

PORTAGE VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES 1/25/10

PRESENT:

Joanne Blackburn
Steve Mendive
Mike Miller
Mitch Blackburn
Mark Parmelee DOT
Alvin Talbert DOT
Mark Butler FCC

APPROVAL OF ACTION PRIOR MEETING MINUTES – None this date.

Portage Valley Community Council (PVCC) President, Steve Mendive called the meeting to order.

Steve Mendive, PVCC President delegated the meeting secretarial duties to Joanne Blackburn.

The public meeting was opened with discussion of special large project the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) presented schematic for improvement of public commercial access for public safety purposes drawn by HR Bell. In recognition of budget constraints and to provide for commercial buildings currently in construction and others being installed at that location AWCC had this access designed since there are no other designed improvements to serve both rivers centrally. These improvements can be easily incorporated into existing maintenance plans year-round. No objections were voiced. The PVCC recommends approval for safety purposes. Damon Blackburn MOVED for approval, Joanne Blackburn SECONDED and the MOTION PASSED without objection.

Mike Miller commented that ninety percent of AWCC visitors remain single vehicle and there is a projected need for an increased volume to the area. Steve Mendive commented that Jennifer Johnston proposed as a public benefit in the state CIP 2010 budget to present for funding this year. Portage visitors are coming to the AWCC. It is now anticipated that Mr. Hawker will present this commercial access improvement within the Financial Budget this year.

Mark Parmelee, DOT Planner, pointed out that 80 percent of people go the speed they desire regardless of posted speed. Mark Miller commented that Portage Valley has no control over tunnel and ARRC Whittier traffic, and Whittier traffic flow which impacts

the area greatly. Bus traffic has to be considered in commercial vehicle access point planning which must include mixed commerce business interests.

Steve Mendive inquired of the state's position regarding the presented plan.

Mark Parmelee responded that he had a few questions and noted that funds are hard to come by. The federal funding is behind. He wondered if Mr. Hawker is convinced; Mark Parmelee thought it was appropriate that Jennifer Johnston wanted this project added to the State rather than Muni CIP List; he spoke of the giant list. Mark said he needed a descriptive paragraph which would go through Mr. Lampson at the municipality. For example, Mark Parmelee mentioned a Windy Corner project which was a twenty million dollar project which had been approved but where was the project today. It too had a project description but was not yet done.

Mark Parmelee said it was imperative to give Mr. Hawker the project cost numbers and have DOT evaluate the project cost as soon as possible since there is not a lot of money. Further he said to provide data to Kelly Peterson who is the project manager.

Damon Blackburn asked for a Scope and Benefit regarding the Ingram Creek to Girdwood project as it would be of help in this description if incorporated.

Steve Mendive said the design of the presented project was mindful of access delimitations by the state for highway design safety parameters.

Mark Parmelee said the description should emphasize that the access alignment is centrally located between the two bridges. The municipality needs the description and the legislators want the costs to add to the PDE. Mark encouraged AKWCC to confirm the construction costs (planners request preliminary costs) to sell to the state and Mr. Hawker and Mr. Lampson needs the description immediately since the legislature is in session.

Steve Mendive and Mike Miller said the Bear Building is going to be built by 2013 or sooner to serve Portage visitors, Alyeska visitors, and the Board of Fish and Game for promotions.

Mark Parmelee said the State of Alaska Driveway Permit needed to be done right away because he didn't know if one existed at that location and it needed to be in place since it is recognized as "as good a spot as you can get".

Steve Mendive and Damon Blackburn iterated that such an access would not accommodate the needs of private residences across the highway.

Alvin Talbert, Consultant Coordinator, asked regarding the timing of the access, the larger scope, headquarters concerns with NEPA's, and the scaled down version anticipated for the larger project overall and competing needs of other projects, the port expansion etc. To move up the list, the project has to have funding. Mike Miller says

architectural drawings and funding are in place to complete the exhibits and the intention is to improve the motorized access which is allowed. USFS is on board with the projects, USFS NEPA's have been done, Theresa Pacquet, of USFS Special Use Permits, is approving of the project since this is moving the federal project along. Right now the target activity is largely uncontrolled. Placer River vehicular impacts are really Twenty Mile impacts.

Joanne Blackburn stated that as we represent local government authority we really must take the lead here rather than depend upon the federal government to lead this though there are BLM easement quad maps that are available to agencies and she believed they may not have been substantively reviewed by agencies for accuracy and applicability and would no doubt be helpful to review and at some point in the future PVCC should review them.

Mark Parmelee exited the meeting.

Damon Blackburn, asked about whether there are 50 or 100 year flood plain elevations. Mike Miller noted elevations impacts highway building costs. General discussion of USFS plans to redesign the Voices of the Ice, Spencer Cabins and other pressures and extensive planning.

Alvin Tolbert, said this Seward Highway Project is one of eight his team is handling.

Steve Mendive mentioned the proposed access project will help improve bank erosion and commercial access.

Alvin Tolbert said DOT had recent meetings regarding projects to eliminate. Kelly Peterson, Project Manager was considering eliminating projects \$2 Million and above. The estimated \$1.6 million cost of this project was under that level.

Steve Mendive said with the environmental documents and phase design already done there was hope that allocation would be available for this "doable" design.

Steve Mendive then MOVED to elect Joanne Blackburn as Secretary for PVCC. Mike Miller SECONDED. MOTION PASSED without objection.

Discussion of need for medical facilities in the area.

Alvin Talbert said he spends about thirty percent of his time on the Seward Highway project. Scoping is a sensitive area right now. The EIS is in draft stage for the overall project, as well as being in the Supplementary EIS.

This PVCC approved project is on the State CIP List. Dave Parrish would pursue conversation with Mike Hawker on behalf of AWCC. The project has been recognized at the Municipality of Anchorage Assembly Level.

Mark Butler mentioned the new political direction of such project funding over recent political events. He anticipates some small awards might be made available. He discussed strategies for reaching out for these and what has been done in the past. July 1 such funds are disbursed. These would be administered through FCC and will be the subjects of future PVCC meetings.

Hooligan fishing problems were discussed. Damon Blackburn noted they are a non-conforming use of the Seward Highway Design at Milepost 82.2 for 30 days. There was general discussion of garbage and human excrement problems. It was noted that it is extraordinary that nobody has yet been killed crossing the Seward Highway at that location during this type "fishing" with cars parked either direction narrowing the Seward to one lane right down the center which impedes commerce and creates extraordinary work hazard for commercial drivers.

Discussion of comprehensive issues, public/private lands access issues, attendant paperwork; signage, wayfaring and kiosk; accesses to private property design and implementation, better traffic flow; through traffic and accesses for private, municipal taxpaying properties, institutional accesses, visitors, industrial institutional complicated, FERC license use.

Alvin Tolbert said Scott Thomas, Safety Officer, DOT looks exclusively at safety.

Mark Butler mentioned a need possibly for a small study grant for professional analysis coupled with structured meeting among the users.

Steve Mendive, PVCC President, MOVED to seek as an initial comprehensive study funds for economic grant monies available due to the lack of consideration of the area previously in the comprehensive planning for the legislative process this year and previously. This MOTION was PASSED without objection as the primary priority of the area by the PVCC.

Next Meeting Set for Monday February 22, 2010 at 4PM at the Community Councils Center location at 1057 West Fireweed lane, Suite 100.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Joanne Blackburn.