

FAIRVIEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL
General Membership Meeting
July 13, 2023; 7:00-9:00 pm
Hybrid meeting Zoom and Central Lutheran Church

Attending: Allen Kemplen, Suzie Alexander, Denise Janson, Ron Aleva, Loren Hill, Mike Braniff, Dave Rittenberg, Jackie?, James Thornton, Alexis Johnson, Roger (Parks & Rec), Dan Volland. Zoom: Sharon Chamard, Karen Gonne-Harrell, Dana, Keelan Baughman, Chris & Maria Crawford, Roger & Scot, Suzi Pearson (AWAKE), Kay Gajewski, Captain Lex (Midtown Fire Station),

Meeting agenda was approved; Ron Aleva wanted to confirm his resolution before the assembly.

No May meeting minutes, but June 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

Sharon: Under treasurer's report, it says a copy of the treasurer's report was attached to the minutes, and it hasn't been.

Presentations:

Alexis Johnson: Davis Park in Mountain View not being abated; we think it will reduce impacts elsewhere. We are putting out two RFI's for non congregate sheltering: one for a location, and an operator. It doesn't look like we will be using the Sullivan this winter.

Mike Braniff: I think everyone is aware that we have a large number of camps at Third and Ingra. It's had two big growth spurts - it looks like we have more than 100 tents now.

Ron Aleva: 150 plus, not counting motorhomes, cars...just tents.

Mike: As a municipality, we are trying to figure out how we manage what's there without shelter space. This summer we won't be abating, at least not on the horizon. Parks and Rec. is tasked with cleaning up the public areas based mostly on public comments. We're trying to make it better for everybody: the people camping, and the people in the neighborhood, as well as the tourists. Healthy Spaces (a division of parks and rec. that is alcohol tax funded) is doing daily cleaning. Main focus is Third and Ingra site. We've had Port a Potties, hand wash stations, dumpsters, and fencing all put up at the site to create a separation and visual screen from the streets. We cleared the site of all the young cottonwood growth, and whatnot in 2019, and as people started moving into the site, I wish I would have cleared the site again. One of the things identified is that long open sight lines produce better results. Next thing is to address the vehicles on site. I think we'll create a parking only area that will be fenced off, separate from the tents. The junk vehicles need to go. Some of the traffic whips through there; will define this vehicle traffic to a designated parking lot.

?: garbled...

Mike: Yes, we learned some valuable lessons from the Centennial site from last year.

?:The folks with substance and mental health issues - garbled...

Mike: Hopefully people will secure food so as not to attract wildlife.

?: garbled...task force put together a list of 20-30 ...organizing tents in rows, ...wealth of knowledge created by the community....

Alexis: The biggest barrier we're seeing right now is funding. Once the camps are up, who will ensure the campers are compliant? Right now we have no enforcement. We can say "Please stay within this eleven mile blocks," but once we've established that, who is there to facilitate it and really enforce it, and what happens if they don't do that? We talked about security and some sort of management on site, but unless it's a non profit willing to work pro bono, we don't have the funding to do so. We're in triage mode. I'm down there every day. I see what the complaints are, but we're really struggling as far as the financing component.

?: I appreciate that. There are a lot of people that are in the community that are willing to help but just might need coordination. Might the task force be willing to be involved? One of the biggest issues is "This is the idea we want to go with."

Dan: I support what Alexis is doing. ...garbled...watch what Felix is doing to secure funding. I think people would be interested in hearing about the meeting last night...garbled...

Alexis: As to the Golden Lion, we are in a hurry up and wait mode. We have permitted Henning to occupy the building in the next 60 days to get us up and running. We have a housing and homelessness committee meeting next Wednesday at 11 am . Will be discussing allowing Henning to operate the building as housing. July 25th, at the assembly meeting, we will be taking up a \$250,000 grant which will cover the operations, and also the long term lease. We have been in the building working with M&L to get it up to livable standards. The fire marshall has signed off. There will be some maintenance ongoing while it's occupied. We should be able to house 80-85 people in the next 30 days.

Denise: Last year we were told the Sullivan wasn't going to be used again, so what's the plan for this year? The Sullivan Arena won't be used again?

Alexis: The latest guidance I have heard is that we will not be using the Sullivan Arena . Our focus will be on non congregate shelter. The three places that have room are: Lake Shore (45 rooms) in Spenard, The Barratt Inn (96 rooms) in Spenard, and the Golden Lion (80-85 rooms).

Denise: Last year the Sullivan had approximately 400 or 450 at a time, or maybe more than that.

Alexis: We're putting out an RFI for people to bring their proposals to the city as well as for an operator...we have heard through the grapevine that there are multiple facilities that are willing to use their rooms in winter time for a non congregate sheltering situation. Rather than having one big congregation of people, you have individual hotel rooms for 2-4 people looking at a hotel room sheltering for the winter.

Denise: What is the turnaround time? It's already July.

Alexis: RFI's have a pretty quick turnaround time - 14 days - before someone proposes it and we close it, so we should know shortly.

Denise: I think part of the public frustration is that we've had this problem for a long time and we're not seeing any improvement or anything happening. I know just from being on the council that there is a lot being done, but I think the general population tends to think nothing is happening.

Captain Lex: ...garbled.....

Loki: I've had someone walk into my house recently and I haven't heard anything back from non emergency police. We have evidence lockers right across from my house and one of things I have asked for is for more patrols. My husband is a cop; we have a police car right outside our house, and yet folks think it's okay to walk right into our house. I was physically in the house and it scared the Sh** out of me.

Alexis: We have asked for increased police presence, but we're told the cops are 45 men down.

Loki: I get that; you aren't the ones in charge, but it's frustrating and it's people like me who is going to take matters into my own hands. We don't want to use handguns against someone who is in crisis. But there are people who are taking a cooler to keep their food cold, because there are no service provided. I'm curious now what we're going to do now to make sure that the folks on Third and Ingra are getting the services they need.

Alexis: As far as resources on Third and Ingra, I know the coalition has received in addition to their \$730,000 grant, a \$1million grant to provide outreach services: housing, food, water, the whole nine yards. They are on site providing those things. As far as APD resources, I've been told they are strapped.

Loki: So we need a budget request to the assembly to get more officers trained to do more community policing. What is the solution?

Alexis: I think they ran a second academy this year which the assembly did fund, but I don't think funding is the problem. Those are paid openings, and there's funding, but there is a limited number of applicants applying to be police officers right now.

?: I'm going to take a stab at that. I think a few things are going on in the really macro sense. 1: I think it's undisputed that the homeless population has increased . We've had these huge infusions of cash and it has allowed the municipality to address the issue over a couple of years. You have this two fold problem: it's like an analogy: You have this hole in the boat and you have two problems to solve: 1. You have to bail the water out (that's what low barrier shelter is dealing with day to day) , but then there's also dealing with the hole in the boat itself which is really tackling underlining causes of homelessness. It's a lot to ask the municipality to do this overnight financially. We are the state hub for homelessness.

Loki: garbled

?: Let me finish. I think that's really the challenge we have. It takes a lot of money just to shelter and feed people, provide services, and it takes even more to deal with the underlying causes.

Loki: You have the opportunity with all the Anchorage caucus here to get some room? together?. You're not going to get all the dollars; the state is not flush with cash as well, but there is a way to leverage every single person in the room to say how are we going to make a solution and be a detailed advocate in Juneau. Nobody came into my office last session. Nobody said "Here's a plan. We found an operator; we need this money to pay for this. We want to make sure we rebuild all of our community patrols and here's how we are going to do that." You have that power. All you need to do is come talk to me.

Alexis: The municipality did go down to Juneau - maybe not talk specifically to you- and lobby for \$25 million.

Dan: I do think we need to more effectively interface with the Anchorage delegation and we definitely need more support from the federal government and that's Chris' hot button. The fact

that Houston Texas got \$46 million, despite having a homeless count that is similar to Anchorage. So we're expected to have the same homeless costs, but less federal money. Their city has done really well with their homeless response. I would argue that having more homeless people per capita actually has more impact on a city so if anything, we should be entitled to more. We're working with Senator Sullivan right now and the secretary of HUD to change that antiquated funding flaw so that Anchorage can bring in more dollars, and not just on the backs of the municipal taxpayers. I feel for Alexis because her job as homeless coordinator is tough. She works for the mayor, and she can only do what she is instructed or allowed to do. We need mayoral leadership. We also need to make our benefits more competitive, and even do some things that are controversial: decriminalizing some things so that police can do actual work. I worked hard to get extra patrols around the Sullivan Arena and what was enforced? traffic and jaywalking. You have in this group community knowledge in this group and it took you guys a long time to convince APD that you knew where alcohol was being sold. We need to use our voices to say this is the crime we're worried about in our community. Not all homeless are criminals and not all criminals are homeless.

Ron: I think the best location to solve the problem is my property that the municipality said they would buy. You've got a fence, security, all the criteria for a sanctioned camp. It's better because it's closer to the crown jewel - the navigation center. Loki, My daughter pulled a knife on someone who came into our house. What saved my life was the dispatcher and I chased him down. She said to call 9-1-1. Should I detain him? She said no. That saved my life, and for sure, his life. I want to leave with my wife and family. My business has been killed. The money's there...buy me out. I'll clear the lot.

Allen: Loki brought up negative off site impacts. Ron brought up negative off site impacts. Denise brought up a point of negative off site impacts. Rob Couples had to close his business on Third Ave.: more negative off site impacts. When we're talking about Third Ave., we're talking about what can we do onsite? Nobody's talking about how do we deal with the negative off site impacts? The neighbors and businesses are in triage mode too. It's important for the municipality - and you're working very hard- to see what the negative off site impacts are. Moving forward, another low barrier shelter is never going to happen until we deal with a solution for these off site impacts. Nobody is going to accept a low barrier shelter until we come up with a solution.

Alexis: I hear a lot of "I'm seeing a man peeing in public. Get the police here." It's a citation, not an arrestable offense. The things citizens want to see people get arrested for, those are just not enforceable laws. They get a citation and what is a citation to a homeless individual? They don't have the funding. There's no maximum citations that end up in jail time. So when we hear about off site mitigation, there's very limited stuff out law enforcement can do because of the repeal of a lot of laws like drunk in public and other low level crime laws. If you smoke meth in public, and a cop arrives, and you no longer have that meth in your possession because you consumed it all, that's not a penal offense.

Allen: Good point I think the assembly has a role to play to make sure the appropriate enforcement structure is in place. A lot of these class A and B misdemeanors that impact the neighborhoods, they aren't being enforced and prosecuted. Is there a threshold? That's where the assembly needs to get in to establish that there is a threshold for an excessive number of misdemeanors and violations that there is a consequence. What that consequence is is up for public discussion, but there needs to be a consequence for excessive violations. We have no city jail and no place to put these individuals. What is the long term plan for Third Ave.? Is there a long term plan?

Alexis: There is limited funding for abatement. Unless there is a safety or ADA issue, the city is not abating at this time. For Third Ave., cold weather will shift the lot, but otherwise it won't be abated.

Allen: The sanctioned camp task force identified several locations for allowable camps in a way for them to be used year round. What has the communication been with the administration?

Dan: Last night, we passed an allowed camp ordinance that would entail two different locations the administration is looking at right now. What I've heard is that there is a privately owned location.

Alexis: I heard this, but we don't know where that location is because it's been held quiet.

Dan: I think the administration is still trying to implement what the assembly is calling for.

Alexis: I also heard it has a cap at 60 people.

Dan: Yeah. It's a piece of the puzzle in addition to housing and shelter. There is a percentage of the population that doesn't want housing and doesn't meet their needs. The assembly is supportive of that concept, but it's up to the administration to implement. The idea is to see how it works first. Has Richard been compensated yet?

?: Getting back to outside services and what I was able to do in camp. The property that was stolen - I was able to communicate through the park workers and they located it and the gentleman got the property back. I just wanted to thank the CAPgarbled...

Ron: Alexis, and anyone in the room: If you were being surrounded with that, and you just said it's not going to clear up, how can I stay there?

Alexis: There's no legal path right now.

Ron: My question is to anyone: it's my family at stake. Can I save it and continue to exist? I'm scared every night. Every morning. Buy me out, like they said they were going to do. Get back my \$100,000. Get back four years of my life. They are going to kill me, or my family members. Complicit by lack of actions by the city.

Allen: This goes back to the negative impacts and what this does to people and how serious this is. It's something to keep as higher on the priority list in terms of funding for this, funding for that...making sure there is adequate funding to mitigate these offsite impacts is crucial for us moving forward as a community and then to develop a compassionate approach for housing the homeless.

Denise: I never fail to notice that there seems to be more acceptance of just leaving this in Fairview and it shouldn't be. If we had a Third Ave. situation in other parts of Anchorage, I think they would be mitigated more actively.

Elected Officials:

Loki Tobin: I appreciate Alexis being here and giving us an opportunity to vent. We have seen with the governor's vetoes, a real crisis. I talked with the Alaska Association of School Boards, talking about what flat funding and a decrease in one time funding is going to do to our schools. I think we're going to see some pretty serious impacts to the quality of life that our teachers are experiencing. I'm concerned about the 700 positions that we have right now at

ASD. There is nobody applying. They haven't even gotten 30 applicants. That means we're going to see class size increase up 5-8 because they can't fill these positions. Nobody wants the salaries they are offering. We are all going to be impacted. We don't have the resources to get high quality folks. That means we don't have folks applying to police academies, as well as folks who are looking to start a cool new business in downtown Anchorage. One of the things you'll see me talk about in the next few weeks is the "Blue Ribbon Panel." We're going to go on a roadshow. We're going to walk around, talking to residents about what is the impact to education and flat funding doing to their city. After visiting many communities around the state, we'll have a town hall meeting in Anchorage to have a robust discussion about what we really want to see in our education system. Many legislators haven't been to remote Alaska, so this is an opportunity for them to see what education looks like in our rural communities and what we need to be funding. We are also looking toward a special session in October to talk about the fiscal uncertainty. With oil prices so uncertain, we need to do something to save our fiscal environment today because in 3-4 years, we're going to be much worse off. I have been appointed to the governor's task force on child care. Early education is so important, and I'm excited to talk about an early education system that everyone is able to access and have a quality education. We want to make sure every child has access to quality education. Early education means we less people experiencing homelessness, less people engaging with our justice system, etc. I'm also involved in a national fellowship on youth homelessness. The Biden administration has come up with a new plan called "All In" and it talks about how we address the issues and symptoms around homelessness. They note that 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are queer or trans. We need to make sure we are serving that population and reduce homelessness. Otherwise, they are going to be the ones stealing that cooler. If you haven't signed up on our website for the Fairview block party, we still need help.

Allen: You talked about we need to be doing something for years down the road to generate revenues. The best way is to encourage new businesses. The Fairview community council and the assembly have both passed resolutions in support of Anchorage being designated as a regional technology and innovation hub. I haven't seen anything from the legislation, so you could be supporting this. We can convert the Sullivan Arena and building new businesses to generate new revenue.

Loki: We were at the downtown community council last night. If you haven't checked out the Solid Waste Service site, they are going to have free composting with worms class. There is a new company called "Grisly Wood" and they are recycling #1 and #2 plastics here in Anchorage and making essentially Trek decking.

Assembly Members:

Dan Volland: We covered homelessness already. Last night we passed an ordinance that will essentially allow a camp with certain characteristics. There are \$79,000 in repairs of the Golden Lion which we did approve. There was a \$250,000 appropriation for operations. We also approved criteria for a low barrier shelter - all the things a site would need to have and running various locations through that criteria to see if they would fit. We are also working on a bike ordinance that encompasses non motorized vehicles. It allows for non motorized vehicles to treat a stop sign as a yield. It allows bicycles to spend less time in an intersection, which is actually safer. Cars can see the motion and it catches your attention. It also decriminalizes some bike equipment- not having helmets or lights. Lastly, we introduced a resolution on our body cameras use. I would like to see clean reporting. An officer puts in his initial reports, and he can't watch the camera footage. Working on when that footage has to be released to the general public. We are working on an ordinance that will make it easier to build tri-and four-plexes. There are a lot of hoops to jump through to build these.

Allen: As you're moving forward with your bicycle infrastructure, are you going to be able to incorporate the fact that we are a winter city?

Dan: Yes. Bike lanes should be temporary or seasonal and they include things like removal of barriers, planters, etc. There is a huge accessibility issue in the winter with where does the snow go? Onto our sidewalks. What if we had bike lanes in the summer and in the winter that becomes the buffer where the snow goes and separates the vehicle traffic from the sidewalk.

Loki: What about when you are coming out of a parking lot for visibility?

Allen: I'll send you some concepts. Funding was brought up by Alexis. The HUD consolidated action plan is currently out for public comment and one of those things that is funded are homeless services. Is the administration aware of that source of funding and the fact that there is the consolidated action plan currently out for public comment? This could be an opportunity to make funding available to help some of the funding constraints we are facing.

Alexis: HUD sits within the Anchorage health department One of the things about the funding is it can be used to build out infrastructure, but not operational dollars. Our HUD money is really limited; I think it's \$3 million a year.

Allen: There are a number of costs that could be paid for out of these funds HUD funds and it's important to realize that there is talk of increasing HUD money to address issues we face as a nation. It's important for the action plan to be written in such a way that when more funding becomes available, you can jump on the pipeline.

Alexis: I just want to make it clear you can't use HUD funds for sanctioned camps. They're not recognized by the federal government. It's only for housing, or building a new shelter, so we can't build a new fence with that.

Dan: I think what he's getting at is potentially the municipality should submit comments. This could be a great opportunity to get the government to fund.

Allen: Just because it's in the current framework, doesn't mean it has to be the framework moving forward. Changing the framework to allow us more flexibility so that we can deal with the issues we are wrestling with is really important. We want to be able to shape that change that is coming as it relates to our city but also make sure that the framework that's in place and take advantage of it.

Sharon: In regards to the location of homeless camps and the task force limitations was that there could be no encampments in Fairview or downtown until other options had been exhausted. Is that limitation still in play?

Dan: I don't know that it's a limitation or related to the clean slate conversation or the allowed camp conversation so I'll check that for you.

Allen: I think it was the clean slate conversation.

Sharon: I thought it was for the encampment thing where they said that you come up with ideas but they can't all be in downtown or Fairview as they usually are. We need to expand that. The task force has given it's report. Is the assembly going to look at that and say " well, it's all very nice, but we want to beef up the Third Ave. one, or whatever."

Dan: On the allowed camps, we passed a resolution that recommended just the one midtown location. My recollection is that on the clean slate strategy, section 3, was the policy that said we shall look outside Fairview.

Community Reports:

Ad Hoc Homelessness:

Allen: I think we've wrestled that one to death.

Community Gardens:

Allen: We need to have an agreement for the use of those two DOT lots and we need Parks and Rec. support.

Mike: I'm not the right person.

Allen: However you can help us move forward.

Merrill Field:

Allen: Two things: 1. The possibility of help with the abandoned camps on their property south of 15th between Sitka and Orca. They are interested in helping. 2. I went to the advisory commission and talked about the number of planes that were departing and not following departure procedures being an issue and they said give us data. So, I talked to my neighbors and we went and bought ourselves a camera and we mounted it. We plugged it into my WI-FI and it's the Orca Street cam. It allows for motion to be flagged and identifies the date and time the motion was perceived. This will help us bring more accountability to those not respecting our properties.

Loki: There is that easement that is on Orca that is Merrill's property and that green space that people use to relieve their dogs without cleaning up after them. I'm curious if there is a way to gorilla community cleanup and beautification and try to get people to think of this as a space to not just relieve their dogs.

Grant Implementation:

EPA EJ Grant:

Allen: We filed an extension through the end of September. We got that approved and we're finalizing our report on the air quality results from the data and workshop report.

DOT Reconnecting Communities Grant:

Allen: We worked with FHWA and we've got an acceptable agreement that has been forwarded to FHWA and we got comments from them and we've made adjustments, and we're waiting for guidance on a section of the measure that Washington DC offers. As soon as we get that guidance on their measures, we'll be able to finalize our contract and be able to spend money on the grant.

Public Safety:

Denise: Last winter we were discussing the areas around Fairview that needed extra lighting and I think we need to revisit that now. There was one area by SJ's place and I think we need to do a map of those and like Maria said even around the rec. center.

Allen: Could the public safety committee get this together as an agenda item and come up with a recommendation to bring before the council?

Standing Reports:

Allen: I don't have anything.

Old Business:

Allen: I want to talk about the March 18th community workshop report and the block party.

Loki: Hopefully Ron gives us the stage. I think he will. We have a lot of new community groups that are joining us. We have a dance group, a jazz band from the elementary school. The beer garden is ready to go and new vendors, including People Mover having a full bus to tour. They are trying to get a lot of community input about the transit centers and locations. We still have T shirts and cups already. Not sure about t dunk tank. If you are interested in contributing in any way, go to our Google page. Trying to get a climbing wall, and we have electricity being donated by neighbor. Brian Hawkins will be our emcee again and was able to secure Showdown Productions who will offer us tables and chairs.

James: One specific neighbor who wants to be out of town, asked about signs and what we might do for them

Loki: I walked around with signs for neighbors so they know we will be there. We'll try to hit folks further away, but probably only hit the folks adjacent to the property.

Loki: K Fat is offering us radio space. This is a neighborhood event, not city event, so we're just trying to let neighbors know what's going on. There are only 500 people on the permit.

Woodside Park Improvements:

Allen: Chugach Electric finished their work and we met with Parks staff and put together two options for improvements. Chugach said either plan works for us, so we're a go. We'll have an August event on 20th Ave. We'll put in new trees and two log planter boxes. We need volunteers.

Eastchester Park Master Plan: We had a bike inventory and id'd items that could be done for the green space on either side of Chester Creek and we'll have a BBQ event August 17th.

Karen: What's the plan for growing stuff in the planters? Do you want me to send out a call for stuff?

Allen: Yeah...we need stuff.

Karen: Do you care if it's raspberries and strawberries or do you want lupine?

Allen: It would be great if one could be Alaskan perennials and the other one fruit bushes.

Karen: I'll put the word out.

New Business:

James: I'd like to lay this resolution on the table regarding repurposing the Sullivan Arena as an investment in Anchorage's opportunity infrastructure.

Allen: okay. Excellent. We'll refer that to the executive board for discussion.

Reports and Updates:

Allen: The Seward to Glen PEL study: no update.

Community Comments and Concerns:

?: In Mountain View we have open applications for small new businesses and classes that are applicable to businesses that are a little farther along. Application are available online. Businesses in Fairview are a priority applicant.

Allen: The FCC wants to know if the community land trust wants to partner with them on grant applications.

?: Just in general?

Allen: There a lot of general grants out there and we don't have the ability to be the grant recipient, so would the land trust be interested in partnering with us in putting together grant applications?

Karen: Today I walked on the bike trails and when I was at lamppost 118, a motorcycle came at me and I would like our assemblyman to know that. It was quite distressing and I would like to know who addresses that.

Allen: We will pass that on.

James: Keelan had to leave but wanted to give an update from the Anchorage public library: summer discovery reading labs are due at the end of the month. Turn them in for prizes. Story times every Tuesday, and a magic show at the Mountain View branch.

Meeting adjourned 8:53.