline for adoption of the plan – NE Council approval (meets September 16th), then approximately 1 month Parks & Rec Commission approval. Lisa McGuire moved to accept the Resolution from RJCC to support the proposed plan. Kendra 2nd. Motion approved unanimous.

10. Discussion on Traffic Calming – There have been some changes since we earlier discussed this. Will defer this until the new person with MOA is in place. Kendra can put together a resolution that includes the area issues to get out prior to the meeting. Forrest said Bradley Coy is the new traffic engineer to contact. Scenic Foothills has residents write in with specific requests. Items can be added to the bond. Tiger Gish spoke about the roundabouts that were put in on E 8th between Hoyt and Klevin and they used to work, but now they are looking for some of the speed bumps put in to deter speeders. If anyone has others needed, email them to Kendra to be included in her list. kendrak874@gmail.com

11. Neighborhood/Community Announcements – Keelin Baughman, Youth Services Librarian at Mtn View Library, located at 120 Bragaw Street. September is library card month. Summer storytime went so well, they are continuing with Family Storytime on Tuesday at 6 pm and Friday at 10:30 am at Dave Rose Park this fall. (Flyer attached)

Lindsey Hajduk (NeighborWorks) – Community Garden for RJCC area has run into an issue of finding a permanent location as the St Anthony’s location fell through. Geran Tarr asked about the current community garden along Bragaw – is there room for expansion there? Not sure, probably not, but that’s a good follow up.

Lori Pickett – AK Literacy Program is now the regional provider of Adult Education (GED prep). They have 50 students and record-breaking numbers of English students. Vaccines have been delivered to immigrants. lpickett@alaskaliteracyprogram.org for more information.

Kendra – AK Public Safety Commission – trying to put together a work session about the body cams policy. New draft policy will be coming out and will be discussed at a future meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 13th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary