

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, May 8, 2024

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Lori Pickett, Kathleen Plunkett, Dana Rosso, Daniel George, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Harry Caldwell, Deirdre Goins, George Martinez, Remington Purnell, Ted Eischeid, Kendra Kloster, Bill Sielechowski, Dora Wilson, Jessica Parks, ACEH

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by President Kendra Kloster. Vice President Lori Pickett continued the meeting after the call to order.

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) - one week left in session. Capitol projects – lots of funding in parks (RJSP, Centennial Park), new destination park in East Anchorage – Cheney Lake which will include a multipurpose shelter that will go over the water – 1.8 million. \$300,000 for Nunaka Valley North. Scenic Foothills trail, Long trail projects in Southcentral, AK Literacy funding, trail re-paving projects. Resources Committee energy issues – carbon sequestration, Cook Inlet gas, transmission railbelt facilities, geothermal, green belt bills. Solar and wind project bills for communities. Could go in on property and be sold to neighboring properties. Bill to help veterans transition back into civilian life. Education funding stay on judicial finding till June 2024 (will revert back to 2014 laws). Veteran's Memorial for Hmong in Mountain View, Davis Park. Kendra asked if we needed to send support letters to the Governor on any of the Capitol projects. Bill said it would be helpful. Sherry Wright moved to submit a resolution of support for Russian Jack and East Anchorage capitol projects. Lori Pickett 2nd. Motion approved.

Sen. Forrest Dunbar – (Seat J) Seth Tigarian went over the written report which is attached.

Rep. Genevieve Mina – Seat 19 – Remington Purnell provided the update - HB 196 expands food stamp eligibility. HB 225 waive license fees for public assistance. HB 191 – major medical. HB 355. Working on a year long accomplishment newsletter which will be sent with multi-languages. Early June joint constituent event (June 8).

Rep. Stanley Wright – Seat 22 Rachel Knottingham provided the update - HB145 just passed house floor dealing with payday lending. Headed to Senate Finance and stands a great chance of passing. Creates a safe harbor for borrowers. HB 126 associate counseling – takes folks waiting for mental health off the wait list. HB 157 sitting in Rules. HB 28 concealment of marijuana offenses.

Rep. Andrew Gray - Seat 20 - Dierdre Goin provided the update – house passed capitol budget. HB 189 moving through Senate that deals with carcinogenic risk of alcohol. Inmate phone call to reduce profiting off prisoners communication. YMCA will take over Bettye Davis High

School pool so that it can be open again. Ballots are mailed out and due back May 14. Chugach Electric board elections are going on.

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each
Christopher Constant Seat 1B – no report

Daniel Volland Seat 1L – no report

Karen Bronga Seat 5H (Genevieve Kikukawa)-no report

George Martinez Seat 5I – Thanks everyone for their presence and work at RJSP cleanup. Passed 1st Qtr budget revisions. Pause due to lack of accounting from 2022. Discussion on extending the emergency cold weather shelter (mid-town transfer center) through the end of May and increasing the capacity to 200, associated with abatement strategies. Alternative shelters were discussed – lowering thresholds for temporary shelters. Correspondence schools affect 2000 ASD students. Worksessions regarding 11 – 2 pm at City Hall alcohol sales tax implementation and usage, and marijuana tax recommendations (early childhood education). Mixed use trails size and wattage of e-bike motors, intergenerational usage of the trails. One wheel vehicles are also on the trails. 500 wattage is being discussed as a maximum, which needs to be noticed to vendors. Title 21 changes and the debates going on, which is complementary to the home initiative. There will be much more discussion on these items, including discussion on zoning. Kendra asked about properties that have burned, been empty and apparently abandoned. What is happening on those? George suggested getting ahold of code enforcement, as they track abandoned properties. Vacant and abandoned properties are being reviewed under Anchorage Community Development Authority to try and get affordable housing back into our community. Sherry Wright brought up the point that those camping in our parks for free need to be cleaning up camp sites, or be abated. We should be able to provide them trash bags, and this is not asking too much. Our parks are turning into dumps. George responded that we should be good neighbors and pick up the garbage. Daniel George asked about the comprehensive plan that was introduced and most community councils don't meet over the summer – relates to the home initiative to reframe land use and zoning classifications. George said he would note that to the Assembly.

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Dora Wilson updated that middle schools will provide 8:30 am supervision; HS 7:45 am supervision; elementary 7:45 am. School consolidation is under consideration based on population of students. School will have staggered start times with 1st – 7th grades beginning August 15; High School will begin August 19; Kindergarten to begin August 22. <https://www.askd12.org/schoolstarttimes> Graduations begin this week. Teacher Appreciation Week is this week. May 21 is next School board meeting. Kathleen – where are graduations being held? Dora responded Wendy Williamson and Alaska Airlines Center. Kathleen said that if Inlet View are not having 6th graders, is there a need for renovations? There are plans to repurpose closed schools, using space to help with childcare and/or pre-school.

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett next week will be back at the Fireweed location. They had been meeting at the BP Energy Center. Daniel has been asked to serve as Vice Chair. He serves on the Mountain View CC and lives in RJCC area. New board is coming on and new staff is in place. Jean is leaving mid May. Kathleen will be at this month's FCC meeting, but not available for June. She provided a copy of the Home Initiative presentation. Public comments are open

till May 22. Ed spoke that Anchorage has more than enough jobs based on the number of commuters that come in from the Valley. He proposed unused industrial land be allowed to be used for high density housing. B-3 is the most versatile zoning and least developed properties.

6. Summer Meeting Schedule – Ed moved that RJCC take June, July and August off, returning September 11. Dan Wright 2nd. Motion approved.

7. Neighborhood/Community Announcements - Kendra has sold the property she owned in RJCC area. She asked if she should resign as President or finish her term till December? Kathleen asked if the non-profit Kendra works with does anything that interacts with Russian Jack area? They work with tribes and communities – they are statewide. Their office is in Spenard area. Ed suggested she finish her term. There are some items are on the CIP list that she is interested in updating. Daniel George ran into this and stated there needs to be a physical tie to RJCC area. Thanks for all that showed up for RJSP cleanup May 4 and Anchorage Park Foundation for providing pizza. AK Literacy Program got the grant to put up multi-lingual signage in the parks. Catholic Social Services hopefully received their grant as well, to put a mural on the building on Pine/DeBarr. United Way Director meeting – Campfire has filled their staff and has openings in the summer childcare program. Kendra has been working on a bill since 2018 which passed the Senate that relates to murdered indigenous people – cultural training for law enforcement, commission to review cases for improvements, MMIP investigative unit which solidifies those positions, VPS internal report and thankful for the work that has been done.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 11th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary