

**Turnagain Community Council
Meeting Minutes February 3, 2011**

Cathy Gleason, TCC President, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

I. Announcements

Cathy Gleason provided a handout with the following announcements and project updates, highlighting several announcements noted in bold below:

February 7 – Planning and Zoning Commission nonpublic hearing for approval of Lyn Ary Park Master Plan. 6:30 p.m., Loussac Library Assembly Chambers. Info.: Parks and Recreation Planner Suzanne Little, 343-4586. *Parks and Rec. Commission has already approved the plan; this is the next step in the process before it goes before the Assembly.*

February 7 — 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Anchorage School District Nonpublic Hearing. 6:30 p.m., Loussac Library Assembly Chambers.

February 8 – Lake Hood User Group Meeting to discuss winter closure of general aviation aircraft ski operations on Lake Hood. 1:00-2:30 p.m., Lake Hood General Aviation Office, 4451 Aircraft Drive. Info.: Andy Hutzel, 266-2741.

February 10 — Community/Airport Strategic Meeting to discuss how to improve communication and collaboration between neighborhoods, recreational/park/open space interests and the airport. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Spenard Recreation Center, upstairs arts & crafts room. Info.: Matt Claman, 350-3105, mattclaman@gmail.com.

February 10 — Comment Deadline on Draft Kulis Land Use Plan. Website for document: www.dot.alaska.gov/anc/about/Kulis.shtml

February 14 – Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing on an ordinance amending Title 21 for correctional community residential centers. 6:30 p.m., Loussac Library Assembly Chambers Info.: 343-7943.

March 10 — Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission public hearing on the 2011 HLB Work Program and 2012-2016 Five-Year Plan. 11:30 a.m., 1st Floor Permit & Development Center, 4700 Elmore Rd, Conf. Rm 170/ Info.: Acting Director Tammy R. Oswald, 343-7986, www.hlb@muni.org.

March 24 — Anchorage Airport Communications Committee Meeting. 3:30 p.m., north end of South Terminal. Info.: Matt Claman, 350-3105, mattclaman@gmail.com.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport — Airport Bulletin providing updates and information is available at back table.

AWWU Pump Station 10 Request for subdivision of an unsubdivided tract & waiver request APPROVED by the Planning & Zoning Commission 2/2/11. TCC provided testimony in opposition.

Alaska Railroad Project Open House Report (1/11/11) — According to AKRR staff, the proposal to Double Track between downtown and International Airport Road is still something they are considering, but it is on “life support.” The Environmental Assessment has not yet been approved and there is no funding for the project at this time.

II. Committee Reports

A. NUSA Convention and South Addition-Turnagain Neighborhood Tour Committee

Cathy Gleason reported that TCC members met with South Addition members so that both Community Councils could discuss the joint NUSA Tour, which will begin in South Addition and end in Turnagain and with dinner at a yet to be determined location. Tentatively, there will be a stop and “tapas” at Westchester Lagoon.

B. TCC Aviation Committee

Chair Pat Kelly stated that the Committee met and discussed concern regarding the appointment of the new DOT&PF Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Aviation. A letter was sent to Mayor Sullivan, which was forwarded to Steve Strait, the MOA’s appointee to the Governor’s Airport Advisory Commission. There are additional letters in the works for our legislators. A next meeting is not scheduled.

C. Anchorage Airport Communications Committee

Chair Matt Claman reported the Committee met in January and the agenda included planning for the Strategic Meeting scheduled for February 10. The expectation is that if this meeting is successful, there may be two or more follow-up meetings. The purpose of this committee is how to improve communication and collaboration with the airport. Also discussed at the meeting was the winter closure of the Lake Hood Seaplane Base.

III. Spenard Community Council-TCC collaboration on CIP Lists

The Spenard and Turnagain Community Council Boards met after last month’s meeting to follow up on a suggestion at the January TCC meeting to work together on a joint CIP list that both groups could collaborate on with the Legislature. A Joint Memorandum was drafted that included five projects that are adjacent to or are included in both Councils (Fish Creek Trail, Northern Lights Blvd. Rut Repair, 35th & McRae St. Upgrade, Turnagain Blvd. Upgrade, Northern Lights Blvd. Pedestrian Pathway). At their February meeting, the Spenard Community Council approved the memorandum. Cathy Gleason moved and Pat Redmond seconded that TCC adopt the Joint Memorandum as well. There was discussion that followed, including a comment that 3 of the 5 projects were included in the MOA legislative priorities sent to the State. The motion passed 23 in favor, none opposed.

IV. Recognition of Breck Tostevin

On behalf of the Turnagain Community Council, Cathy Gleason presented Breck Tostevin with a plaque to show TCC’s appreciation for the great job he did while serving as president of TCC in 2009 and 2010. Breck continues to serve on the Board as past president.

V. Comments from the floor & Agenda Items for March

- * Approval of a TCC letter on the Heritage Land Bank 2011 Work Program and 2012-2016 Five-Year Management Plan.
- * Update on the airport's acquisition of properties at the end of Wendy's Way that are in the RPZ (runway protection zone). A comment letter from TCC has been submitted on the project, which included the statement that we opposed any future extension of the gravel strip as a result of the acquisition. However, the airport has stated they could not commit to that condition.
- * Instead of having a TCC Assembly Candidates Forum at our March meeting, it was suggested that Spenard, Sand Lake, and Turnagain Community Councils collaborate on a candidate's forum in March. The Boards will discuss and set up. It was suggested to also invite the candidates to the TCC March meeting but limit the time for presentation and discussions. Pat Redmond suggested that the joint meeting was a good idea, but stated the candidates should come to the Community Council meetings to see what we do. Harriet Drummond is the incumbent and up for re-election; it was unclear at the meeting who, if anyone, was running against her because the deadline isn't until February 11, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. Phil Isley stated he would help anyone who wanted to run for Assembly free of charge. Philisley@ymail.com.
- * A suggestion was made to contact the airport regarding the status of an upcoming Airport Noise Study.

VI. Approval of minutes

A motion was made by Cynthia Toohey and seconded by Pat Kelly to approve the January meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Legislative Report

Sen. Hollis French joined the meeting telephonically from Juneau. He has been reading the hundreds of surveys from constituents and encouraged everyone to send one in. He had a hearing on the National Popular Vote Bill; it is to ensure that the electoral votes cast would be for the person who got the most votes. In the US Constitution it is very clear to give power to the state Legislatures to lay out in law how presidential elections are coordinated. A follow-up question from Pat Redmond commented on a study that she participated in on the National Popular Vote Bill and she stated that she is in support of the bill.

There was a question about when the Commissioner for the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Deputy Aviation Commissioner would be approved. Sen. French stated it had just been referred to the Legislature yesterday, so the hearings have not been set yet. He recommended getting in touch with his office and the meetings should be noticed 5 days in advance. Sen. French said there was no public testimony about Commissioners, but if anyone had questions, the information should get to Sen. French pretty soon. The Committee hearings happen in March, but then there is a joint session towards the end of the session for the Legislature to vote.

Cathy Gleason asked a question regarding Knik Arm Bridge representatives, who apparently made a request to the Legislature for \$150 million dollars. Sen. French doesn't know about it but people are pretty divided about the topic and it would be a tough sell this year getting even \$10 million.

Dan Gleason commented that Neighborhoods USA is coming to Anchorage in May and encouraged the Legislature to support funding for the Conference. Sen. French asked for a little paragraph to communicate to the other legislators in Gavel to Gavel. Cathy Gleason said \$70,000 was approved for the Community Councils in last year's legislative budget, but was vetoed by the Governor. It was discussed that it would be appropriate to make some overtures to the Governor about why and whether he would veto again before people do a lot of work on presenting this idea again.

There were follow up questions regarding NUSA, which was described as a three-day conference in May, with lots of community based groups from all of the country. The group is working with ACVB. There are lots of good workshops; the website is nusa2011.org. There is a link from the Federation of Community Councils website.

VIII. Treasurer's Report

A written Treasurer's Report was provided, including a summary that we spent a total of \$28.04 in 2010.

IX. Assembly Report

The Assembly Report was given by Harriet Drummond. She spoke about the West Anchorage Assembly News that was inserted in the Anchorage Daily News. The Assembly approved an \$80,000 grant for FCC. There will be a ballot proposition for parking in April that Ernie Hall will discuss. TCC Secretary-Treasurer Barb Jones has been appointed the new Muni Ombudsman. She was assured there is no conflict with her volunteer duties for TCC. An ordinance was moving through the city that will change how Boards and Commissions within the MOA work. If you have comments, pass those on to Harriet, Ernie, and Pat Flynn. The ASD and MOA Budget Advisory Commissions may be combined. This week was a long Assembly meeting because a number of bond issues and ballot propositions were approved. There is \$107 million in bonds on the ballot, addressing public safety, fire, roads.

There was a question to Ms. Drummond regarding how difficult it is to find agendas for Assembly, Zoning, Platting Board, etc. meetings and public hearings now that they are not posted in the newspaper. After several hours, someone emailed a TCC member the link on the MOA website, but the member suggested the MOA home page should have the agendas. There could also be a database for people who want this information. There is an email list for those who want to receive E-Alerts. Another topic regarding website, Lance Ahern was hired as Director of Information Technology, so he would be a person who may be able to help with this.

There was a question regarding Lyn Ary Park litigation and whether the property owners made an offer by the deadline of January 10. Assembly member Ernie Hall answered the question that

something was delivered to the legal department by the deadline. The attorney said he would contact Ernie Hall about the contents.

Ernie Hall discussed a proposition on the April ballot that would allow parking enforcement to go back to an agency of the MOA. They won't be able to do anything except parking enforcement. They are working on this with others about the inconsistency of parking enforcement downtown. ACDA to do enforcement. Questions included the following: Is there a right to appeal? Yes. Will ticketers get part of the income from giving tickets? No. The businesses are really starting to feel this because there is not turn around in parking spaces; actually if you do have enforcement, people will pay so it will result in greater revenue. The ACDA compensation will be the same. What is the process to get more handicapped parking downtown? Some have been taken away near the Performing Arts Center. Ernie checked and was told that the handicap spaces were taken for tour busses, but were supposed to go back to handicapped parking.

X. Assessor for the Municipality of Anchorage, Marty McGee

Following are some points from a presentation that Assessor Marty McGee gives to the Assembly each year. Based on state law, he has the discretion to set value at "full and true" value; basically that means what you can sell it for. He's worked for the Assessor's office for the last 15 years, and has been the Assessor for the last 10 years. Jerry Wedelich is the Deputy and is in charge of the valuation of residential property. They are mandated to assess 96,000 properties in one year, and to visit every property at least every 6 years. 16,000 properties were visited this year. The change to the land value was the most significant thing this year. They don't value land and building separately. The purpose is to get the total correct. Anchorage has a stable value for real estate. Real estate value is driven by jobs and income. We have a stable value for jobs and employment. Even though you may be struggling with expenses, we have not had problems with employment or foreclosures. The average increase in residential property is 1.5%. It isn't that the Assessor's Office thought the value of your home increased, but because Alaska doesn't have mandatory sales disclosure, where sellers are mandated by law to tell what the sale price is, the Assessor is operating with about 1/3 of the data. But usually that is enough data to predict value. That's what's happened in the Turnagain community. It became clear that over time, the Assessor's Office undervalued an area in Turnagain, specifically west of McKenzie Dr. and north of W. Northern Lights. The Assessor's Department can show the data that they have. Most of the inspections they do are for exteriors of the property. If you have bought or sold property or had an appraisal, the Assessor will use it to get the value correct. They have made over 1000 adjustments to value. They are not a stonewall; they need certain information. They are willing to admit if they made a mistake. It's based on information they have, because they use pretty complicated algorithms to estimate 96,000 pieces of real estate with about 20 people working in the department.

State statute allows a limited amount of time for an appeal. It must be applied for by February 14 and requires a \$100 deposit. Ninety-eight percent of the time, the office has refunded the deposit. Property owners have to cooperate in allowing them to inspect property and participate in a hearing in front of the Board of Equalization. It's a fair process to first work with the

Assessor's staff and then go to the Board of Equalization, then you can appeal to the state Superior court. The court reviews the information; it's not a re-do.

Questions included the following: For two contiguous pieces of property, if A appeals and gets a reduction, does B, who did not appeal, get a reduction? Response: B does not get a reduction in the current year, but in the next tax year it is taken into account. Second question, the average overall increase was 1.5 percent, but on Westwood Drive and Hood Court it was 18.5 percent. Response: There is no mandate that says this year's value that has anything to do with last year's value. The only reason the Assessor's Office must increase value dramatically is out of equity and fairness to all of the other taxpayers. When we allow one part to be assessed lower than the true value, it isn't fair to other taxpayers. The Assessor's Office wouldn't have to do this if we didn't have the lack of mandatory sales disclosures. The Assessor is not allowed to ease it in at 5 percent per year; when the value is incorrect he must correct it. A person asked for the model and the data to back up the model. The speaker said he can't understand the valuation. There is got to be an explanation. The Assessor stated that if the taxpayer came to the office, he would show him the model. A comment was made that actual sales are not consistent with the valuations. The response was if the Assessor's Office is getting consistent information from one area convincing them that houses are over valued, then anyone that comes to us from that area, can get it corrected. The Assessor recommended that everyone in the area should file an appeal, which gives the office more time. Another question concerned whether the office consulted realtors. The response was that we look at the market and we consult listings and track market changes. It was discussed that condo valuation models and homes are different. Several neighbors expressed concern regarding comments by the Assessor's front office staff, including (1) that since the taxpayer got the senior citizen's exception, what was the problem? (2) that since the taxpayer lived in a low crime area and a desirable place to live and had two properties, the taxpayer should be able to afford it. The response was the Assessor and Deputy Assessor will have a talk to the office staff tomorrow about some of the statements that have been made. A comment was made that there should be some policies and rules that should be known to the public. If it's sold it may be the value for the next two years. Response: We're trying to provide that information via the website, like application for the senior website. We do not relate your value to the sale price of your property. It's just considered with all of the other data. A questions concerned one specific property and his increasing 17 percent, but the last house sold in the area was sold for 70 percent less. The response was that we could have a specific appraiser look at your property.

The Assessor addressed the appeal process. Result could be one of two things: (1) the Assessor's Office could lower the valuation; or (2) the matter could proceed to the Board of Equalization. But before that appeal process, you can talk to our appraisers; there is some sale information on the web. We could provide the model to you, but it is internal data. A question was that the taxpayer wants to see what data you're putting into the model. There have been a number of houses for sale that have been vacant for sometime. The response was that the Assessor's Office is trying to focus on total property value. There is very little vacant land in Anchorage. We're using improved property sales. When you get a fee appraisal, we try to allocate it the same as private appraisers. We have had values at a certain level in this community, and what we're seeing has not been fair to everybody and we're trying to get it right. Again, the Assessor asked taxpayers to use the process in the Assessor's Office and if a taxpayer

is not satisfied with the response, ask to talk to a supervisor. If you want to try to review the model, it can be done one-on-one. I can work with a couple of people and then they can explain it to the others or we can hold a separate meeting. A question was asked that since we have an entire neighborhood, and about half of us are here, if you've made a mistake, do you fix it for everyone? The response was that that has never happened, although the Assessor does have the legal authority to do a reevaluation and a correction. So the Assessor asked the taxpayers for any sales data, listing information, etc. A question was that that the taxpayers want to see the Assessor's data. The response was that every year is independent because it's an annual valuation process. But it's a very dynamic process, because it declined in the 1980s, and then rebounded in 1990s. Sales are much more important, but listings are important, too. The final question was whether there are any other neighborhoods that went up more than ours, and the response was not this year.

XI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Jones, Secretary-Treasurer