

Hillside Community Council Meeting
Minutes for Monday September 20, 2021, 7:00 pm
Location: Hilltop Ski Area and via Zoom

Board Roll Call: Present: Carmela Warfield, Robert Redlinger, Zac Johnson, Todd Brownson

1. **Board President Warfield opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.**
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Call to order & welcoming remarks.
 - Membership & voting requirements.

2. **Consent Agenda:**
 - Motion to approve the agenda.
 - Moved: Zac Johnson, Seconded: Robert Redlinger.
 - Motion to amend the agenda by President Warfield, to add an update from AFD Capt. Casey Johnson.
 - Moved: Robert Redlinger, Seconded: Todd Brownson.
 - Motion to approve the amended agenda carried.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the August HCC Meeting.
 - Moved: Carol Winter, Seconded: Zac Johnson.
 - Motion carried.

3. **Updates and Reports from any officials in attendance:**
 - Representative Laddie Shaw:
 - Going back to Juneau on October 1st for the next special session.
 - Looking at developing a long term fiscal plan and PFD payments.
 - President Warfield asked what can citizens do to help?
 - Rep. Shaw suggested to call your representatives and make your feelings heard.
 - Legislative Aide Dirk Craft for Senator Josh Revak:
 - Unknown if any new legislation will be introduced for next special session.
 - There will be a meeting of the Anchorage Caucus at Bettye Davis East HS on Wednesday.
 - Representative James Kaufman:
 - Has had some success with creating legislation addressing an appropriation limit.
 - Board Member Redlinger asked, considering the recent IT security breach, what movement do you expect next year on HB 55 (cybersecurity)?
 - That is Rep. Johnson's bill; hope it gets traction.
 - There's a chance it could be addressed during the special session, if the Governor amends the agenda.
 - Doug Robbins asked when is the upcoming Anchorage Caucus townhall?
 - Wednesday, 5-7:30 pm, will be held on Zoom.

- Rep. Shaw clarified that the cybersecurity bill is HB 3.
- Director of Community Engagement Portia Erickson for Mayor Bronson's Office,
 - Extended Loussac Library hours for COVID testing, now covers 7 am to 7 pm.
 - May open a new testing location in Muldoon.
 - The next Assembly meeting will include a measure covering a potential mask mandate, which the Mayor will not support.
 - The Business Grant Relief Program will be ending September 30th.
 - State has received \$90 million in new business and tourism relief funds, as part of ARPA.
 - Alaska Housing is working on the next round of relief for tenants and landlords, to include assistance in paying utilities.
 - Two grocery stores are out of paper bags; the Mayor will not enforce the plastic bag ban for substitutions.
 - Carol Waters asked, what is the rationale for not considering a mask mandate, given the great harm COVID is causing to the community? Also would like more information regarding the awarding of the management contract for the Sullivan Arena homeless shelter to 99 Plus 1.
 - Dir. Erickson shared the Mayor's position on the mandate and reason for opposition, and answered that 99 Plus 1 has been offering a concierge service for COVID positive homeless persons for about a year; was also determined to be qualified through the bid review process.
 - Elizabeth Harpold asked how many businesses bid?
 - It is uncertain if that information is public, but can provide after looking into it. Dir. Erickson provided contact information.
 - President Warfield asked Dir. Erickson to share any applicable updates and answers to questions at the October HCC meeting, since other community members were also interested.
- Assemblymember John Weddleton:
 - The Assembly is focusing on homelessness; need short term and long term solutions
 - A year ago, a commission was established to study/consider stormwater utility issues in the Anchorage Bowl.
 - The Skyhill development request for a rezone is on the Assembly agenda for September 28th.
 - The Assembly is also developing a new scoring system for Transportation Improvement Plan, with multiple opportunities for public comment.
 - The Assembly will be considering a proposed ordinance for a masking mandate.
 - We are at a different point in the pandemic now; the medical community has stated the need for services has exceeded their capacity.
 - The proposed ordinance provides accommodation for medical/other opt-outs and would expire in December.
 - Regarding the process for a new service provider at the Sullivan Arena:
 - The original contract was sole source, but had to be put out to bid eventually.

- Carol Waters asked how many bids?
 - Assemblymember Weddleton said he believed there were at least three, but does not know for certain.
 - Anchorage School District Board Member Kelly Lessens:
 - Projecting 44,000 students this year.
 - Tomorrow is next board meeting, which will include a goal monitoring session; how much progress is being made.
 - Recently shifted away from mandatory quarantining of close contacts of COVID positive children; new policy only applies to those with symptoms.
 - ASD is struggling with staffing issues, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.
 - HCC Board Member Brownson asked where is the \$112 million in funding coming from?
 - ASD Board Member Lessens said it was federal relief, received in three rounds (\$12 mil, \$60 mil, now \$112 mil); must be used by September 2024.
 - President Warfield asked if there are concerns regarding a report from the Department of Education and Development (DEED), expressing alarm regarding reading and math proficiency?
 - ASD Board Member Lessens said she has not seen it. However, ASD's internal report echoes reports across nation that there has been a substantial drop; need better than average growth to catch up.
 - President Warfield commented the numbers are very concerning and the virtual environment is not conducive to learning; students need to stay in person.
 - President Warfield also said, as a parent, although it is important for students to have a voice in School Board proceedings, there is concern that a proposal to prioritize students over all other community members during the first public testimony period of School Board meetings could hinder parents or others, who also should be heard, from testifying.
 - ASD Board Member Lessens said the Board welcomes public testimony; can be submitted in writing, telephonically, or in person.
 - Jason Warfield asked for clarification regarding additional funding from the federal government?
 - ASD Board Member Lessens said the \$112 million was focused on addressing COVID.
 - Mr. Warfield asked, could the money be used to reduce District expenses and offset taxpayer burden, instead of treating as windfall?
 - Given the questions from the Community related to funding, ASD Board Member Lessens offered to invite the ASD CFO to the next HCC meeting.

4. **Business Updates:**

- President Warfield:
 - Would like to recognize Hilltop Ski Area for hosting the HCC meeting.

- Treasurer Vergason was not present, but there has been no new spending; will need to renew Zoom license (about \$120) and microphone for in-person meeting.
- FCC Delegate Johnson:
 - Relevant information from the most recent FCC meeting had already covered at the meeting.
- HALO Delegate Redlinger:
 - Not present at the most recent HALO meeting.
 - President Warfield said the meeting spoke on Fire-Wise Program; looking towards the 2022 event, which might be held at Hilltop Ski Area in early spring (April/May).

5. **Presentations:** None this month.

6. **Community Information:**

- Anchorage Fire Department Captain Casey Johnson, from Station 8:
 - Station 8 operates a fire engine and a 3000 gal water tender; not many hydrants in the area.
 - Firefighters are cross trained as medics, which is why you may see an engine respond to medical call.
 - Goals are for a 4 minute response to a code red, and an 8 minute response for a code yellow.
 - Many residences do not have address numbers at the end of their driveway, which can make it difficult to locate the correct house in an emergency.
 - Recommend getting fireplaces inspected by a professional.
 - Check your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors; AFD can help installing, checking, or providing a detector if needed.
 - Still accepting applications for the Fire-Wise Program, which is a grant program to remove spruce beetle kill, providing a reimbursement to homeowners up to \$500.
 - HCC Board Member Redlinger asked if the new policy limiting overtime would affect AFD's response time?
 - Captain Johnson said there will be at least one firefighting apparatus available.
 - HCC Board Member Redlinger asked what is projected saving?
 - Captain Johnson said the media had reported \$70,000 to \$100,000.
 - Carol Waters stated she does not think it makes sense to reduce fire resources.
 - Captain Johnson suggested contacting the Mayor or Assembly with concerns.
 - Joy Boston asked, regarding \$70,000 to \$100,000, is that close to the 5% in cuts the Mayor has asked each department to save?
 - Captain Johnson said he does not think that comes even close.
- JBER Community Liaison Joy Boston:
 - The Installation Commander has declared a health emergency on base (health protection condition bravo); masks are required indoors.

- This is due to high COVID rates in the surrounding community.
 - The decision involved senior military leadership and the Mayor's Office, but the policy was in part due to some inaction from the Mayor.
- Angela Rush, from Alaska Child and Family:
 - Organization is focused on assisting one child/one family at a time.
 - Works to help reunify traumatized children with their families.
 - Will provide a more in-depth description of services at the October HCC meeting.

7. **Candidate Forum:**

- Assembly Candidate Randy Sulte:
 - Lives in the Hillside area, up on Crooked Tree.
 - Business background, including working as an engineer for BP.
 - Fiscal conservative.
 - Believes there has been disfunction in the Assembly, and we need to get back to focusing on creating a great community.
- President Warfield made a motion to extend to the meeting to 8:50 pm.
 - Moved: Robert Redlinger, Seconded: Zac Johnson
 - Motion carried.

8. **Announcements:** see Agenda.

9. **Open Discussion:**

- Carol Waters & Helga Berry.
 - Both are long time residents and active skiers on the Hilltop Gasline Trail.
 - Adding lights would make the trail safer for wintertime use, especially for senior citizens.
 - Working with the Nordic Ski (NSAA) on planning, and looking for community support.
 - HCC Board Member Brownson asked who oversees the area?
 - Ms. Waters stated it was the NSAA, but the State owns the land.
 - Hilltop Ski Director Trevor Bird said he believed the project is feasible, and Parks & Recreation could be good avenue to consider.
 - More updates will be provided at future HCC meetings.

11. **Adjournment:**

- President Warfield thanked all officials who attended the meeting.
- Motion to adjourn:
 - Moved: Robert Redlinger, Seconded: Todd Brownson.
 - Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.