

**Mid-Town Community Council (MTCC) General Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting located at 3000 C Street –First Floor Conference Room**  
**Wednesday; April 12, 2023**  
**12 Noon to 1:30 PM**

MTCC Officers and Directors attending the meeting included: Kris Stoechner, Rosemary Borchardt, Megan Debenham, Brian Swartzentruber, Kirk Hastain, and Greg McDonald.

**Sign in and Call to Order** – Kris Stoechner President – All MTCC businesses, residents, land owners and guests are welcome to participate and bring ideas forward to this meeting.  
Kris called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

**Approval of Minutes: 1 Min**

Greg moved and Brian seconded that the minutes from March 8, 2023 be approved. The vote to approve was unanimous.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Kirk Hastain - Treasurer - **1 Min**

The balance of the bank account is \$345. Northrim has started charging a \$5/month service fee. Greg moved and Rosemary seconded to close the Northrim account and open a new account at Alaska USA (soon to be Global) Credit Union. The vote to close the account and open a new account was unanimous.

**Approval of Agenda: 1 Min**

Kirk moved to approve and Greg seconded that the agenda be approved. The vote to approve the agenda was unanimous.

**Committees:**

**Marijuana and Alcohol** – Brian Swartzentruber & Rosemary Borchardt – **2 Minutes**

Kris: Spenard CC plus MTCC have more Alcohol and Marijuana stores than rest of Anchorage combined.

Brian: We met with the AMCO board and learned several things:

1. The MOA has many restrictions on top of the SOA regulations and statutes.
2. As a community council we should work closely with the Assembly since the AMCO board will take the Assembly’s recommendations seriously.
3. As a citizen, or as a council, we can always report violations to the AMCO enforcement division. They have a team of investigators and enforcement personnel.
4. On January 1, 2024, a new set of regulations takes effect that changes many of the rules.

Rosemary: There is one package store license renewal with issues. This is a package store that moved from Tudor to Benson two years ago. Store not identified in the meeting.

**Presenters:**

**Mayor’s Office** – Trista Espe - **5 Minutes**

Trista Espe, Communications director

Michelle Hodel, Constituent relations

Annual review of capital projects beginning. Coming soon: survey ranking projects in the area

Pothole hotline: 343-6363

Pulse point mobile app: subscribers who are CPR trained can be alerted to a heart attack in public location and thus offer help

Career expo at West High: 700 students attended, partnership with city and ASD

Parks and Rec hiring for the summer: Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program

Mayor's Community Grant: application period open through April 28

### **School Board – Margo Bellamy – 5 Minutes**

School start times: Next meeting April 18, extended work session to discuss start times and PLCs (professional learning community)- getting close on making a decision on school start times

Budget: Assembly approved, working with legislators to increase BSA for 2024-25

Prop 1 and 14 look promising

Creating scenarios for budget possibilities

Future work sessions-

Alaska literacy initiative (state)- New reading curriculum was approved by state

6<sup>th</sup> grade transitioning to middle school

ASD Virtual

Family Partnership Charter School- Board voted to terminate charter, but keep school in place under district management.

Transitioning students from Abbott Loop

Questions:

Has the Board made a decision to move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to middle school?

Margo: Yes, the superintendent will present a plan and hopefully in next two years it will be implemented. Plan should be solidified in mid-May meeting

Rosemary: How will kids get in to FPCS?

Margo: Just like other alternative schools. Right now there is a waitlist. Students lottery in. FPCS will still have a parent organization.

Rosemary: No physical location?

Margo: Correct. They have an office. The governance was not good at the school. The board voted 6-1 to remove the charter.

Plans to expand charter school program?

Margo: ASD loves charter schools. Charter guidelines are from state and can be found on the State board of education website.

### **Alaskan Grown Cannabis – Kalla Peacock - 10 Minutes – 2 Min Presentation; 8 Minutes questions**

Kris: appreciates AGC for coming. They have written a memorandum of understanding to guide their interactions with the community.

Kalla: Raised in Kotzebue. Wife and two children now live in Anchorage. Used to be educator for ASD. Opening a cannabis retail store at 2505 Fairbanks Street. Also owns property in midtown.

Questions:

Greg: What will you do?

Kalla: Solely retail. No cultivation or manufacturing.

Kirk: How does taxation work? Levied at point of sale?

Kalla: The State taxes at cultivation level. MOA charges sales tax. There is a state tracking system. Point of sale that integrates with state tracking system. Strictly cash-based. Banking still restricted by the federal government. 5% sales tax in Anchorage now.

Kirk: What is your opinion on taxes being raised?

Kalla: Like everything, there is a need for taxes. Not too concerned about MOA raising to 10%. Main issues are state tax and federal government because there are no deductions. Allowed to deduct COGS only.

Kalla: My direct phone number is in the packet if you have further questions.

Michael \*\*\*\*\* : cash only businesses are targets for theft. Mandate for security?

Kalla: Operating plan for security systems, employees monitoring, lighting, cameras around entire building. No cash kept overnight on premises.

**S4-Group-Surveying-Land Design** – Kate Sauve – Proposing 3 tracts of land be subdivided into 4 tracts and a rezone. Project is located east of Old Seward Hwy & South of E 46<sup>th</sup> - **8 Min for Presentation & Questions**

Craig with S4 Surveying: Proposing a subdivision and rezone. Nothing submitted to city yet. Presentation to MTCC is the first step. Propose a new fragment lot plat and easement for access. All steps have to be approved for project to move forward.

Rezone from R-3 to B-3. Currently storage yard with a variance. Hope to build mixed use on tract A. No plans for tract B yet (currently vacant).

Travis Busse- new owner of lot

Steps in Subdivision and Rezone:

1. Presentation to MTCC
2. Planning dept
3. Flyers sent to residents and business owners with opportunity for public comment
4. Planning and zoning commission
5. Assembly - Nov or Dec if things go smoothly. Approval next year about this time.

**Just Serve** – Rina Su'esu'e - Find service projects in our area. Make a difference in our community today! **5 Minutes**

Justserve.org is a website connecting volunteer needs with volunteers nationwide since 2012. Non-profits can have their projects posted on the website for volunteers to view. If MTCC has a project it could be posted.

Parks and Rec Clean-up project in May in MTCC area.

**AK Mental Health Trust** – Allison Biastock - What is the AK Mental Health Trust and how does it fit into Anchorage - **15 Minutes**

Steve Williams, CEO  
Brent Fisher, Trustee  
Allison Biastock, Communications Officer

Steve Williams presentation:

History: AMHT was formed out of lawsuit against the state in 1982. Vern Weis had a child with a mental health condition that couldn't get services. State had breached responsibilities. 1994 lawsuit settled. Established AMHT authority:

1. Instead of legislature overseeing 1 million acres, trustees do it
2. Trustees are appointed by governor, approved by legislature, and serve 5 years
3. \$200 million cash invested in Permanent Fund Corp (now \$531 million)
4. Million acres of land were reconstituted
5. Board of trustees are responsible for authorizing use of trust funds
6. Board of trustees make recommendations to governor and legislature every year about general fund dollars being spent on beneficiaries.
7. Funding has to be focused on beneficiaries of trust- people with mental illness, addiction, traumatic brain injury, and special needs statewide
8. Job is to maximize revenue from 1 million acres of land
9. Have to manage for future. Exists in perpetuity.
10. Mission is to improve lives through state or other systems, allow people to be active in community, live in places of choice, promote them and their lives

Annual budget approved FY24 \$35 million to support trust authority office and trust land office

Kris: Homelessness is a major issue, and a big part of it is mental illness. Anchorage is becoming a hub for help and housing. What might you do in the future to help?

Steve: What we have done- Provided \$1.5 million for 3 projects, adding 200 beds:

1. Complex Care on C and Fireweed. 53 beds, up and running right now.
2. Home for Good- program through United Way. Permanent supportive housing.
3. Providence Alaska House, under construction, focus on seniors

Melinda: What percentage of your portfolio is contributed to physical housing?

Steve: AMHT also partners with AHFC for vouchers for homeless assistance and special needs housing. 1 million acres is largely in SE, some in Fairbanks, some in SW, Anchorage, Valley. Parcels in Anchorage occupied by providers like CSS, ARC, Assets, Salvation Army.

Rosemary: when will Providence Alaska House be done?

Steve: No idea

Rosemary: How much AMHT Anchorage land is available to build on? For MOA to use?

Steve: Trust land office Justy Warner, executive director- can see online where all trust lands are located. AMHT doesn't necessarily own all rights. Sometimes own surface, sub surface.

Rosemary: Can we look to the trust for help with homelessness?

Steve: AMHT does things in partnership with funding and policy making. AMHT is part of the Homelessness council and ACEH. We have staff with expertise on these issues. Also engaged in issues for trust beneficiaries released from correctional institutions.

Brian: Does any of the land produce resource revenue?

Steve: Yes. In SE timber land 85% goes into principal, 15% spendable.  
Royalties from Fort Knox mine in Fairbanks.

What about code of conduct for housing with mental health support available?

Steve: AMHT partners with organizations that provide this type of housing. People need access to low-barrier housing units. Access to stable housing is foundational and makes it possible for people to receive the support they need. Permanent supportive housing is also a key component.

Travis: \$35 million budget comes from revenue?

Steve: Budget comes from-

1. Investments in Permanent Fund
2. Revenue from lands
3. Grants previously awarded
4. Checking accounts with low interest

Key piece on the budget. Each of the 4 elements above are found by looking back 4 years and taking average. This process smooths out the ups and downs.

Allison: Important to note that AMHT is completely self-funded.

Travis: Able to sell or exchange land?

Steve: Some land exchanges.

Travis: Split on funding for prevention?

Steve: Early intervention is priority- focus on youth, children, adolescents

Melinda- are you a public authority?

Steve: AMHT is a state corporation, doesn't provide money to general fund.

**Assemblyman Felix Rivera** - Mr. Rivera will provide a map showing all homeless shelters in the city of Anchorage - **10 Minutes**

Kris: Felix not able to be at the meeting. These are the things he wanted to present:

1. Body worn cameras- money allocated two years ago
2. Hickel contract lawsuit
3. Homelessness- April 30 Sullivan closed. Right now we have 200 people on the street who don't want services, 300 at Sullivan, 200 more utilize warming tent. There is talk about extending Sullivan because of weather. Homeless committee meeting right now.

**Other Assembly reports – Rivera, Zaletel, Constant & Volland – 5 Minutes**

**New Business:**

**Remainder of Meeting – Arctic Rec Center** – What has occurred and what is going to happen going forward?

Kris informed the council that there is a person in the community who wrote a document accusing the MTCC of having secret meetings. This person has been distributing the document throughout the neighborhood. Kris stated that this accusation was false and outlined what has occurred:

A resident of Anchorage sent Kris a link to a newspaper article about the city asking the state for money to buy the Arctic Rec Center with the intent of turning the ARC into a low-barrier shelter. The MTCC acted quickly to find out what was going on and to prevent this from happening. The city had not communicated at all with the MTCC.

The mayor had a town hall meeting about the ARC.

Residents opposed to the ARC becoming a shelter distributed flyers alerting their neighbors.

MTCC board had several emergency meetings, one with Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson who stated that there is a 99% chance that the money would **not** be funded from state.

Felix Rivera has been working to find other housing alternatives.

One volunteer has been building maps revealing that there are 3 schools, 2 churches, several daycare centers, many establishments with liquor licenses, playgrounds, parks, and neighborhoods in the area. The Windemere neighborhood in the Spenard CC is across the street from the ARC.

The MTCC board is doing everything in our power to prevent ARC from becoming a low-barrier shelter.

The ARC parcel has strict restrictions on land use.

Kris has talked with Darrell Hess, the city ombudsman, and he confirmed that the MTCC board has not done anything illegal. The allegations that we had secret meetings are unfounded. MTCC is allowed to have board meetings, and we are not hiding anything. The Open Meetings Act was written for public institutions. The MTCC is private, but we do work with FCC and other public institutions.

Questions:

Travis Busse: Any litigation?

Kris: Not that we are aware of.

Is this a person acting alone? Or part of a group?

Kris: Doesn't know, but thinks it's one person.

Is it true that the city is moving forward as outlined in Felix Rivera's clean slate policy?  
Looking at the entire Anchorage Bowl for shelter locations?

What is the difference between a low-barrier and a regular shelter?

Kris: there are no restrictions/conditions for clients of low-barrier shelters.

The mayor had proposed a shelter off Tudor behind police station. It sounded like a good idea. What happened?

Triste Espe (mayor's office): The mayor's office would love to hear feedback. Suggested reaching out to office and emailing assembly members. These emails become part of the public record.

### **Resolution 2023-02:**

Melinda Gant moved to approve the Midtown Community Council Resolution 2023-02.  
Rosemary Borchardt seconded.

Lindsey Hajduk proposed an amendment to remove Neighborworks from the final paragraph of the first page. She stated that the current property owner had not approached Neighborworks about moving forward with Phase II of the development.

Amendment passed with a vote of 7 for removal, 3 against

Melinda Gant proposed an amendment that the final paragraph of the first page be reclassified as a "Therefore" paragraph and moved to the "therefore" section of the document. Melinda pointed out that "Whereas" statements should be facts based.

Amendment passed unanimously

Melinda Gant proposed an amendment to add "businesses and property owners" to the first "Whereas" paragraph: "WHEREAS, the Midtown Community Council (MTCC) is an organization representing the interests of the residents, **businesses, and property owners** of the Midtown area of Anchorage."

Amendment passed unanimously

Discussion: Lindsey Hajduk pointed out that the Spenard CC considered a similar resolution and did not adopt it.

Kris Stoechner added that the Spenard CC members had written their own resolution and that the community council had rejected it without opportunity for amendment. The members who wrote the proposed resolution were asked to rewrite it and bring it forward in the May meeting.

Kris Stoechner moved to adopt the resolution as amended. Travis Busse seconded.

Resolution passed with 11 votes for, 0 against, and 1 abstention

Megan Debenham moved to close. Travis Busse seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:44 pm.