

Mid-Town Community Council (MTCC) General Meeting Minutes
Meeting will be located at 3000 C Street –First Floor Conference Room
Wednesday; May 10, 2023
12 Noon to 1:30 PM

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

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 12:01 pm

Approval of Minutes: 1 Minute

Greg moved and Brian seconded that the minutes from April 12, 2023 be approved. The vote to approve was unanimous.

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

No report- Kirk absent. Kris noted that no changes have been made.

Approval of Agenda: 1 Minute

Agenda has following changes: Candidate for Chugach Electric Board will be first presenter under New business. CIP projects are now under Greg McDonald.

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

Committees:

Marijuana and Alcohol – Aqua Vitae - Brian Swartzentruber & Rosemary Borchardt – 4 Minutes

Rosemary- MTCC has been dealing with AMCO about proposed package store on Benson Blvd. Originally applied for license 2 years ago and never did anything about it. MTCC committee objects because it does not appear to be a credible business plan. Any thoughts from MTCC are welcome. Committee putting together a letter for AMCO.

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) – ~~Kris~~ – Greg - 1 Minute

Greg has held the position for 1.5 days. We have listing of CIP. MTCC priorities due June 15

Presenters:

Mayor’s Office – ~~Trista Espe~~ Michelle Hodel (Constituent Relations) - 5 Minutes

1st Quarter Budget Revisions:

- The Administration proposed revisions that put the budget \$3.6 million under the tax cap with property taxes.
- This did not cut anything from public safety and added to the Police and Fire budgets.
- This Includes \$750,000 for repairs to the Golden Lion.
- In addition, this put \$1 million extra toward snow plowing for snow season.
- The mayor made 2 veto decisions. These Include:

Revised Budget AR 2023-102(S), as Amended:

Amendment No. 23 GG, Line 11 and Line 15: \$50,000, ACDA, Municipal-wide housing study of short-term rentals (STR)

- “While the Mayor supports a municipal-wide housing study of short-term rentals this is not a legal appropriation and therefore it had to be vetoed.

Amendment No. 15 GG, \$119,000, Community Development/Heritage Land Bank, "To hire a real estate consultant to protect the HLB interest in the Holtan Hills land development deal, if the development agreement is approved by the Assembly"

- While the Mayor supports the efforts in advancing the Holtan Hills development agreement, the proposal to utilize funding from a position that is currently filled within the Mayor's Office is putting an individual's employment in jeopardy, and he does not condone that. He vetoed this amendment to furnish the needed budget to fund this position within the Mayor's Office.

Golden Lion:

- The administration is working with the Anchorage Assembly to set up the Golden Lion as a rooming house to provide housing options for low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness in Anchorage.
- As stated earlier, \$750K has been allocated in the 1st Quarter Budget to bring this property up to code.
- Key safety items, like the fire sprinkler system and interior electrical upgrades will be addressed by this funding.
- The mayor is committed to working with the Anchorage Assembly to fund, start up and bring online the Golden Lion Hotel to be utilized as a viable housing option for our city's most vulnerable.
- As we work together to make sure no one sleeps in the cold, the mayor has directed his team to expedite a plan that opens the former Golden Lion Hotel as quickly as possible.
- With the shutdown of the Sullivan Arena as a shelter, He is committed to standing up the Golden Lion in a legal and efficient manner.
- We realize that the Anchorage Assembly has given us a timeframe and we are here to work with them to figure this out and make it happen.

Sullivan Arena Demobilization:

- After assembly approval, the Anchorage Health Department and shelter contractors are working to determine avenues to provide a one-month extension at the Sullivan Arena to our most vulnerable.
- This includes those persons who have needs that substantially impair daily activity or mobility. We are working to accomplish that objective.
- Homeless service providers are actively working now to place as many people into other facilities as possible.

Homelessness:

- The Mayor thinks that city government works best when both branches are on the same page.
- The mayor and the administration have proposed a variety of options to deal with homelessness which include the Navigation Center, pallet housing, and the use of the former Anchorage School District relocatables.
- The Administration is willing to work with the Anchorage Assembly and community partners to make these options available as quickly as possible.

Downtown Public Safety:

- As of May 1st, a Downtown Patrol Team has been activated. This team is comprised of two officers from the Anchorage Police Department, two members of the Anchorage Health Department Outreach staff, 6-8 Parks and Recreation Healthy Spaces staff, and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership.
- Anchorage Downtown Partnership has up to 15 staff who perform security, outreach, business contacts, etc. downtown. They are interested and excited to take part in this effort. We are coordinating with them to align our efforts.
- Municipality of Anchorage staff will not be performing law enforcement. They will be providing an increased presence downtown. They'll be talking with residents and tourists. They will contact the Anchorage Police Department through either 311 or 911 if they observe illegal activities. The Anchorage Health Department staff and Parks & Rec staff can also help connect individuals with service providers as needed. The Anchorage Police Department can contact the Mobile Intervention Team as needed.
- The goal is that through an increased presence in the core downtown area, there will be a positive impact on reducing disorderly conduct, loitering, and vandalism, so that our tourists and residents feel welcome and safe to enjoy downtown Anchorage.

Port:

- Recently, the Mayor traveled to Washington DC to discuss the Port of Alaska.
- The administration had many productive meetings with the Alaska Congressional Delegation, other Congressional leaders, and federal agency heads.
- This 2.2-billion-dollar mega project is crucial to rebuild and modernize the port for the future success of our state.
- The Port is high on the mayor's radar and his administration is dedicated to securing more federal funding.

City Cleanup:

- Please join in the annual Citywide Cleanup that will happen in the month of May.
- We invite you to create teams and use your cleanup skills to help spruce up our city.
- To register your team please go to citywidecleanup.org
- You can pick up orange bags at designated locations including your local Fred Meyer.

Community Councils:

- The mayor supports and appreciates every community council in Anchorage.
- You all are the heart and soul of your neighborhoods, and the mayor desires to work with each one of you on ways to improve your areas and Anchorage overall.
- The Mayor's focus is to work with all the councils to come up with innovative ideas to make our city a better place to live, work, and play.

Community Council Survey Link:

- Spring is upon us, homeowners are planning improvements, and City Hall is reviewing Anchorage's needs for capital improvements.
- Many of you recall that the Community Council Survey is the first step in this process.
- The mayor relies on community council guidance when identifying, considering, and prioritizing Anchorage's capital projects.

- The way we do this is the Community Council Survey. Through this Survey, city government develops the 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Budget/Program.
- We want Community Councils to provide an overall priority ranking of all capital projects in their area, as well as suggest additional projects.
- Projects listed are those currently included in the approved 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program.
- Please keep projects on this list for future years if your project is not selected.
- The survey is located at <https://www.muni.org/communitycouncilsurveys/homepage/>
- The deadline to complete the survey is June 15, 2023.
- Community councils help build “neighborhood pride.”
- Finding ways to better define Anchorage geographic districts was a recommendation of the 2023 Project Anchorage Task Force, and we encourage you to review the Task Force’s Final Report (<https://www.muni.org/Pages/ProjectAnchorage.aspx>).
- Every community council benefits from a commercially vibrant Anchorage.
- On behalf of Anchorage, we want to thank you for your service and sense of civic responsibility.
- We appreciate your insight into our community, and we want to make sure that your voice is heard on capital spending and other important matters facing our fair city.

School Board – Margo Bellamy – 5 Minutes

No representative

Anchorage Police Dept – 8 Minutes- Sergeant Michael Farr- day shift supervisor for patrol and community focus sergeant.

Calls for service are up from 2022. 951 calls Feb 2023, 834 calls Feb 2022. However, number of reports written has stayed the same. Biggest reason for calls is disturbance. Next largest call is trespassing. Business owners can submit a trespass letter. Trespassers can be arrested based on criteria of letter. Trespass letters have been effective. Police department can provide business and property owners with the letter to be signed.

Kris- will email trespass letter to MTCC mailing list. There also need to be trespassing signs posted on property.

Rosemary – is there any movement to get small hardcore group of criminals off the streets? Is there a group of people that do an outside portion of crimes?

MF- Yes. Drug nexus related to many crimes. There is a long-term drug investigation team.

Unfortunately, many people arrested are often released and repeat offend.

Rosemary- as it stands now, car thief could steal 10-20 cars until that individual goes to trial?

MF- Could happen. This is a question for the presiding judge who makes the bail schedule. Post Covid only felonies are going to jail.

R- So we need a legal solution for re-offenders?

MF- It seems so. Once people are sentenced, they will be monitored.

R- does Anchorage have a facility for offender with drug problems?

MF- Not that he’s aware of, definitely not for unsentenced individuals.

Al- Dollar amount difference between misdemeanor and felony?
MF- Yes. \$1500 theft is felony. Stealing a car is a felony.

Assemblyman Felix Rivera - Mr. Rivera will provide a report on the "Clean Slate Strategy" - 15 Minutes

Kris- Senator Jackson reports that money for Arctic Rec Center purchase is not being funded

H&H Committee Work:

Sanctioned Camp Community Task Force: Created as part of the demobilization plan the Assembly adopted in April. Meant to explore the feasibility of a variety of different models and concepts of sanctioned camping. Tiny home village, dignity village, pallet shelter, ASD relocatable buildings, etc. Report due to the Assembly and administration in July with lanes of recommendations that are scored by criteria. From there, in the hands of the Assembly and administration to make the policy, funding and implementation decisions.

Complex Behavioral Health Needs Community Task Force: Created also as part of the demobilization plan the Assembly adopted in April. Meant to explore how we meet the immediate needs we see on our streets and address mid-to-long term solutions to our behavioral health crisis. Reports and recommendations are due to the State of Alaska, the Assembly, and administration in June and September.

Forest Park Mobile Home Park: This is something new that was added to the committee's plate last month. The MOA is evicting a mobile home park in Chugiak-Eagle River due to water access issues. The committee is charged with coming up with recommendations and action items to help address this situation and keep this people housed. Reports due in May and June to the Assembly.

Clean Slate Strategy: Assembly approved this lane of work in March. Main goal is how to get to a decision point on a new permanent year-round low-barrier shelter. We know we need more shelter beds and we need to make a decision and get one stood up by the end of the year, preferably before the snow flies. The first phase of this work is happening right now through ACEH's community engagements. Rest of the work through early August is spelled out in the final draft timeline.

Closure of the Sullivan:

Assembly made a wide variety of funding decisions related to the closure of emergency cold weather shelter, so the Sullivan Arena, Alex Hotel, and Aviator Hotel.

Simple reality: more people being unsheltered. Raised that red flag for months now.

Funded housing – \$750k for repairs and \$250k for startup costs for 85 units at the former Golden Lion which the administration is trying to turn on by mid-May.

Funded outreach -- \$1.15M, four types: 1) contact driven, 2) housing driven, 3) mobility and medical needs outreach, 4) mobile navigation services

Funded unified funding proposal -- \$1.55M, basic safety net, ties in directly with the Anchored Home plan, Covenant House, Complex Care, BFS, 3rd Ave Resource Center

Funded homelessness prevention -- \$500k to stop people from being evicted at the Guest House and provide other supports at the housing projects the Anchorage Affordable Housing and Land Trust have taken on (Guest House, Barratt Inn, Lakeshore now Lakehouse)

Funding to keep Sullivan open -- \$326k to do 3 things: 1) keep the Sullivan open for all for another 12 hours, 2) keep the Sullivan open for up to 90 individuals who have a condition which substantially impairs their daily activity or mobility, and 3) a set aside fund for non-critical transport for those with mobility issues.

So what does that definition mean? Two criteria questions: 1) Can this person perform “activities of daily living?” If no, would this person be at-risk if not at a low-barrier shelter? 2) Does this person have mobility issues? If yes, does the mobility issue put this person at-risk if not at a low-barrier shelter?

More inclusive than just mobility. Could include a paranoid schizophrenic who would be at-risk in the elements outdoors.

So going back to the question of why. A few things:

- Kick in the rear to the providers and people doing the work: Getting people connected to resources, getting into housing or other placements, and making their own decisions. Client choice is at the center of all this work.
- Funding: Do we continue to fund emergency or do we fund more permanent solutions and prevention that will have more upstream impacts? Also, we have no money left over. On Tuesday, we used all of the extraneous funding we had available to us until we get audited financials in September. At that point, we'll have a better picture of how much money we have left over in fund balance.
- Neighborhood impacts: Done continuing decisions that have led to inequity onto Fairview.

Housing coming online:

Former Barratt Inn: 96 units. Some set aside as PSH through Home for Good. Accepting referrals / applications.

Lakehouse: 45 units. Workforce housing. Accepting referrals / applications.

Former Golden Lion: 85 units. Opening in mid-May / June. Administration is pushing for folks with mobility issues to go there. We'll see what it looks like in the end. No applications opened up.

May 24 H&H Committee meeting focused on housing. All of our housing investments since 2020 and other underutilized housing in our community.

Impact to MTCC:

- Increase in camping
- Increase in vehicle-pedestrian incidents
- Increase in panhandling
- Increase in break-ins or other public safety incidents

QUESTIONS

Melinda- You mentioned that some inns are taking applications, but I can't find them online?

FR - Website not up yet. Referrals and applications can be taken through the coordinated entry list

Melinda- Sullivan Arena destruction- what will it cost to get it back up?

FR- Sullivan needed repairs before 2020. Now impacted even more. \$4-5 million a couple of years ago. Decision before us now is cost benefit analysis. Do we repair the Sullivan or is there another vision for that location? (Tear down)

Bill- last year initiated a place for people to camp at Centennial Park. This year no plan? Why is this better than the camp? What is reasoning behind this decision?

FR- Start of Centennial wasn't great. It was disastrous. Didn't want to do that again. This year funded outreach, knowing that people will go where they feel safe. Areas around Sullivan, Cuddy, Davis in Mt View. Admin is providing dumpsters and restrooms at those locations. HPR providing food. Sanctioned camp needs to be planned well including thorough public process.

Rosemary- It takes time to go through the process. What is the end result?

FR- Sanctioned Camp TF will provide report in July. We know there is urgency, but need to do it right.

Al- we still don't have a plan. We've been through a couple of mayors. Assembly failed to do it. Would like to see a comprehensive plan. Involve businesspeople. Are you working with Salvation Army?

FR- We do have a community plan called the Anchored Home Plan. The Homelessness Leadership Council is independent of any administration. Made up of business leaders, its task is to examine the AHP and drive the city forward in a sustainable way.

Kris- Cuddy Park is in MTCC. Has been visiting the last few days. Sees good and bad things happening. Fire starting, plastics. Coalition serving hot meals. Needles, feces. We need to remember these are people. Invites everyone to visit Cuddy with her. Some things we can fix. Hopes MTCC can continue to contribute.

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

Assembly member Daniel Volland represents North Anchorage, including a sliver of MTCC area. First time at an MTCC meeting.

Yesterday first Assembly meeting with new members. Two agenda items were delayed in order to have work sessions on them. DV will keep MTCC in the loop about both.

1. Title 21 land use- Pedestrian features in urban core. New parking regulations, windows facing street, etc.
2. R4 and R4a zoning- housing density, permitted uses

Rosemary- old downtown La Mex building? Just appeared on MLS. Supposed to be Beans Café? Will the money come back to the muni?

DV- doesn't know but will research.

Cuddy Park - Taylor Keegan – Rain garden approach to assist with drainage - 15 Minutes

Tamas Deak- Friends of Fish Creek received a grant from Anchorage Park Foundation in 2022. This signage project is a small part of MOA stormwater control project which includes a rain garden near Cuddy Pond. Will install Interpretive signs about watershed of FC this summer. Cuddy Pond is part of FC. This is part of an effort to educate the public about sustainable ways of managing stormwater. The sign will be interactive with a QR code.

Karen Button, president FoFC, brought a rough draft of interpretive sign. Through QR code you can see exactly where you are in FC watershed. FoFC hopes to bring 70% of FC waters back to surface to prevent flooding and have a greenbelt.

QUESTIONS

Melinda- use phonetics on sign for Alaska Native language, suggests QR code with native spoken language

KW- Denaina linguist is doing that.

Diana Evans- suggested to APF that all signs have indigenous language

FoFC asks that MTCC support this project which represents a collaboration among the MOA, APF and FoFC. Letter of support and informational packet were distributed and will be included in the minutes.

New Business:

Brad Authier- one of nine candidates for Chugach Electric Board of Directors. Running as team with Bettina Chastain and Harold Hollis. All are engineers, have owned companies, and have prior board experience.

Easy to vote online with a control number from CE. Brought flyers. Votechugachstability.org. Will entertain questions afterward. Rosemary pointed out that there are no names on the flyers.

City Cleanup – Kirk Hastain – 2 Minutes Kirk unavailable

Question on CC Boundaries – Kris & Rosemary – 3 Minutes

Kris- MTCC Boundary will stay intact

Protected Bike Lanes on Fireweed – Daniel Volland, Brad Coy and Bike Anchorage – to include presentations and questions – 30 Minutes Brad Coy was unable to attend

Greg- report from Monday meeting. Met with Brad Coy, Mark Butler, Brad Johnson, Kris. SOA has \$1 million for testing of bike lane. Hired CRW Engineering Group, Kittelson and Huddle.

DV- Opportunity to use state funding with no local match to do a study of temporary protected bike lanes. Engineering team would design. Worked with DOT and Bike Anchorage to come up with a handful of possible locations. Fireweed is not predetermined. Have to work with engineering team about best location. Chance to do proof of concept with temp bike lane. Assess safety, usage, etc. Fireweed reconstruction is already on schedule 2023-2026.

How can we make active transportation safer? Anchorage's pedestrian collision rate is nearly double nation's. There also has to be a business case for protected bike lanes. Some community councils have written resolutions in support of temp bike lanes.

Kris presented Meg Zaletel's questions:

1. Is there a written plan of what the study is going to be?
2. What stats will be collected?
3. What permits have been issued?
4. Is the plan approved by DOT?

DV- No plan yet. That will be the design team's job. Not even sure of timeline. May not happen until 2024.

Emily Weiser, board president Bike Anchorage.

Protected bike lane is on street level. Vertical physical barrier between bikes and car traffic. Benefits:

1. Enables bikers of all abilities to feel safe.
2. Keeps bikes off sidewalks.
3. Safer for drivers because people have to pay more attention.
4. Private businesses benefit. "Protected Bike Lanes Mean Business" report:
 - a. Bike lanes bring more people to the street.
 - b. Place-making aspect.
 - c. More welcoming.
 - d. Slows people down, easier to see business.
 - e. Bikers tend to visit business more often and regularly

What will this project look like?

1. Temporary and summer only. Not thinking about snow removal yet.
2. Collaborative.
3. Materials used and locations are yet to be determined. Looking for locations with minimal traffic impacts and where bike lanes would facilitate business access.
4. Quick and simple build. No restriping lanes. Converting car lane into bike lane. Easy to clean up.

QUESTIONS

Brad Authier- barrier materials?

EW- Several options. Can glue pylons (both rigid and flexible) to pavement. Sometimes concrete.

Depends on what DOT has available.

DV- could also be creative- planters?

Rosemary- taking car lanes?

EW- if on Fireweed, taking one car lane in each direction. Traffic counts on Fireweed indicate that it needs a lane reduction. People drive too fast.

R- presented to businesses on Fireweed?

EW- No, because we don't know where it's going to be yet

DV- it would be an experiment. Better to do an experiment than something that can't be changed.

Fireweed would have to be this summer. Reconstruction slated to start next summer.

Kris- observations with schools- traffic backs up. Hoping to meet with principals next week.

DV- good feedback. Inlet View just did first "bike bus."

LH- a lot of the pedestrian challenges during the winter involved people using mobility devices. Would help if the road was separated from sidewalk. Muni has tried some very temporary demo projects in the past. This is an opportunity to use local data over a length of time. Believes the right team is on the job.

Diana Evans (from RPCC)- does most of errands on bike. Number one complaint from others is they don't feel safe riding on the street. With e-bikes becoming more common there is an even bigger need for bike lanes. MT doesn't have any bike lanes and could see a huge business benefit with safe bike lanes.

Al- suggests making sidewalks wider. More room for bikes and snow storage. Have you checked police reports about accidents?

DV- Fireweed not part of high injury network.

Kris- Some of our data on accidents is skewed. Causes of accidents are not reported. Safety huge concern for all of us. Safety training within program?

DV- Other CCs have passed resolution in support of bike lane testing.

Kris moved to adjourn. Greg seconded. Vote to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm.