

## RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, December 14, 2022

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Kendra Kloster, Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Fred McLeary, Daniel George, Andrew Gray, Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Pete Peterson, Maya, Mercedes Colbert, Ted Eischeid,

Meeting was called to order at 6:54 pm by President Kendra Kloster, in part due to inclement weather and in part due to lack of connection to [info@communitycouncils.org](mailto:info@communitycouncils.org) email (so we could get the passcode being sent to connect the Zoom meeting). This has been an ongoing issue.

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement We are meeting on Dena'ina Land – grateful for their care and sharing the land with us.

2. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (Keith Bauguess) – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – Senate is organized with 9 democrats, 8 republicans. Committee chairs are split with attempts to share leadership. There have been a few introductory meetings. January retreat planned with an all-day session to define goals. Things that continually rise to the top are education funding, inflation, defined benefit packages, energy costs (whether renewable or not).

Sen. Tom Begich (provided by Mercedes Colbert) – Begich at East coast conference. Tracking progress. Mercedes is transitioning to Sen Wielechowski's office as chief of staff.

Rep. Geran Tarr - Thankful for those safe at home. Motto to make every moment count. Report coming out regarding standing up for the less fortunate. PFD cut seems the most repeating effort to balance the budget by the legislators, which impacts lower income families. Wrapping up many group meetings. Restorative Justice summit happened – working with partners. Intern was able to help with inmate rehabilitation efforts, which dovetails with some of ACLU work. GED education – tracking of participation efforts is not happening in the correctional facilities. Letter to Governor requesting this effort, as well as what other states are doing (making access to education mandatory while incarcerated.) ACLU is taking a much more comprehensive look at this issue and Geran will provide a report in January. Wrap up of bills passed will be available. Geran is a professor and lots of requests for her at the university. She is figuring out what will be her next move. ASD may be looking at adding 15 minutes to each day, rather than extending the school year (due to the many snow days we've had).

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – not much going on with house. LB&A committee approved some contracts and appropriations language (grant funding for existing programs). State holds a single audit to ensure compliance with federal grants. ASD is making some preliminary decisions about their budget gap this coming Monday. Addressing the base student allocation is one of the issues. There is a real need for citizen involvement. COVID funding has masked the shortfall for awhile.

Street plowing was discussed – lots of complaints about the lack of road clearing and lack of school opening. At the state level, they can ask for additional funding. Too many Anchorage roads are in priority level 2

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

Discussion of a childcare bill was brought up by Kendra (which Beth Kertula may have tried to get passed). New state facilities may include childcare within new buildings. Childcare is a huge issue for young families that would like to get back to work, but many childcare facilities have a wait list. Ivy said there is a ballot proposition to dedicate marijuana monies for childcare education – (aka preK funding). There was continued conversations about that and the required licensing. The childcare market doesn't work successfully anywhere (unless it is subsidized). Kendra will draft a childcare resolution to review/discuss at our January meeting. Another element of discussion included vocational training. It was suggested that we need another King Career Tech type school. These schools may have higher costs associated with them.

### 3. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen – Enterprise Committee (re: snow plowing issue) Muni snow plowers are being paid \$22/hour (about half of private contractors). Pay raise up to 30% is being discussed as the assembly just found out this discrepancy today. Renegotiations of those contracts is encouraged. Homeless committee meeting – Sullivan Arena averaging 200 people per night. There is a warming area inside the arena – had 93 last night with over 100 per day in December. All the other shelters are full. Hotels are not quite ready to come online. Golden Lion estimates for repairs will take 3-4 months to get it ready.

What is the difference between a warming area and a homeless shelter? They don't work on hooking people up with services. If they are staying there, unless they have a day job, people are on site 24/7. Facilitators try to collect names so they have that data. The Assembly is spending an inordinate amount of time on the Girdwood subdivision issues. Girdwood has so many short-term rentals, that housing for those that want to live and work there are minimal. The proposed housing in the area will likely not be priced for the entry level housing market.

Forrest Dunbar -Passed budget and over-rode mayor's vetoes. Brother Francis shelter 120 beds, appropriation for the assembly security contract, technical assistance for organization (alcohol tax). Forrest spoke more about inflation and snow removal budget, which will begin January 1. There is a surplus of funding that can be used for snow removal (considering the amount of emails coming). Forrest will resign January 3, which will kick off the process for his replacement, who will be seated on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Kathleen Plunkett asked about year-round residents vs visitors to Girdwood. 30% of the homes are owner/occupied. A study to determine how many short-term rental residents was suggested. The municipal assessor has done a study to determine owner/occupied homes there, and perhaps some of the complaints are not coming from those.

### 4. School board report (3 minutes each) – no report

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – no meeting in December. Some of the topics at the November meeting included a great presentation on Honor Flight program, Girdwood cemetery, noisy vehicle law (smog related, as well as muffler modifications), ASD presentation and small discussion of community council boundaries.

6. Community Council Boundaries – Assembly has a survey that doesn't get at the heart of the issues – RJCC boundaries are simple and work out nicely. NECC is very large, but the survey only allows you to answer for your own area. Last time they did this, a revised boundary was sent out for people to review. There were some revisions made and a lot of effort. RJCC feels no need to revise our council boundary areas.

7. Capital Projects update for RJCC area – Ted had some comments on the google doc – recommendation to create a priority list from the CIP list. His preferences are included in the google doc. Recommend (even if it's for next year) to come up with 3-5 priority projects to submit for next year. Kendra asked for any changes desired to be made and given to Kendra via email or at this meeting. We had some discussion about projects that have been taken care of or larger projects that would be done by DOT and should come off the list. Unmarked APD cars helps a lot with neighborhood calming. San Antonio Park – recent break ins, slowing down traffic.

8. Election for RJCC Officers - Motion was made by Ed Leach to retain the officers from last year. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Daniel George. No objections, motion carried. Officers – Kendra Kloster, President; Lori Pickett, Vice-President; Sherry Wright, Secretary; Ed Leach, Treasurer; Kathleen Plunkett, FCC Rep & Trustee.

9. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Daniel George received a citation for top 40 under 40. Great job, Daniel!

Next meeting is scheduled for January 11th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Sherry Wright, Secretary