

Mid-Town Community Council (MTCC) General Meeting Minutes
Meeting located at 3000 C Street –First Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, June 14, 2023 Revised
12:30 Noon to 2:00 PM

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 Stoechner called the meeting to order at 12:36 pm

Officers and Members of the Board present:

Kris Stoechner, president
Ric Davidge, vice president
Megan Debenham, secretary
Greg McDonald, board member
Al Tamagni, board member
Bill Borchardt, board member
Brian Swartzentruber, board member
Rosemary Borchardt, board member

Approval of Minutes: 1 Minute

Al moved that the minutes from May 10, 2023 be approved. **Ric** seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report – Kirk Hastain - Treasurer - **Excused**

Approval of Agenda: 1 Minute

Changes- Andy Josephson here. Alyse not here. Senator Gray-Jackson here.
Bike Resolution- Ric Davidge will conduct so Kris can speak.
Are we going to meet the rest of the summer?
Ric moves. Al seconded. Unanimously approved.

Committees:

Marijuana and Alcohol – Aqua Vitae - Brian Swartzentruber & Rosemary Borchardt – **5 Minutes**

Rosemary- MTCC protesting reinstatement of liquor license for package store next to Arby’s. Suggestion that the purpose was to park his license. (Aqua Vitae) Assembly voted last week to not address it, giving licensee 6 more months. We were successful in shining light on the situation. There will be a major change in liquor laws beginning January 1, 2024.

Al moves to accept the report. Greg second. Unanimous.

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) – Greg McDonald – **3 Minute**

Have rankings from several board members, but the muni website is impossible to get into. Survey due tomorrow.

Presenters:

Sundown Solstice; June 16th – 18th; Cuddy Park – Kris – **1 Minute**
Operators unable to attend. Sounds like it will be fun.

Mayor's Office – Michelle Hodel - 5 Minutes

No one present

School Board – Margo Bellamy – 5 Minutes

No one present

Possibly in attendance – Senator Gray-Jackson & House Representative Alyse Galvin – 10 minutes each

Andy Josephson- represents district 13, includes southeast corner of MTCC. In 11th year in state house. Minority for first time in six years.

Successful session:

1. Didn't overdraw savings.
2. Dividend this year is the affordable dividend.
3. Passed 31 bills between 2 chambers.
 - a. Timber carbon offset bill
 - b. Fentanyl- murder in the second degree for distribution if someone dies
 - c. Question from Ric- any move to regulate new more potent marijuana?
Andy- industry wants taxes lowered
 - d. Bill that mirrors muni ordinance in criminal code. Assault in front of children is a second misdemeanor. Moved out of committee
 - e. Defined benefits bill- give back to first responders. Disliked by house majority. (Covers 7 1/2 % of government employees.
 - f. Fiscal issues- as long as we have the revenue to provide basic government, there will be mixed opinions on taxation. Penalty we pay for not taxing is the dividend.
4. Amendments to the budget-
5. Back in Anchorage now and meeting with people. Favorable position to gear up for January.

Senator Gray-Jackson- part of the Senate majority, leadership, chair of legislative council, education committee, community services, labor and workforce development, etc.

Now has 7 community councils. Most don't meet during the summer. Elvi won't be in attendance if we do meet in the summer.

Bessie Odom chief of staff was also in attendance.

Kris- thanks Elvi for Arctic Rec Center issue. Staff was very responsive.

Elvi- one more announcement- this weekend is Juneteenth celebration. It's an American holiday.

Assemblyman Felix Rivera - Mr. Rivera – See below under new business

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

Old Business:

Protected Bike Lanes on Fireweed – MTCC Resolution 2023-03; "A RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEMPORARY PROTECTED BIKE LANES IN ANCHORAGE" – 15 Minutes

A discussion on the practicality of using Fireweed as a test site for protected bike lanes occurred.

Kris pointed out that the document presented by Bike Anchorage use data from cities around the world that are not relevant to Anchorage. Kris supports a protected bike lane test on Fireweed with the considerations listed in the resolution.

Lindsey Hajduk noted that MT has some of the highest collision roadways in Anchorage. This is a research project to do a temporary program. There is a design team (Lounsbury) working on a permanent design for Fireweed. Looking at multi-use pads (8-foot wide sidewalk). These are DOT funds. Opportunity for Fireweed is exciting because there will be a permanent design soon. Right now our city is not designed well for snow.

Employee of ANC park foundation- supports this as a test. Pilot project can answer questions. Appreciates all research Kris did. Lived here 20 years, lots of improvement over last 20 years. Has made a difference in behavior of drivers. Commute trips are only one type of trip you can take on a bike. APF is promoting moose loop trail (connecting all trails in Anchorage) and supporting access to trails through neighborhoods.

Melinda Gant- bike resolution went in front of downtown CC and Muldoon where they encouraged the Muni to adopt the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines.

Ric moved that MTCC Resolution 23-03 with addition of NACTO guidelines be passed. Brian seconded. Motion to approve the resolution passed with 9 votes for and 3 against.

New Business – Camping at Cuddy Park area – Felix Rivera & Daniel Volland – Balance of meeting; they may be late to the meeting so we will wait for them to arrive.

FR- Task force began meeting in May- came to conclusion that they needed to address immediate needs. Had an ambitious proposal. Mayor said no. Majority of assembly also expressed concerns. Now more narrowed and tailored. Has support of mayor and most of assembly. Green light to administration/assembly to plan for an allowed camp. Bring plans back with a dollar figure. This resolution provides parameters for planning. Goal is to turn it on by mid-July. July 11 Assembly meeting would need to have plan and appropriation.

Melinda- Concerned about Nov 1, 2023 date. Emergency temperatures happen in October. August 1 would be more reasonable. Mitigation needs to be put in place in code. No safety measures for this ordinance. No police oversight required. There will be impact when this camp is designated. 3rd and Ingra is an example.

FR- November 1 deadline is for summer 2024. Emergency plan will be formulated in October and is currently happening. Section 8 of the ordinance addresses mitigation concerns, definitely includes policing.

Rosemary- What is going to happen when the weather turns cold? Now is the time to put something forward. Elmore is the place. What do you think is going to happen this winter?

FR- at the June 8th housing and homelessness committee FR presented options for 700 individuals currently unsheltered. (250 will hopefully be housed over the summer with new shelters coming online) 60 individuals at Archive site with pallet shelters year-round. If clean slate strategy successful, 150 more. That still leaves some people to plan for. Current planning number is 450 individuals over the winter. July meeting is when we are planning for winter. Never had an emergency cold weather plan in the summer. We are doing a lot of forward planning.

AI- How many homeless individuals?

FR- 700 unsheltered individuals. 3000 homeless.

AI- has number increased or decreased from 2021 and 2022?

FR- numbers fluctuate. Single adult population went down and then back up.

AI- It appears number has grown since 2021. How do we deal with this if the number continues to grow?

FR- Need to plan for homelessness prevention.

AI- are you measuring results?

FR- yes, there is some data tracking.

Melinda- Anchorage is the centerpiece for the state of Alaska for those that are homeless. Anchorage is taking the burden of this cost. Has there been any discussion about working with the state?

FR- In May, there was a collaborative effort with mayor, DV, CC, FR asking for SOA and HUD to step up and change how they are allocating funds. Put forward a proposal for funding to the state legislature.

Bill- Why do we want to attract all homeless services into midtown? What is wrong with the Elmore location? MT is getting all the homeless shelters.

FR- Disagree with opinion that MT has all services for homelessness. Golden Lion is not a shelter. It is housing.

Bill- The situation has never been like this? Why does assembly keep avoiding the Elmore facility?

FR- Homelessness existed before Berkowitz admin. With regard to Sullivan Arena, there are a variety of options for this next winter. We don't want to use the Sullivan. Hopefully by August we will announce a plan and what it will cost. Elmore navigation center: June 20 voting on proposal in assembly. Cost is extensive. Could be \$20-25 million. What is cost/benefit analysis? Operations- continually requested an idea of operations, mitigation, but no acceptable response from the mayor. Work session on Friday.

AI- There's a simple solution. Put it on ballot and let voters decide where to locate homeless shelters.

FR- how would you determine what locations to put on ballot?

GM- is the Archive site being planned as a winter shelter?

FR- yes- year-round. End date of pilot program is Sep 2024. ITB process will determine.

GM- Resolution should be specific that it is the plan for year-round.

RB- in 2020 we asked Assembly for details about the Golden Lion. Assembly paid premium price on white elephant. We could never get any financials. Never received any information on converting it to homeless services. We were ignored. The Assembly's example was not a good one.

Kris- I served on the task force. It has been hard. If this pilot program doesn't work Anchorage is in bad shape for next summer. With clean-up of Cuddy, saw unbelievable filth. Water contamination. Theft and defecation at Lowes. Having a camp fenced in protects people in and out of camp. This allowed camp will be monitored. We need to try to make it work. Every single person is a human being.

Does the CC want to meet in July and August?

Rosemary moved that we don't meet except for emergency. Greg seconded. Passed unanimously with one abstention.

Rosemary moved to adjourn. Megan seconded. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm.