

**Fairview Community Council
General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2007
Fairview Recreation Center**

Meeting called to order by council chair Darrel Hess at 7:02 pm.

President's Report, Darrel Hess:

The United Way Day of Caring on June 1st and 2nd was a big success. The community garden at Fairview Lions Park is almost done; the patio there is finished. There will be a paving party on June 22nd to complete the community garden. All the businesses that provided support are much appreciated. Mark Begich, Mary Jane Michael, Vic Mollozzi, and Jeff Clarke are all committed to continue working with the council to improve Fairview's parks.

The draft for the 9th Avenue project has been released. Alternative #3 is very close to the ideas proposed by the council.

The annual Mayor's Picnic will be held on August 4th at Fairview Lions Park, in conjunction with the Fairview Block Party.

Secretary's Report:

There were no minutes from the May general membership meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance 4/14/07		\$5,543.60
Deposits		
5/3/07	Membership dues	\$15.00
5/4/07	Alaska Sales and Service	\$5,000.00
Total Deposits		\$5,015.00
Expenses		
4/17/07 #1095	Lee Ross – Patrol Scanner	\$284.16
5/4/07 #1097	AK Best Water – APD substation	\$70.00
5/7/07 #1096	ACS – Patrol hotline	\$38.81
5/7/07 #1098	S.B.S. – Plant Sale	\$69.86
5/14/07 #1099	Lee Ross – Patrol Camera and Recorders	\$584.97
5/14/07 #1101	Harry Deuber – Plants	\$156.62
Total Expenses		\$1,204.42
5/14/07 Ending Balance		\$9,354.18

Guests and Presentations:

Allan Tesche, Anchorage Assembly

Mr. Tesche noted that regarding the matter of the renaming of Town Square Park after Ruth Moulton, members of the Fairview Community Council presented different views and opinions on the matter, all of which were respectful of Ruth and the process. The matter was postponed by the Assembly until June 26th. Mr. Tesche said that testimony by members of the FVCC was first-rate, and he was proud to represent Fairview. Also at the recent Assembly meeting, Mayor Begich gave a presentation on the Day of Caring and showed a 17-second movie showing work by volunteers and the transformation in the park. Mr. Tesche urged the council to present the Fairview Neighborhood Plan forthwith to Planning and Zoning and the Assembly.

Johnny Ellis, State Senate

On behalf of Representative Les Gara and himself, Mr. Ellis said that the recent legislative session was the most productive one since he has been in Juneau. He said it has been a pleasure to serve with Les Gara. Some of the major funding that has been secured for the Fairview-area (subject to forthcoming approval by the governor) includes

- \$10M for the Highway-to-Highway project
- \$10M for the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center
- \$4.2M for the Loussac Library
- Funds for the Fire Training Center
- \$55,000 for 13th and Gambell
- \$10,000 for Fairview Elementary
- \$100,000 for upgrades to the Fairview Community Recreation Center
- \$800,000 for the Anchorage Senior Center

For the municipality as a whole, \$32M has been allocated to the School District and \$48M for municipal assistance and revenue sharing. These funds will be used to relieve property tax payers. There was also millions of dollars sent to state retirement programs, a crime package, and \$1B of oil surplus set aside for forward funding of public education in Alaska. A bill concerning saving programs for post-secondary education for foster children, and another concerning ethics, both passed in the recent session.

Carol Comeau, Anchorage School District Superintendent, Patricia McRae, ASD Elementary Education Coordinator, Marc Robinson, Fairview Elementary School Principal

Several matters of interest to the Fairview community concerning education were discussed by these three presenters. First was the issue of the recent fire at the Fairview Elementary School playground. In addition to this fire underneath the playground equipment, it seems there is evidence that other small fires were set around the grounds and building. The school will have extra security and there will be extra police patrols. Residents are urged to keep an eye out for suspicious activity. The School Board recently approved naming the Fairview Elementary library after Charles Benson. His picture, legislative citation, and a list of his activities will be put up, and there will be a dedication ceremony in August or September. Johnny Ellis asked about the possibility of campers protecting the school from vandals. Carol Comeau said they are looking hard for someone to cover Fairview Elementary.

Patricia McRae presented data on student performance and satisfaction levels at Fairview Elementary. She said the goal in all elementary schools is to have all students reading by the 3rd grade. Test scores at Fairview Elementary were excellent. Reading scores increased at every grade level; there is 70% reading proficiency in the 3rd grade. Out-of-school suspensions have decreased over the past two years. In 2005, there were 61 such suspensions, 50 in 2006, and 30 in 2007. Policies did not change during this period. Also, referrals to police officers have declined over these years from 300 to around 130. They have also collected data on satisfaction. Parents can give their input on the ASD website, and it is also solicited at school functions. In general, across the district, they struggle to get enough data. That said, data from Fairview Elementary show that students strongly agree that school staff have high expectations.

Marc Robinson commented on the request made by the FVCC to consider funding a parent liaison using Title 1 money. There is not enough money to do this. There is currently a Family School Services Coordinator and PALS liaisons who reach out to ethnic groups—six different ones at the moment. The thought is that parents are more likely to chat with others similar to them as they are more likely to trust them. Special efforts are made to reach out to the Samoan, Hispanic, and African-American families whose children attend the school. They also try to make a connection with new students and their families. Dr. Robinson added that there are about 390 students at Fairview Elementary, and about 70 of them are homeless. In the whole district, there are about 2,000 homeless students, something Carol Comeau described as a serious problem. At Fairview Elementary, the Family School Services Coordinator works closely with these homeless families.

A number of community members asked questions and made comments. Dee Kennedy asked if there are similar problems at Denali Elementary given that it is a Montessori School. Patricia McRae replied that it is also a neighborhood school. Compared to Fairview Elementary, it has a smaller number of suspensions, but then there are other schools that have more suspensions than Fairview. She said they don't really compare schools, but instead look at trends in individual schools, particularly if they are implementing programs to reduce discipline problems.

Dan Loring said he talked to a bunch of his neighbors and they are going to offer a \$500 reward to anyone who can provide information to the police to identify the person who set the fire at the school playground if it results in punishment for the offender. He also said that when he was chair of the FVCC, there were people concerned about the elementary school, so he established a standing committee. After the new school was built, scores went down and there were more discipline problems. But with the new principal, things are improving. He asked how we, as a community, can determine if our school is doing okay. Is it all dependent on who the principal is as to whether the kids get a good education? Carol Comeau replied that the principal is very important, as are the teachers and other staff. Test scores are not the whole picture. The school climate is also relevant—do kids want to come to school, do parents get involved? If the staff feels supported by the community, that is a motivator. Also, if kids are coming to school on time and want to be there, that is a motivator. Patricia McRae said they look at data and ask how they can do better. A big issue is demographics. There are challenges when students and parents can't speak English. She said that you can't pin school success on any one thing. She meets every year with principals, who in turn meet frequently with their staff.

Arnold Dade said he used to work as a teaching assistant for the school district, and he thinks it is a problem that principals move around a lot. Carol Comeau answered that they used to have a seven-year mandatory transfer policy, but not anymore. There are always people retiring and new staff being hired, so they might ask a principal to go to a new school if that school needs those skills. Or if a principal wants to transfer, we let them. But we want to encourage stability. Dr. Robinson said that as a school principal, his job is to establish systems that should be functional if a new principal comes in.

Paul Benson asked if progress is being made as quickly as the guests would like, and what the community can do to help them reach their goals? Dr. Robinson said he is very happy with how things are going. They have formed relationships with students, test scores are higher, there are fewer discipline problems, and the climate of the school has improved. The community can help by continuing to do what it has been doing—supporting Fairview Elementary and schools in general. Carol Comeau said that community members can help by serving as role models and showing kids why education is important. People could go read to kids for a few hours a week. They can get out and show support for schools and kids.

Sgt. Dennis Allen, Anchorage Police Department

Sgt. Allen presented the calls-for-service statistics for the Fairview council area. Overall, there were 425 calls-for-service. Of these 64 were for warrant arrests, 36 were for collisions, and there were 6 each for drunks and drunk driving. There are a lot of calls-for-service from 13th and Gambell. APD is making some headway with V.F. Grace. A possibility is blocking off the vacated alley in the middle of that property. Carrs Gambell was a leader in removing mouthwash from the shelves. Since they did it, mouthwash has also been taken off the shelves at the Carrs store in the Sears Mall. This convinced Fred Meyer to remove their big bottles of Kroger mouthwash, and put electronic article surveillance tags on the other mouthwash. They have arrested shoplifters and trespassed chronic inebriates. The Assembly is reviewing the operating conditions of Spirits of Alaska.

Arnold Dade said he knows some people who live in the housing complex by Eastchester Park, and they have been locking the gates at night because of problems with car break-ins.

Sgt. Allen commented on gangs. He said they are spread out across the city, and Fairview doesn't seem to have a problem relative to other parts of the city. There is some tagging, but little gang graffiti. Fairview's crime problems are more related to prostitution, drugs, and drinking.

Dan Loring said there seems to be new graffiti on traffic signs and up and down 15th Avenue. Last year he called Graffiti Busters seven or eight times and finally gave up. He asked if Graffiti Busters is still active, and what should be done if there is graffiti on school property. Carol Comeau said the ASD maintenance department will remove it right away. Sgt. Allen advised that if someone sees graffiti, it should be reported to APD. They will come out and take pictures. Tagging is different. If it is still there in a couple of days, call Graffiti Busters, but that is only one guy with one truck and he has to cover the whole city.

Ronna Simien

Ms. Simien asked if the FVCC would pay the bill for printing 50 t-shirts for the upcoming Juneteenth celebration. She said that when she came to the Executive Board meeting she was told the council would pay for the shirts, and that she had an assistant contact council chair Darrel Hess by e-mail to request the shirts. Darrel Hess said any expenditure over \$100 has to be approved by the general membership with a quorum of fifteen, and presently there are only seven members in attendance. He added that the council just doesn't have the money right now, because even though there seems to be a lot of money in the

account, a significant portion has been allocated to the Parks Foundation for Day of Caring and for printing of the Neighborhood Plan. Ms. Simien was adamant in her recollection that the Executive Board promised her that it would pay for the shirts. Mr. Hess stated that he remembers that he told her he knows someone who might be able to give her a good deal on the shirts. He further added that the minutes from that Executive Board meeting when Ms. Simien attended in February indicate that she asked for help identifying potential donors, and with contacting businesses to put up flyers, fundraising, and volunteers to help with things at the Park Strip and walk with kids on the sickle cell walk. She also requested help arranging street closures and rerouting of buses. The minutes of the February meeting also detail that Darrel Hess asked that they make a list of what specifically they want from the council. He said that he never received any such list. In addition, Mr. Hess said that that the function of the council is to raise money for specific purposes and that is it not a fundraising organization or a charity. There was a heated discussion between Ms. Simien and Mr. Hess regarding what the Executive Board did or not promise, the general business practices of the Fairview Community Council, and the commitment of the council to children in the neighborhood. Mr. Hess invited Ms. Simien to return to the general membership meeting at a time when there is a quorum to make another request for payment for the shirts. She added that she would return to the council next year to ask again for support for t-shirts for the 2008 Juneteenth event.

Committee and Community Reports:

Beautification Committee, Harry Deuber:

The Plant Sale was held on Memorial Day weekend. Gambell Street was unexpectedly closed for road work, so there was less traffic. The sale did okay though. The diverters were planted two weeks ago. Thanks to Claris Syren, Dan Loring, Allison Loring, and Ella Demoski for their help. The Flower Patrol is always looking for volunteers.

Dan Loring asked if the Day of Caring was supposed to include projects at Fairview Elementary. Darrel Hess said that those projects were scuttled because there were not enough volunteers.

Neighborhood Plan Committee, Darrel Hess:

The Neighborhood Plan will be sent to the printer by the end of July.

Public Safety Committee, Sharon Chamard:

Officer Wendi Shackelford from APD has done a lot of good work investigating the recent fires at Fairview Elementary. The Community Patrol received a state grant last year for \$3,200. So far those funds have been used to purchase two digital voice recorders, a digital camera, a digital video camera, and a scanner. The remaining funds will be used to cover the cell phone bill for the past year and other equipment within the purview of the grant request.

Community Comments and Concerns:

Dee Kennedy reported that the Central Lutheran Church picnic was yesterday. About 200 people came. There is also a Farmers' Market at the church every Saturday from 9 am – 2 pm. The Native Lutheran Church is having a garage sale tomorrow.

Dan Loring said that the Downtown Soup Kitchen received \$1.5M in the state budget. The Soup Kitchen plans to do a study to assess whether their current location might not be serving their target clientele, but instead is primarily catering to chronic inebriates. If they find that the best location is in Fairview, they will probably move to build a facility here, complete with housing and treatment services.

Dan Loring said that people who have made attempts to get parent liaison positions established have been blocked. There are indications that the Family School Services Coordinator at Fairview Elementary is not effective. Four students were bullied and ended up leaving the school, but there was no contact from the Family School Services Coordinator. **Dee Kennedy** commented that AFACT took group action, and got Carol Comeau to commit to a pilot program in two schools to improve communication between natives and the schools. There was a general discussion about this program and whether it is working.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Chamard, Vice President.