

Russian Jack Community Council
Meeting Highlights
December 10, 2014

25 present, including presenters

Legislative Report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski: Senator is in DC tonight. Staff presented. Projects as of late include development of East Anchorage farmers market with the help of residents and Mark Butler who helped set up other markets. More planning meetings in January. New staffer who will be going down to Juneau. Muldoon job center was set to close and Senator W. helped save it. AK Military youth academy is moving into that same area.

Sen. Ellis: Staffer Matt Moser presented. Joint project with Rep Tarr – concerns about developing a school zone near AK Native charter school. Traffic engineers involved to study the area. Discussions ongoing.

Rep. Geran Tarr: Working on items that came out of the Fall Constituent meeting including PCA rates and issues. Working on Davis park and TBOP – take back our parks initiative started by Elvi Gray Jackson. Tikishla Park, Russian Jack Park and some other pocket parks are experiencing some issues with parties and destructive behavior. **Interested in finding residents to be a part of the committee working on TBOP initiative. Not many meetings but wants to organize a spring cleanup of the area's parks.** Davis park master plan in Mt View. Keep it on our radar – 3 meetings coming up in Jan, Feb, and March. The NE skate park may be on the agenda, Pump Park, Frisbee golf, etc. Neighborhood snow removal- Kids are being forced to walk in the road because sidewalks aren't cleared. There have been no cuts in staffing at this section of the Muni. Residents need to call the Muni when snow clearing issues arise so it can be noted and addressed. Unitarian Universalist church in Airport Hts – may want to reach out and see if they want to get involved in the RJ church

Assembly Report, Assemblyman Paul Honeman: Passed budget for 2015, 473 million or so, up from last year's budget. Biggest challenges include permanent automobile registration tax, Anchorage Muni will not do this for cars and trucks in the city but will do it for trailers because taxes would have to go up elsewhere such as property taxes. Working on Uber ride sharing issues in Anchorage – Uber is trying to drum up business in the area by giving free rides and spreading the word. There are some issues with Uber coming to the Muni because it will impact taxi businesses, and there are insurance concerns and rates issues that people are concerned about. Vehicles are not inspected, driver background checks process is unclear. Mayoral race in 2016. Unsure what the Marijuana regulations will be like. Honeman has voted to "opt out" with Demoski until we see what the regulations will be like and then we have the option to opt in.

Assembly Report, Assemblyman Pete Peterson: Echoed concerns about Uber and noted that some countries are banning Uber. Wants to be fair to existing companies and to Uber. Taking a cautious approach. Eastside district plan – passed unanimously. Several amendments – 7 of 8 passed. The plan designates the old municipal greenhouse land as park land.

School Board, Kathleen Plunkett: Meeting next week. Saving money in some areas, but not in others. Working on class size issues in collaboration with Principals. Will no longer pay utility bills ahead of time because it doesn't save enough money.

School Report, Principal Sean Murphy: Invited everyone to Winter choir performance! State based assessments are now gone. New testing for certain grade levels, computer based. Less testing time, less impact to the classrooms with this technology. Won't know the main impacts and outcomes until a few years but it is projected to be very different and great.

Dr. Frank Von Hippel, UAA and Jamie Tramel, UAA: Spoke of community engaged service learning. In 2001, RJCC asked for help with the water quality in Chester Creek. Dr. Von Hippel took this project on with students. Map of Chester creek watershed and sampling sites in RJ community that were tested. Measured water quality at several areas of the creek. RJ residents were concerned about water quality around Reka drive as it is discolored once it comes out of the culvert at east 20th. Sampled every spring from 2001-2014 year after year looking at many different aspects.

Findings:

- Sediment size in the water increases as creek travels from RJ park to east 20th. This is a problem for various species. It kills animals in the creek.
- Lots of ions getting into the creek. Road salts, and other. This is indicator of water pollution.
- Species richness of creek. Lower species richness as creek travels from park to east 20th. The most pollution sensitive species are disappearing. Dolly Varden, stickle back, sculpin, lots of other fish in the creek.

Jamie Tramel, GIS subject matter expert:

- Storm drain network empties into the culvert near RJ park which is likely why the pollution is occurring. About 50 miles of street sediment being dumped into the same creek area.

Solution to this problem would likely involve a re-engineering of the storm drain network and in this fiscal environment, this is unlikely. To unchannel the creek its expensive.

Could establish a treatment plant but this is expensive.

Can establish vegetation buffers/corridor along the creek at Reka Drive to help decrease the sediment running into the creek. Residents could be a part of this. UAA students can help design it as a project. Lots of invasive species in that area too which the anti-invasive species group might be interested in. RJCC would have to talk with Widener to get permission to do this because creek goes into culvert at their apartments. Also may want to talk with them about not putting snow right up against creek in winter. Rasmussen, parks and rec, parks foundation, fish and game – these may all be potential partners.

Resolution: Proposed that RJCC partner with the UAA environmental studies program to design and implement a vegetation project along Reka Drive to include removal of invasive species.

Frank McGuire- proposed, Kathleen Plunkett – 2nd

11 in favor, 0 opposed.

Committee to make sure this happens: Kathleen, Sherry, Fred, Lisa

Airport Heights community council and other councils may need to be contacted because it impacts them too. Rogers park, south addition also impacted. May be good idea to contact Federation of Community Councils to present this project idea to collaborate and get funding.

Anchorage Parks and Recreation, Joshua Durand, Planner:

- Wonder Corridor Park – improvements planned this year including pavement repair, vegetation Management. Grant of \$25,000 obtained. Will include some ideas for the problematic interface at the roads. Will also look for lighting opportunities too.
- Dave rose park – last year did not do any construction. Got an extra \$108,000 for the playground at Dave rose park. Went through a public process of sorts, got input from residents. Shared the plans for the park. \$45,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$108,000 for this project. No additional funding needed.

Resolution: Wonder Corridor Park – motion by Tammy, Sherry 2nd

All in favor – 11, 0 opposed

Resolution: Dave Rose Park improvements. Kathleen – motion, Kendra 2nd

All in favor- 11, 0 opposed

Kendra proposed idea to hold community picnic at the grand opening of the newly improved Dave Rose park. Idea to have 9am-12 volunteer day, followed by ribbon cutting and Parks Foundation will provide food. RJ Council can contribute our usual annual park contributions.

Capital Improvement Projects: Added funding for East HS stadium completion.

All in favor, 0 opposed.

Officers 2015:

Ed Leach, President

Fred McCleary, VP

Lisa McGuire, Secretary

Kendra Kloster, Treasurer

Sherry Wright, Trustee

Sherry Wright will take notes at Jan 14 meeting

Speaker phone will be set up to keep contact with the legislators

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm