

## RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, April 10, 2024

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Lori Pickett, Kathleen Plunkett, Dierdre Goins, Karen Bronga, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Lloyd Stiassny, Mercedes Colbert, Seth Tigarian, Aaron Stiassny, Katy Giorgio, Harry Caldwell, Jr, Dora Wilson, Ted Eischeid

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by President Kendra Kloster, then Lori Pickett presided over the remainder of the meeting.

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. Bill Wielechowski – (Seat K) Report provided by Mercedes. House working on operating budget tonight. Budget timeline is well on track to pass Friday. Senate will take up Capitol Budget on track with the information on it made public tomorrow morning in Senate Finance Committee. Senate Capitol Budget should head over to the House on Friday and hoping for this legislative session to adjourn on time. Public Safety Committee closed out tonight, that included sexual assault and domestic violence federal funding restored. Kendra asked about the funding if it is for every year or needs to be requested annually. Supposed to be matching the House (so it doesn't have to go to conference committee).

Sen. Forrest Dunbar – (Seat J) Legislative update attached. Report provided by Seth at meeting.

Rep. Genevieve Mina – Seat 19 – Report provided by Katy. They are in the middle of amendments 105 of 107. They will work a few more hours tonight and most likely finish tomorrow. A couple of the amendments include: \$4 million to extend Anchorage cold weather emergency shelter; \$1.3 million operating budget for Anchorage snow plowing and maintenance. She will be holding a constituent at Waffle Rush in Mt View this Sunday 2-3 pm.

Rep. Stanley Wright – Seat 22 (report attached)

Rep. Andrew Gray - Seat 20 - Report provided by Diedre. Is having a constituent town hall Zoom meeting April 11 from 5:30 to 6:15 to provide updates on the progress of sponsored legislation, amendments they have attempted to pass, and the budget that is up for consideration this week. HB 220 only state in America that doesn't have a bed tax, which could raise 60 million. It would be an additional 6% (added to the municipality bed taxes).

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

Christopher Constant Seat 1B – no report

Daniel Volland Seat 1L – no report

Karen Bronga Seat 5H - Camping ordinances are being worked on. Special meeting next Thursday about the homeless encampments, with current discussions having tent only with small personal belongings (no lean to's or other structures). Health Dept is looking at safe parking spaces (25 cars/tents total congregated), which would have a sign up and an operator assigned. It is legal to have someone camp on private property, churches could have up to 3 tents. Aviator Hotel is closing soon. Shelter at old AK Solid Waste facility has probably 25 small offices, that people could graduate into from the bay area. Ed reminded Karen that code and law can be changed (regarding supervision requirements) and there should be no problem if someone is not complying with rules to remove them, because others are waiting to get in. Karen said we need to let our voices be heard at the Assembly level, and there is an online public comment on the MOA Assembly page. Next step program has been able to help up to 85 people, with the goal of accommodating 150 people. 33 more were approved to help families coming out of the shelters. Officer cameras have all been deployed at this time. Kendra asked about what kind of funding there is for park bathrooms to be maintained so that they are useable. The Assembly is way behind in MOA FY 2025 budget work (starts July 1, 2024). Audit for 2022 still is not done and Lori expressed concern that this could cost federal funding for non-profits.

George Martinez Seat 5I – no report

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Dora Wilson – thanks to legislators for support of education. Looks like Prop 1 will pass. Preparing for upcoming school time change initiatives which are: Elementary 8 am to 2:30 pm; Middle School (adding 6<sup>th</sup> graders) 9:30 am to 4 pm; and High School 8:45 am to 3:15 pm. Kendra stated that working parents would appreciate some comment period to say how this is going, and the late start Monday's adds another level of complication. Many parents are stressing about this. Lori added that AK Literacy Staff and clients are impacted in their adult education scheduling parents and volunteers that are also taking children to school. Also will be interesting to see if the diversity is impacted with special programs (charter, optional activities). Will there be a review of that data based on racial, socio-economic? Dora believes it will as they already consider those criteria in other reporting.

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – March meeting had UAA professor which spoke about housing sales in Anchorage. Next Step initiative came and spoke. Jean is leaving at the end of April and the new Executive Director, Arianna, started March 26<sup>th</sup>.

6. Park Clean Up confirmed – Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 12 pm. Anchorage Park Foundation will provide bags, gloves, grabbers and making fliers and pizza will be provided by legislators. We will meet at Polar Bear Park to start off the clean up.

7. Uncle Herb's – retail location and new onsite consumption application: Lloyd & Aaron Stiassny. The store is at 360 Boniface Parkway which will include an edible café. They might offer other food items. Endorsement at the state level is more in terms of smoking (MOA voted down smoking indoors). A question of what limits are there on consumption. The State limits to 25 mg and MOA have limits of 10 mg. Up to a gram of flour permissible. This would be the first Anchorage site. There is nothing that allows for delivery of their product. They see their café as a positive place for the community, with support for local musicians and possibly game nights as part of their vision. This parallels the alcohol community. Sherry mentioned that TAMS training is required in Alcohol servers, is there something similar for cannabis? Cannabis servers have a handler's certification. All inventory is tracked, which links every purchase to

each individual. Dan mentioned that marijuana is a gateway drug. 27 states have legalized cannabis. They offer what the public is asking for in a regulated environment. Dan spoke about our park cleanup and finding cannabis wrappers, syringes, empty alcohol bottles in various parts of the park which is posing a huge public safety problem. They believe having a social place may alleviate that problem. They are not asking for anything from the council at this time. Dan expressed concern of adding another vice to our community, which already has an assortment of problems.

8. Camp abatement policy update – shared during Karen’s assembly report.

9. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Sherry said Anchorage Parks & Rec are looking for volunteers to serve on two advisory committees to update the 1997 Areawide Trails Plan. Application deadline is April 17<sup>th</sup>. Sherry submitted an application for the Citizen Advisory Group. Lori provided a copy of the Anchorage Park Foundation “Map Your Anchorage” which allows you to draw on a map of Anchorage how you experience our city. Kendra reminded us about the letter the council put together for the Assembly. Karen said that appearance requests are available, which are taken first in testimony. We can also submit the letter via the MOA Assembly portal. Lori is willing to attend an Assembly meeting, given enough notice.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 8th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Sherry Wright, Secretary