

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, January 8, 2025

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Clayton Chapman, Tara & Nevin Blankenship, Forrest Dunbar, George Martinez, Daniel George, Dan Wright

Present via Zoom: Bill Wielechowski, Margo Bellamy, Remington Purnell, Ted Eischeid, Genevive Mina

Meeting was called to order by our new President Clayton Chapman at 6:39 pm.

A Welome and Acknowledgement that we are meeting on Dena'ina Lands and are grateful for their care and sharing the land with us.

Legislative Reports were provided as follows:

Senator Bill Wielechowski: Pieces of legislation he will re-file-

- Requiring school districts to teach financial literacy basic fundamentals (ie balance a check book, invest in an Ira, fafsa form filing). Anchorage school district already doing it to some extent, helping bring it to rural Alaska.
- School districts to ban cell phone use. Spoke on a Begich middle school visit where they relayed a need for benefits for the school and more funding to recruit and retain teachers. But, the top thing they did that was beneficial to their school was to not allow phones in schools to be used. They can have them there but unable to use during school hours.

Governor budget 1.5 billion deficit.

There may be an upcoming announcement of a company hoping to build a gas line to help with energy deficit.

Capsa system in order for projects to be able to be requested for funds.

4950 Taku Dr : contaminated gas station at that site was closed and cleaned in 2015. Property fenced in and cleaned up.

Representative Genevive Mina - Chair house majority health and social service committee: child care, behavioral health, workforce, move good bills through. Moving old bills through.

- Major medical emergencies improve the office of EMS. Coordinate how we respond to trauma in an emergency.
- State Wide transportation program. DOT already does a lot of transportation but it only applies to urban transportation. Help rural Alaska have better public transportation. Tribal governments.
- Family Rite Assisted homes. Behavioral health needs for the very sick.

- Waiving business license fees.

Clayton has questions:

- Regarding stroke and a life saving medicine they can be used in this emergency system plan. Tpa.

Representative Ted Eisheid:

- Co chairing the transportation committee in the state house and a meeting with the Anchorage delegation group. Transportation was a top issue.
- Military and veterans affairs committee.
- Less is more approach. Judicious with his capital.

Clayton question: Asked about updates on the VA information with the new administrator? He was referred to ask our new Senator.

Reply: Trump has included infrastructure to have his support but not sure about the VA

Remington (representing Andrew Grey):

1. Incentivise more houses Alaskans can afford with property tax incentives.
2. Warnings at all points of sale that alcohol causes cancer colon and breast.

Grey has new podcasts: highlighting several: Lori Pickett Former Pres of the Alaska and literacy program. Dr Mini Benjamin problems in rural Alaska health care. Hollis French

Senator Forest Dunbar:

- Pre filed about 10 bills. No new updates. Was attending in case we have questions.
- Same staff as last year.

Assemblyman George Martinez:

- Spoke of the most recent assembly meeting discussing the proposed sales tax. More discussion moved to March 4th. Passed by the body that whatever the result of the sales tax would be in a special election between August and Nov. it's a resolution that passed to just move it back a bit George called it "punting."
 - Question: regarding alaska's charter protection to need a 60% pass. He wants to know why we would create an election when there is nothing else important to vote in resulting in an off season election.
 - This causes uncertainty and seems like big interest is pushing this through without public interest at hand.
- RV parking and overnight parking. The feelings that people have to take action into their own hands to make changes of the rvs parking in front of or near their homes and conducting "illegal" activity. Example: If there is an illegally parked rv who can move it? Can individuals pay to move them? No. Can the city move them? Maybe? City contracts towing and it becomes more complex than one would think. Tow operators are not able to drop an rv without approval.

- Fix abandoned lots.
- Help fix & repair senior centers.
- Food security issues with expanding urban farming and gardening. Williwaw garden coming soon.
- Re invest in developing through city corridors.

Margo Bellamy School Board:

- School board did not meet yet this month due to weather. Giving recap of December 17th meeting.
- Thank you to council for sending right sizing resolution. Memorandum 73: reflected the administrations recommendation. 7 schools were originally planned to be closed or repurposed: only 2 schools will be closed: Lake Hood and Nunaka Valley. Proud of the input from all of East Side. “It’s gonna get worse before it gets better.” Allowed superintendent to give another right sizing plan.
- Memorandum 61 grant acceptance to the Academy of Anchorage. Academies create pathways to career and our goals to college and life ready goals. Planning how this money will be used.
- Memorandum 71 budget planning for new school year. Passed with a plan for future amendments. Amendments will come when they get closer to putting this into action.
- Software application to get ideas from the community on how the community would balance the budget. Looks at what we are doing now and what it will look like when we move forward into the future. Balanced budget March has to go to assembly.
- With the help of Senator Weilechowski a joint agreement with the assembly for increased funding for the district . Bronga, Martinez, Rivera and one other all assisted in this.
- Highlight added by George Martinez “thank you” for flagging an update. Memorandum 73 ASD owns properties throughout the city and will move a land mass into control of the municipality to build housing. The plot of land is large and off Muldoon behind the totem theatre.
 - Questions for what kind of housing will be determined and how will Municipality decide what can be done.
 - The questions would be about what is possible. Interesting things with tax incentives over the next few months.
 - Discussed Holtin Hills property and compared that to what can and will happen. Public and private process is new to navigate each land plot.

Kathleen: FCC report.

- Pedestrian Safety plan presentation.
- Upcoming FCC meeting will have a city assessor.

Community Announcements: Costco wants to renew their liquor license. One member spoke in opposition as we already have too much problems with alcohol in our state. No other comments from attendees and no vote was taken.

The group present went around and introduced themselves.

Next meeting will be held February 12 at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Tara Blankenship, Secretary Pro Tem