

Rogers Park Community Council Minutes
7 PM Monday, November 10, 2014
Rogers Park Elementary School Library

Board Members Attending:

Iris Matthews, President
Travis Smith, Vice President
Jim Wright, Secretary
Cheryl Forrest, Treasurer
Bob Churchill, FCC representative

I. Welcome.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. Members were asked to sign in to establish a quorum. A quorum was present.

II. Minutes: October 2014.

Bob Churchill moved to approve the October 2014 Minutes. Cheryl Forrest seconded. The October 2014 Minutes were approved as submitted.

III. Treasurer's Report.

Cheryl Forrest reported that there is \$202.88 in the RPCC treasury.

IV. The FCC Report.

Rogers Park Community Council is a member of the Federation of Community Councils, or FCC. Our FCC representative Bob Churchill reported as follows. There was an FCC meeting on October 15. Dick Traini ushered the FCC budget through the Assembly and it was approved in the same amount as last year. A big item in the upcoming year is further training for community council officers. The president of the FCC resigned, so that the vice president, Dick Tremaine, is now the president and the secretary is now the vice president. There was a presentation by Jennifer Castro of APD regarding the crime public information system. The system allows citizens to see where incidents of crime are reported, subject to the caveat that sexual assaults cannot be traced to particular neighborhoods so as to protect the identity of victims. Ms. Castro will come to RPCC if we'd like. It's important to always report crime so that others have that information as a warning and because resources are allocated based on such information.

Dick Traini added that crime information other than sexual assaults can be broken down by community council district. You can access Nixle on your computer or smartphone by dialing 888777 + your zip code for alerts.

Iris proposed we may have a Nixle presentation at the next community council meeting or the one after.

Dick Traini praised the FCC training afforded new community council officers. He noted that there are changes among even old timers who've been with the community council system for a very long time, and the newcomers will need training.

V. Assembly Reports.

Assembly Member Elvi Gray-Jackson presented, as follows:

- SAP – The Administration requested and the Assembly approved another \$3M (6-5) by way of a loan for the continued implementation of the Financial and Human Resource Enterprise Resource Planning System (SAP).
- Ms. Demboski and Ms. Gray-Jackson brought forward a resolution requesting a \$200,000 appropriation from Fund Balance to provide funding for an independent review of both the Payroll System (Kronos) and SAP implementation. The Public Hearing was held on October 21st and it was approved 7-4. In September 2013, a resolution was brought forward by Mr. Traini and Ms. Gray-Jackson for the same purpose but it failed 4-7. Current costs for SAP - \$34.6M. The RFP went to potential bidders November 6th.
- Chugach Access Plan (CAP) first public hearing was held on September 9th and continued to the meeting of September 23rd. Forty-eight persons testified – 38 in favor of immediately approving the plan and 10 concerned about property rights. The Assembly held two work sessions. The CAP Plan approval was postponed until the meeting of November 5th to allow for the Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board the opportunity to review the Plan as required by Code. The Board requested that the Assembly postpone approving until its concerns are addressed. At the November 5th meeting, the Assembly approved postponing action on the Plan until the meeting of March 25th.

Last Friday, Mr. Evans moved to reconsider the CAP, seconded by Ms. Gray-Jackson. This motion to reconsider will be voted on at the November 18th Assembly Meeting.

Next Assembly Meeting: November 18th

Assembly Member Dick Traini added the following. He wanted to delay the Chugach plan, to study it. He wanted to know who wrote it? He thought it was the Municipality, but it turned out it was the State.

He also discussed the proposed towing ordinance, which would reform the law to prohibit a number of predatory practices. He thinks he has the votes to pass it. Debate at present is about details. He wants towing outfits to be open six days, while they want five. If

only five, then there should be no storage charge for the weekend. The proposed law would eliminate “cussing fees” and the like.

Turning to the Uber ride sharing controversy, the taxi industry opposes it. The Assembly is looking at this as Uber fills a need in the Anchorage Bowl.

Pete Mjos asked about the status of Title 21 and its date of implementation? He wondered if this will impact or is impacting the Chugach Access Plan. Can we get a definition in writing about what the scope of “grandfathered” rights is? Dick explained that Jennifer Johnston, chair of the Title 21 committee, proposed a one year delay in Title 21 implementation. Dick thinks the purpose is to kill it. Changes are proposed in the meantime that will likely be to required setbacks.

Pete Mjos also asked for Mr. Traini’s thoughts about the issue of moose-impaling fences. Dick explained that the proposed ordinance against such spiked fences was vetoed by the mayor. Jennifer Johnson didn’t seek an override of the veto.

VI. Legislative Reports.

Following the recent elections, **Sen. Berta Gardner** is now the Minority Leader in the Senate. After discussing various committee appointments and activities, she discussed the following points.

- * School Funding and the Alaska fiscal crisis, which she described as the “big issue” this year. In the near future she will conduct a survey to obtain our feedback on this issue. She foresees 6 to 8 years to exhaust Alaska’s savings, after which the State will predictably draw on the PFD.

- * The very recent legalization of marijuana vote. Dick Traini would like to see the legislature leave taxing of marijuana to the cities. He wants a local tax so that it can benefit our local police. Berta said the marijuana debate will no doubt be very lively. This and many other questions will be on the table. Bob Churchill added that small and midsized employers are very worried about the issue, as it heightens concern about drug testing and potential liabilities.

Rep. Andy Josephson presented as follows.

- * A legislator can pre-file up to 10 bills. One concern of his is the \$11 billion unfunded liability for state pensions. One goal is to get it down to \$300 million per year, down from \$600 million per year. Accordingly, he proposes more prepaying now, getting the remainder down to \$8 billion.

- * He is also concerned about the 32 special management areas and change in rulemaking that would allow for less public input as to critical habitat sanctuaries and the like.

- * A focus of concern for him is the way the approximately 40 boards and commissions that address licensing are funded. As he previously reported, he would like to get them operating in a financially smooth manner.

- * Another focus is HB278, an omnibus education bill. He wants to commission consultants for two reports: 1) to look at the foundation formula; and 2) to address other

options for efficiency, such as consolidating school districts and pay at school districts. He feels the consultants should be limited to this scope of work.

* Andy noted that he got a seat on the House Resources Committee, which he coveted. Only two members from his caucus are on it.

* Addressing the gubernatorial election, Andy noted that a Walker win would present a very different approach to the Parnell administration. Personally he favors Walker.

One member asked about the status of request(s) for proposals for the foundation formula piece of the education bill. Andy said that reports are due by June, and that there will be one seat on the budget and audit committee. Bob Churchill asked how the selection process is done. Can we track it? Berta noted that this ties in to the legislative ethics code referenced earlier (addressing the degree of independence of consultants from ties that might conflict with their independent judgment). Iris said that the public can access respondents' reports and scoring, as this is a matter of public record.

Rep. Harriet Drummond noted that committee seats are not entirely decided until the absentee votes are all in. She is hoping for this to have a positive impact. She presented as follows.

* Harriet is focused on local efforts to grow your own food. Only 5% of food consumed is grown here.

* She has taken part in a housing think tank. There is little building going on. We need ~900 residential units per year, but are building only ~300 per year. Weidner Investments says it wants to build, but that MOA regulations make that problematic. For example, the MOA wants too much parking. So Harriet thinks MOA needs to listen to the experts who know how to develop, and that we need denser housing where appropriate. There is a less than 3% vacancy rate. KABATA is not the answer (to open up housing markets across the inlet). We need housing close to work places in Anchorage.

* Harriet hopes for a seat on the Education Committee. She is concerned that GOP leaders on that committee favor vouchers. She doesn't think the votes are there to approve vouchers.

* She noted that MOA wants to move the transit center to midtown, but MOA shelved the plan for midtown development. We have space in midtown but need to use it wisely.

Marilyn Pillifant asked whether there is anything that can be done about the old Northern Lights Inn, closed and boarded up and fenced for many years. It's an eyesore that likely attracts crime. Dick Traini noted that they pay their taxes, so that a tax foreclosure and sale is not warranted. [There was no discussion of whether an option exists to condemn.]

Marilyn Pillifant asked about the issue of auxiliary living units, such as mother in law apartments? Dick Traini said the need is there and that the Assembly, or a group within it, is working on it.

Ann Lorber asked about housing for military families and whether the base helps out. Harriet noted that JBER has about 10% of MOA property. JBER provides a housing stipend for off-base housing, but does not assist in building off base. Ann said she was

thinking about on-base housing. JBER has lots of room. Dick Traini noted that Eklutna Native Corporation is actually the biggest landowner in the Anchorage Bowl, with much land near Eagle River and Chugiak. Harriet added that population growth there hasn't panned out. We built a school there, but it was largely populated by depopulating other nearby schools, rather than by growth in the area.

VII. Presentations.

A. Otis Lake Water Level Restoration. Local resident Robert Mintz spoke about historical lake levels at Otis Lake and how they are managed. Lake levels were getting too high, creating problems in the late 1980s. MOA placed a system to control it, but that system needs maintenance. As planned, Stanford was originally intended to encircle the lake, but wetlands to the south rendered that problematic. Once upon a time the wetlands extended south and west as far as the Sears Mall, but much of this was filled in over the years with development.

Otis Lake comprises about 10 acres with an average depth of four feet. It is ~119 feet above sea level. It has risen about 9-10 inches.

Northeast College Village storm sewers drain into the lake at Carlson Park. Local wetlands used to support abundant wildfowl, but not so much now due to cats. There is also too much fertilizer going into the lake. MOA proposed to treat it in that regard, building a wooden weir to separate out contaminants in a settling pond.

Lake levels were under 118 feet above sea level in the 1970s, but this increased in the 1980s. The MOA then proposed a pipe under the lake to 36th Avenue and MacInnes, and installed a control structure to handle the overflow into the storm water system. They used short perforated pipe, which didn't work. So in the 1990s they used a shallow surface ditch to the control structure. It was only about 3 feet deep atop the perforated pipe below, and worked poorly. Cobbles were later placed in the bottom of the ditch, which helped facilitate flow. Unfortunately, the ditch has been filling in over time.

During the last two years we've had high precipitation levels so that the lake is again rising. It now backs up over the weir so the treatment pond isn't doing its job. Carlson Park has more ponding than usual. MOA Public Works Department says it will clean out the ditch to regain adequate flow.

Cheryl Forrest noted that David Green Park (36th & MacInnes) is to get upgrades, and asked if this will have an impact on the Otis Lake overflow issues? She suggested looking into that now, as the changes are to occur next spring. Berta Gardner noted that David Green Park gets water from multiple areas. Bob Churchill noted that homeowner's insurance won't cover damage if water backs up to the neighborhood and that flooding in the lower parts of College Village has been a recurring concern for the neighborhoods. Bob and Iris suggested working with Public Works.

B. Pedestrian Overpass Redesign to Area Schools. Iris Matthews presented an update summary to the group. She is privy to a report generated as to the project, of which this forms a part, but the report contained no design recommendation and instead proposed considering an open, no roof design that could lower construction costs, and potentially tap into other sources of funding, such as funding for trails. The report estimated costs of over \$4 million for each overpass, a very high number. However, Iris reported that this open design plan could present problems for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility, a stated community priority, as well as potentially impede pedestrian crossing over the winter.

Berta Gardner observed that any online survey to address the issue needs to be very clear. The goal of a covered trail and overpass might never be funded. Bob Churchill asked whether the choice is between getting bike accessibility without maintenance or nothing? Iris said she thought we have discussed both making the route ADA accessible and making it bike accessible, but that we didn't demand both. She questioned the likelihood of funding for any variation being realistic given the budget.

Jim Richardson emphasized that kids need to cross there. Other members also spoke to the importance of keeping the overpasses free of snow and accessible for school children year round.

Iris put to the group whether she can go back to Brooke Blessing the MOA's project manager with comments that the community council prefers a closed design with a roof. There was a group consensus to that effect. Iris also mentioned that these overpasses are owned by the MOA, but maintained by the State. On the practical level this has meant it is difficult to get things done, like getting vomit cleaned up and graffiti gone.

Jim Wright, Iris and Berta had an exchange regarding separate ownership and maintenance duties, Jim noting that the Northern Lights Sound Barrier was paid for by a State grant on a State road but contingent on MOA maintenance – a commitment that may or may be honored by MOA.

Iris also offered to make the full report available to anyone who was interested in reviewing, but said that its large file size prevented her from emailing it out to all of the CC.

C. Great Alaska Schools Resolution (Increased Schools Funding). Marilyn Pillifant presented as an advocate for increased school funding. She praised the good work of Great Alaska Schools during the last legislative session and wants the “muscle” of RPCC to push for increased school funding. Accordingly, she proposed the following resolution:

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
INCREASED EDUCATION FUNDING TO REFLECT INCREASED
COSTS**

WHEREAS, providing an effective public education system is one of the most important functions of state government, and is mandated by the Alaska Constitution;

WHEREAS, a strong education is a key predictor of an individual's future earnings, and therefore an effective education system is a critical driver of the Alaska economy;

WHEREAS, failure of the education system can lead to increased public costs in welfare, public assistance, and incarceration;

WHEREAS, the base student allocation (BSA) is the basis for how state funding is distributed to school districts for students and staff;

WHEREAS, from 2011 to the present, the BSA value fell far behind inflation;

WHEREAS, the Anchorage School District (ASD) has cut teachers and staff positions in each of the past three years and faces the need to cut many dozens more in the next few years without adequate increases in the BSA; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL asks that the Alaska Legislature increase the BSA by an amount necessary to restore the value lost to inflation since 2011, and without the need for future legislation to keep up with inflation thereafter.

Bob Churchill moved to adopt the proposed resolution. Jim Wright seconded the motion. Dick Traini asked whether it contains inflation-proofing terms? Marilyn Pillifant answered in the affirmative. Marilyn asked Bob Churchill to take the resolution once passed to the FCC for its consideration. Bob indicated that the FCC already passed a supporting resolution. Upon the vote there were 17 yeas, 0 nays and 0 abstentions. The resolution passed unanimously.

VIII. Announcements.

Iris announced that there now exists a "Next Door" social network for the Rogers Park neighborhood, and encouraged the Rogers Park subdivision residents to join. Sign up at www.nextdoor.com. Marilyn Pillifant noted that it provides a crime watch function. Helen Selodjik noted that there is also a Next Door social network starting for the College Village subdivision.

The meeting was then adjourned.

