

Rogers Park Community Council Newsletter December 2005

The next meeting is Dec. 12, 7 pm in the Rogers Park Elementary library. The agenda will include a first review of proposed by-laws revisions (proposed changes have been sent out to all members via e-mail), Mr. Art Weeks of the Loussac Library, information about a Highway Safety Improvement Program project between Northern Lights and Tudor on Lake Otis by USKH, a Fireweed-LaTouche update by DOWL, a ML&P concern by Mr. Ken Langford, and more. All current RPCC officers will retire as of the May meeting. Please consider serving your neighbors as a community council officer.

The November 2005 Rogers Park Community Council convened on Monday, November 14, 2005. In attendance were Sen. Johnny Ellis, Rep. Berta Gardner, Emily McCoy of Rep. Gara's staff, and Assemblymen Mr. Traini and Mr. Coffey.

I. Announcements:

- ? Municipality Disaster supplies Kit may be obtained: e-mail at MOA bulletin board, office of Emergency Management, 343-1401
- ? Tudor Area Traffic Calming Study. Comments due Dec. 2, 2005, addressed to Steve Noble at DOWL Engineers, snoble@dowl.com
The Chester Creek Complex Design is underway. This involves the future of Sullivan Arena, Anchorage Football Stadium, Ben Boeke Ice Arenas, Kosinski Fields, and Mulcahy Stadium. For information, hearings and comments contact Land Design North, 276-5885.
- ? The Anchorage Parks Plan, previously tabled, will afford public testimony before the Assembly on Tuesday evening, Dec. 13, 2005.
Public notice. The Housing and Community Development Plan, the 2006 Action Plan, is available for comments until December 5, 2005. Contact Tyler Robinson at fax 343-6831; or RobinsonTP@muni.org.
Assisted Living Facilities state link: www.hss.ak.us/dph/CL/ALL/default.htm
- ? The RPCC by-laws are being revised in accordance with the Assembly's recent community council ordinance changes. These will be available online and at the December 12 meeting. The membership is requested to review and comment.
The position of vice –president remains vacant.
- ? The assembly will hear testimony on a ordinance amending the AMC section 25.20.027 regarding eminent domain limitations (Assembly Ordinance No. 2005-171 if you want to read it on the web). The ordinance prohibits the use of the power of eminent domain to acquire private property, for the purpose of leisure amenities (defined as including indoor and outdoor facilities intended for personal enjoyment including, but not limited to, parks, natural resource use areas, trails and pedestrian paths and/or trails of any kind, greenbelts, access to wilderness areas, amusement rides, small boat facilities, personal use fisheries, sports activities of any kind, play areas, picnic areas, spectator viewing, and associated infrastructure such as parking lots and access corridors).

II. Assembly Report.

The topic on the table was a discussion of the recent Assembly actions on the Lake Otis-Tudor intersection, the South Coastal Trail Extension, and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). President Mjos introduced the topic by noting that several Rogers Park CC members work on the creation of a vision for the best possible, most livable Anchorage- the creation of the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan 2020 and the Long Range Transportation Plan. President Mjos expressed considerable disappointment at the last minute changes to the plan as recently adopted by the Assembly. Mr. Coffey explained that he felt that the Assembly was performing its duty to review, amend, and approve the LRTP within the required 45-day period.

The Assembly established the following priorities.

1. The highest is the building of new roads which are the "missing links" in our current road grid system.
2. Completion of the Transit Restructuring Plan.
3. Trails. "The Assembly believes that building new trails when the existing trails are not maintained and repaired is not good public policy". "The Assembly supports the building of new sidewalks, pathways, and/or trails that are associated with the building of new roads". "The Assembly did not support the construction of the (South) Coastal Trail Extension at a cost of \$24,000,000.00 requiring the taking of 90 parcels of private property".

In response to comments that the Assembly is trying to stop construction of the most congested city intersection at Lake Otis and Tudor, he stated that the Assembly action to delay the project for years was in order to see if the

once-completed Bragaw extension would even make the Lake-Otis and Tudor project necessary. Mr. Traini and Rep. Gardner wished it noted "for the record" that they support the project.

In response to questions why he supports extending Bragaw through the UMED District, which is in direct conflict with the UMED Plan, Mr. Coffey stated that he only proposes that \$500,00.00 of MOA funds be expended to study this. The content of the study was not disclosed. Bob Butera, a member of the U-MED team, suggested that a better approach would be to reopen the UMED Plan and involve all stakeholders. In response to the statement that the University Area CC is opposed to a Bragaw connection, Mr. Coffey responded, "That is only their opinion".

Dr. Christopherson and Dr. Mjos both repeatedly emphasized the proven health benefits of walking as opposed to driving, noted the increased health risks to our community from the sedentary time spent behind the wheel-in particular, obesity and diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. We questioned why the Assembly removed references to health issues from the LRTP. Many residents expressed the hope that walkability and public transit could be substantially increased, especially for seniors. Dick Traini said that mass transit would never work in the north because people would rather get into their cars on cold days. Dan Coffey said that transit would only work if bus service entered neighborhoods. Some expressed support for the town center concept. Dick Traini said that town centers are dead because people don't want it.

Further announcements: On Nov. 28, DR. MARK FENTON, nationally known authority on walkable, livable, and active cities was to address the Alaska Health Summit, and offer a public presentation in the Marston Theater.

President Mjos presented a paper from the Surface Transportation Project that cited an article by the American Society of Civil Engineers and others that espoused "skinny streets". These promote cost savings in construction and maintenance, traffic calming, and greater pedestrian and bike use, particularly among the elderly.

Northern Lights sound barrier. Thanks to the legislature, in particular the efforts of Sen. Ellis and Reps. Gara and Gardner, the Muni has received \$500,00 to design and construct the long awaited sound barrier. Dan Graham reported that CRW engineering has been awarded the design contract. A wooden barrier will be much cheaper than concrete or an earthen berm but only 5% less effective. Sen. Ellis noted that if the blvd. were built today a sound barrier would be required.

Jacobson Trail Park. Mr. Art Eash explained that Jacobson Park on Lake Otis and north of 36th is the site of an informal trail that allows pedestrians to exit the subdivision and access 36th av., the bus stop, and the park across the street. This trail is seasonally muddy or under water. The Areawide Trails Plan identifies this trail for future improvements. He suggests that we resolve that an unpaved trail be constructed and drainage work be done. We will consider his proposed resolution at the Dec. 12 meeting. Furthermore, Sen. Ellis will investigate state funding assistance. This will probably be an RPCC CIP priority this spring. Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Mjos, President