

# Minutes

Northeast Community Council (NECC)

August 15, 2024 | 7pm

Centennial Village – Multipurpose Room

9131 Centennial Circle, Anchorage, AK 99504

## **Board Members Present**

**Murray Crookes**, Vice President | **Nate Martin**, Parliamentarian | **John Cunningham**, Treasurer | **Stephanie Taylor**, Member | **Pamela Raygor**, Member | **Stu Grenier**, Member | **Mary O'Loughlin**, Member

40~ people in attendance and online.

**Murray Crookes called the meeting to order at 7:02pm**

**Pledge of Allegiance** - **Scott Pascal**, AFD Senior Captain

**Board Roll Call** – **Murray Crookes**

**Minutes Approval: May & June Special Meeting**

**Donna Mears** moved to approve minutes; **Mary O'Loughlin** seconded. None opposed. **May General Meeting Minutes** and **June Special Meeting Minutes** approved.

## **Treasurer's Update**

**John Cunningham**: Reported \$1,714.60 in the bank as of August 15, 2024. John was added to the account in May. FCC has made changes to their fiscal policy; John expects to have things up to speed by the September meeting.

## **FCC Report**

Monica Schwingendorf, NECC FCC Delegate, out of town; no report. FCC meets next week. They had their picnic last month.

**Community Concerns and Activities (opportunity for community members to share concerns, requests for the council, and upcoming needs/activities, up to 2 minutes)**

**Stu Grenier** – Parks and Trails; groups of volunteers vary in size from day to day. They pick up trash in Centennial Park. The hope is that the recent Supreme Court ruling will help the city resolve the problem and get the park permanently abated of homeless camps.

**Murray Crookes**: Reported frustration from someone about folks driving too fast through the Centennial Center parking lot.

**Miles Brodsky**: Recently returned from deployment. He has concerns about speeding on Boston Street near Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. He was thankful for traffic calming efforts that are in the works. He continues to advocate for pedestrians and bikers. He mentioned the Anchorage Bike Blvd. and JBER perimeter trails.

**David Cristal**: Raised concerns about the area near E 10<sup>th</sup> and Old Harbor and the bike path. Creekside Park has the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new inclusive playground on August 29, at 5:30 pm.

### **Legislative Reports (limit 3 min. each, including questions)**

**Senator Bill Wielechowski:** discussed the JBER Perimeter Trail bills. Introduced his Chief of Staff, Mercedes. Bill spoke at length about several energy issues. Some residents at Chester Park Retirement Community want solar panels that can tie into their individual units, but there are some obstacles to that. Solar panels would not cost rate payers, would reduce the need for natural gas to generate electricity. He discussed issues with HillCorp and the need for an investigation to be reopened by the Federal Trade Commission. SB 154 would create a Bidded Preference for Apprenticeship Program. There were several questions from attendees about energy issues, the State Attorney General and Tidal energy.

CONTACT: Phone: 907-269-0120, Email: [Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov)

**Senator Tobin:** Alaska Children's Caucus is September 20, 2024. A task force is being established to work on the Cost of Care gap, Pre-K and Early Education.

CONTACT: Phone 907-465-3704, Email: [Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov)

**Representative Donna Mears:** Also discussed energy issues in Cook Inlet. Enstar is going to contract for LNG; a short term fix. She gave a plug for the Scenic Park Community Council. They received a grant for park work. The Primary Election is this Tuesday, August 20. Absentee ballots are by request; in-person voting at the Division of Elections.

CONTACT: Office: 907-465-3438, Cell 907-632-6382, Email: [Rep.Donna.Mears@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Donna.Mears@akleg.gov)

**Representative Stanley Wright:** Discussed the Capitol budget; \$2.6 million for the roof at Ptarmigan Elementary; \$800K for Creekside and Turpin Parks. He briefly discussed HB 126 and HB 57 were combined.

CONTACT: Phone: 907-465-2095, Email: [rep.stanleywright@akleg.gov](mailto:rep.stanleywright@akleg.gov)

**Representative Cliff Groh:** Discussed Military & Veteran family's Help Desk; education and employment opportunities. He said the PFD is under threat.

CONTACT: Phone: 907-952-3353, Email: [Representative.Cliff.Groh@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Cliff.Groh@akleg.gov)

### **Assembly Reports (3 minutes each, including questions)**

**George Martinez:** George and Karen Bronga will alternate attending meetings. George discussed vacant and abandoned properties; the third of 10 such properties was taken down with ARPA funding. There are approximately 170 vacant and abandoned properties. Access for Youth – At risk kids have access to the programs they need. People Mover changes include longer wait times by about 5 minutes. The #1 transit stop in Anchorage is on Muldoon Road across from Peck. Housing – Trying to get money from a downtown project for AFD Fire Explorers' Program. George discussed mixed used mobility in Anchorage and a Community walk he did with Assemblyman Daniel Volland and the Economic Development Strategy. George also mentioned the damaged at the landfill caused by lithium batteries.

**Dave Ulmer:** Doesn't want more pot shops and asked about the status of the Baltazar Pot shop. George Martinez said the plans had fallen through. (Message sent later to the council that plans are actually moving forward).

**Stu Grenier:** noted that there is a meeting withing the Muni on September 24, to approve the shop license. Public comment is open through August.

**Karen Bronga:** Sent a message: The bears in Chanshtnu Muldoon Park have been reported to Fish and Game. She could not get an update from the previous administration. The new Homeless Coordinator is Farina Brown. Traffic and speed issues were also addressed.

### **Community Leadership Updates (3 minutes each)**

**Anchorage Fire Department Senior Captain Scott Pascal:** He discussed the Gridwire Fire-Spy trial program. It is an early warning system for wildfires. The Woodland Mitigation Lot is open through 8/31 and is free on Fridays and Saturdays. Pulsepoint is an app CPR certified people can download. This alerts people to cardiac emergencies in their vicinity. People rarely die in a fire when there are working smoke detectors present. Working smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are required in rentals. He reminded people about the landfill fire that damaged the lining. It was caused by improperly disposed lithium batteries. People need to recycle them and keep them out of the garbage. Station #6 wants to go from 3 person companies to 4 person companies. Having an additional person in each company would double what they can do.

**Ted Eishied:** Asked a question about vacancies in AFD. They can have academies as needed. This keeps their vacancies to a minimum.

**Pam Raygor:** Asked about AFD programs. They have Fire Ops 101, Bike Helmets, Car seats.

**David Christal, Creekside Elementary Principal, Bartlett Area Principal Group:** School started today. This year we have staggered start days. The Kindergarten Academy has also begun. David shared numerous statistics about the students in the NECC schools. There are 57 open positions in the NECC schools, 90 homeless students, 43 elementary teacher vacancies. 8/29 is the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Creekside Park Inclusive Playground. Elections are on August 20, and November 5. He encouraged folks to watch for signs for the polling entrances.

**Fran Gregoran:** Asked about the new start times and why they were changed.

#### **Committee Updates – 2 minutes**

**Stu Grenier, Parks & Trails Committee:** Reported that a dumpster has been delivered to Centennial Park on Boundary Ave. It is unattended so people from all over are bringing their garbage. There has been an issue with a “screamer” in the homeless camp. The police will not enter the park unless there are three officers. Parks and Rec will not enter it either. He documents everything with photos.

**Murray Crookes, Picnic Committee:** Picnic Committee will meet on Thursday, August 29, at 5:15 at Starbucks adjacent to Krispy Kreme to review the picnic and begin planning for next year. Stephanie Taylor presented a proposal to have a Fun Run that would end at the Spirit of Muldoon Picnic. If people are interest in this idea they should attend the committee meeting in two weeks.

**Kyle Rehberg, Alcohol & Marijuana Committee:** Kyle and Stu reiterated the upcoming Muni meeting on September 24, to issue the Marijuana License to Balthazar. Public comment closes on August 30 for NECC.

**Nate Martin, Bylaws Committee:** The committee met and began reviewing the bylaws. They established a timeline for changes. Their next meeting is TBD. Folks should send any suggestions on possible bylaws changes to the NECC email.

#### **Presentations**

None

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

#### **Alaska Bar Association, Fair and Impartial Courts Committee**

**Susanne DiPietro:** Susanne discussed judge retention elections. She explained the process, how folks can get information on judges and the Council's process for evaluating judges. The Council was established during the Constitutional Convention during Statehood. It is made up of citizens, attorneys, and the Chief Justice. The voting process for selecting new judges is elaborate and significantly different from the Federal process. Several questions were asked and answered.

### **Project Anchorage**

**Radhika Krishna:** This is a downtown partnership of companies that are proposing a 3% sales tax. 2% of the tax would be used to offset property tax, dollar for dollar and would be under the tax cap. The remaining 1% would be used for community driven capital projects. Exemptions would include: groceries, gas, childcare, rent. The cap would be \$30 regardless of the value of the goods purchased. The proposal will be presented to the Anchorage Assembly, and they will decide if the tax should go on the April ballot.

### **Homelessness in East Anchorage**

**George Martinez:** The new Homeless Coordinator is Farina Brown. She is the point person in the Muni. Verbal commitments have been made that Centennial Park will be permanently abated of homeless camps. Reporting of hazardous conditions is very important. There will be no mass shelter; their focus is on housing. Faith based organizations are assisting with the effort. "In My Backyard" is working with churches and other organizations to establish pallet shelters and Workforce Development.

### **Community Announcements:**

A candlelight vigil will be held at 1:00 pm, Friday, August 16, 2024, on the Park Strip in memory of Easter Leafah, a 16 year old girl who was killed in an incident with police earlier this week.

Weed Smack Down is Saturday, August 17, at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park at 10:00 am.

Aaron Pascar's service with the Community Patrol was acknowledged.

Rock the VOTE is Friday, August 16, 2024 at the Pink Cadillac at 7:00 pm. It's a chance to meet the candidates, enjoy live music and free appetizers. 369 Muldoon Road.

GOTV at Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, on Saturday, August 17, at 1:00 pm. Sponsored by Shiloh and Alaska Black Caucus.

**Murray Crookes adjourned the meeting at 9:04 pm.**

**Upcoming NECC meeting: Thursday, September 19, 2024, at Creekside Elementary**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Stephanie Taylor, Member**