

AHCC 19 Sept 2024

(Board to do: Check what meeting location is listed on the FCC website)

7:01pm call to order

Introductions

Attendees:

- Residents: Breena Apgar-Kurtz, Carolyn Ramsey and Paige, Joan Fisher, Emily Becker, Brita Mjos, Brianna Beswick, Tyler Boyes, Chelsea Ward-Waller, Matt Widmer, Larry Hayden, Emily Weiser, Kate Yenik, Dave Gardner, John Whitlock, Rayette Sterling, Michael Galginaitis, Karlene Leeper, Aaron Jongenelen, Rachel Pennington (see also list in the room, and chat from recording)
- Guests: School board member Donley, Assembly Members Rivera & Zaletel, Rep Mina, Seth (staff to Sen Dunbar), Earl Malpass (Merrill Field Airport Manager), Janis Fleischman (Fire Island Bakeshop)

Approve agenda: moved Larry, second Carolyn

Amendments: add update on Fire Island, update from AH Elementary. Mover and seconder agree

No opposition; agenda approved as amended

May minutes: move to approve Carolyn, second Larry, no opposition, minutes approved

Elected Officials Updates:

- Schoolboard Member Donley:
 - ASD is looking toward closing 10 more schools per direction from the state administration, due to district-wide occupancy of 70%, some schools under 60%, staffing shortages. Board will adopt decision criteria and will go through a public process to choose which schools to close. Unsure what level schools could be closed.
 - Speaking personally as a board member, not for the board, SBM Donley would like to see more patriotic activities (playing the national anthem, state flag song, recognize National Constitution Day, Juneteenth, Declaration of Independence) required in schools, but the board is sticking with those being voluntary (except every school is required to say the pledge of allegiance, per state statute).
 - Kate (AHCC resident) asks what the public process for that will look like. SBM Donley says the first step is to develop and apply objective criteria, then go to the public for input.
- Assembly Member Zaletel:
 - Early this month, Assembly joined with Eklutna Native Village to request an alternative arrangement for the Eklutna dam
 - Port: upcoming vote to approve Terminal 1 reconstruction. To be funded by port user fees (\$600m). Will also work on a crane-sharing agreement. Construction anticipated to begin next July.

- At next Tuesday's Assembly meeting, AM Zaletel will bring forward a resolution that will be a call to action to DOT and MOA about pedestrian deaths. 9 so far this year, last year was 11 all year. DOT said they'll work on an action plan over the next couple months, but AM Zaletel wants immediate action to add lighting and lower vehicle speeds. Mayor's office had a "safe streets" press conference yesterday but did not address pedestrian safety.
- Question from resident: is there a plan for a crosswalk at Columbine across DeBarr? Chelsea notes (in her professional capacity) that segment of road is up for consideration to address safety
- Emily Weiser says thank you for raising the pedestrian safety issue
- Emily Becker says thank you for your service re: recent news that AM Zaletel won't run for reelection. Also suggests additional enforcement of speeding, red light running could help. AM Zaletel agrees but recognizes APD is understaffed, so would need to be targeted enforcement, in combination with design and education.
- Assembly Member Rivera:
 - Budget: Assembly has received initial broad overview from LaFrance administration, including capital projects that could be on next year's bond. Full detailed budget coming early October.
 - Major administration priority: staff retention. Assembly will be voting on paid parental leave, improved telework flexibility
 - Housing/homelessness: Next Step program moved 150 people from shelter into housing. This summer/fall it has moved another 45 people from camps to housing. Total number of unsheltered people has dropped from 900 to 500. Assembly is looking at how to continue the Next Step program.
 - Homelessness: LaFrance administration is looking at winter shelter with a total of 500 non-congregate beds, will come before Assembly to vote on those contracts soon, beds online by Oct 15th.
- Rep Mina:
 - Has moved to Mountain View but still in our district
 - \$1702 PFD passed, which includes about \$300 for energy relief and about \$1400 is the actual PFD
 - House passed a balanced budget in May but governor vetoed a number of items, including the three capital projects (neighborhood priorities) that would have happened in Airport Heights. Had tried to increase funding for snow plowing (budget has been flat, not keeping up with Anchorage)
 - Also passed bills relating to energy crisis, correspondence schools, short-term increase in education funding (equivalent to \$680 BSA increase, but not long-term) and were unable to pass added benefits for teachers
 - Bill to improve eligibility, access, and efficiency of SNAP program, tied to a Medicaid bill – passed
 - Statewide Transportation Improvement Program delays resulted in Alaska losing access to \$50m in federal transportation funds. House Transportation Committee is looking at putting that on a meeting agenda to discuss further.
 - Question from resident about whether energy relief is taxed... Rep Mina is not sure, another resident says it is not taxable (but the PFD is) – please double-check this for yourself
- Seth with [update from Sen Dunbar's office](#):

- Internship applications are open for college students to work with state legislators in Juneau. Ask their offices if you or someone you know would like to apply, or the political science department at UAA (students can be any major). Due end of October
- House Bill 228, companion bill to psychedelics task force to integrate psychedelics into our health care system, if FDA approved
- Senate Bill 103 allows first responders to talk to mental health professionals confidentially about their work
- Senate Bill 159: Alaska Veterans Poppy Day will be recognized
- House Bill 148: expands opportunities for a merit scholarship at Alaska schools
- Register to vote! Deadline October 6th for the November election. Check your registration online at elections.alaska.gov. Can request an absentee ballot by Oct 26th to be mailed to you (it will not automatically be mailed unless you request it).
- [Update from Sen Tobin](#)

Airport Heights Elementary update from Kate, new PTA member:

- Oct 5th: apple pressing event 12-2pm. Seeking donations of apples or crabapples. Students can come help you pick!
- Oct 19th: fall festival, 4-6pm at the school, open to the community. Volunteers would be welcome (you don't have to have a kid in the school) and businesses can set up tables to pass out candy provided by PTA. Games, outdoors if weather allows
- Seeking ideas, community events, donations for after-school activities
- Ice rink is open to the community. Friday Night Lights and skate clubs will be happening again this winter. All funded by donations
- PTA supports school bus fees for field trips
- Kate or another member of the PTA plans to attend CC meetings every month to update us
- John asks if it's possible to donate to the library here specifically. Kate will send out the PTA email to check with them.
- Emily Becker says you can exchange volunteer time for some space in the school greenhouse – ask her or Moana if you want more details for next summer. Also will be a greenhouse cleaning party at 10am Oct 5th (please come help!)

Earl from Merrill Field, new airport director

- Considering how to address noise complaints that have come from the neighborhood, including better education on how to avoid neighborhoods. Will take further complaints seriously.
- Summer 2025: east-west runway refurbishment, closed 60 days, will have more north-south aircraft traffic over Airport Heights
- Centennial celebration will be in 2030. Wants community involvement to plan it. Looking for schools to adopt flower gardens at the airport
- Municipal Anchorage Airport Advisory Commission does not currently have an Airport Heights representative. Would be great to have a volunteer from the neighborhood attend each month.

Matt with Bar Association, Fair and Impartial Courts Committee

- Judicial retention system: judges are also on the ballot. State Judicial Council vets candidates, governor selects from them. After initial term, judges have to go before

voters to be retained. (Term duration depends on the level of court, 4-10 years.) We will have 17 judges for Alaska, Palmer, and Kenai on our ballot. Many voters skip that part of the ballot due to lack of information, which is essentially like a “no” vote. Judicial Council provides recommendations on voting yes/no based on objective, unbiased vetting whether they are performing their duties; see pamphlet provided in the room. The Alaska Judicial Council website has all the details from the vetting process. This cycle, all judges have been recommended for retention by majority vote. League of Women Voters also provides recommendations. Matt lives at 20th & Talkeetna in the gray house and is happy to chat if you want more information.

Fire Island Bakeshop updates: Rachel Pennington, Janis Fleischman (co-owners)

- Bakeshop is 10 years old this year and is now starting an expansion. Existing buildings will be retained to reduce environmental impact, will add additions. More space inside, will preserve the backyard, will have a big garage door to open out to the backyard. Will add landscaping and sidewalk in parking lot. Will have a community event space. Espresso bar; neighborhood mercantile to buy bakery ingredients, produce, other food. Would like to restart the summer market also. Staff room and office on 2nd floor of one wing. Planning to take 6 months for construction, reopening Feb 15th if all goes well. In the meantime they have a connex with a smaller selection of baked goods, same hours (7a-4p Weds-Sun).

Community Councils boundary review (Chelsea): quick reminder that this is happening, had some delays. Emily Weiser was on the community advisory committee if anyone has questions. Public hearing draft is forthcoming in October and CCs will be invited to comment on any changes affecting them. May include a proposal to move the pocket neighborhood on the NE corner of Lake Otis/Northern Lights into Airport Heights (they are currently part of Rogers Park). If you have friends who live there, ask what they would like and encourage them to formally comment once public input is open.

Federation of Community Councils report (Chelsea): Amanda Moser was our rep, then on the FCC board, now needs to step back as our rep due to a new position with the LaFrance administration. FCC has a new Executive Director and another employee. They are hosting a series of community workshops for members of the public to learn more about the FCC and CCs. First one is Sept 23, 7-8pm at Loussac Library: Demystifying Community Councils. Will also be livestreamed on YouTube. Learn more at communitycouncils.org

October: AHCC elections coming up. Terms are 1 year so all positions are up for election. Contact Chelsea or Amber Morris if you might be interested in running. Positions are President, VP, Secretary/Treasurer, FCC Delegate, and two Members-at-Large.

Community concerns:

- Breena Apgar-Kurtz: east 16th & Norene has had a number of crashes and she is interested in whether it could be made a 4-way stop
 - Some context from Chelsea: last year we passed a resolution asking to reduce speeding in the neighborhood with several streets specifically named. Some funding for this was in the budget passed by the state legislature, but vetoed by the governor. Other funding comes through the Muni (via bonds) and there is interest among policymakers in increasing the funding available.

- Chelsea will ask for an update from the MOA Traffic Department on what they're doing in the neighborhood regarding our resolution or other traffic calming efforts.
- If E 16th & Norene wasn't in the resolution, we could do another resolution to add that to our list of requests.
- Brita would like to find out if the trail around Goose Lake will be repaved
- Emily Weiser said there's an article in the ADN today about upcoming Bragaw safety improvements, and also encourages everyone to consider running for CC board positions next month—great way to get involved and stay up to date

Adjourned 8:42 John Whitlock moved, Carolyn seconded