

Fairview Community Council
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Anchorage Senior Activity Center, August 13, 2015

Call to order at 7:10 pm by President Christopher Constant followed by introductions and establishment of quorum.

Guest speaker Mayor Ethan Berkowitz commented on three main issues:

- 1) Award of resilience grant which will pay for VISTA volunteers in some neighborhoods, including Fairview. The grant will focus on energy-efficient homes, gardens, and improved language access.
- 2) Safe Harbor – there was the ability to move quickly and leverage a grant to help 56 people. It is a moral issue, and also a cost saving because the people who will be housed at Safe Harbor make demands on municipal services. We need to do something different about homelessness. As the economy declines, homelessness increases. We can create cohesive neighborhoods with more services, mixed use, and denser housing.
- 3) They are working on regulations to enable the Fairview tax abatement zone ordinance.

He concluded his main remarks by saying that Fairview is a great part of town, and he is eager to do things to make it a great place to live.

Ron Alleva commented about the lack of crosswalks on 3rd Ave. He said Safe Harbor is in a bad location because there are no crosswalks and it is close to “Cocaine Alley” behind *Fantasies on Fifth*. He said he is concerned about demands on EMS if Fire Station 1 is on a “man down” call, because it will increase the call-out time from Station 3. He continued to express strong concerns about the effects of bringing more end-stage alcoholics into Fairview, and questioned paying \$113,000 for a Homeless Coordinator. He asked if Mayor Berkowitz would rescind the decisions regarding Safe Harbor and the Homeless Coordinator. Mayor Berkowitz responded, saying he disputes Mr. Alleva’s assertions. He added that Housing First saves money, and doing what we did before has led to the current situation.

Thomas A. asked how Mayor Berkowitz will work with other agencies doing work in areas touched on by the resiliency grant. Mayor Berkowitz said we need to do better, and because of the budget situation in state government, we are free from the old ways of doing things.

Heidi Heinrich noted the concentration of homeless services in Fairview, Mountain View and Downtown, even though homelessness is a city problem. She added that placing Housing First facilities in proximity to these services is not necessary because Housing First residents do not need homeless services any more.

Mayor Berkowitz said he had made a map of homeless services which shows they are spatially concentrated. He said we should disperse Housing First across the city, and it’s not fair for one neighborhood to bear the entire brunt of the situation. He said we can craft a solution that distributes the problem and actually solves the problem.

Penny Burt said she disputes Ron Alleva’s comments, and that she had visited Safe Harbor and it is better than some places she has lived. Christopher Constant reminded the mayor that “promises are

promises.” Mayor Berkowitz replied that we’re making progress and it’s a positive development, but some parts of the city have more homeless services than others.

Sage Cohen said she thinks the \$113,000 salary of the Homeless Coordinator is very high. Christopher Constant explained that this person is actually an employee of the Mental Health Trust Authority and this is what she makes at that current job. She will be on a temporary assignment to the Municipality and will not be a Municipality employee.

Senator Johnny Ellis asked what can be done about low police staffing levels. Mayor Berkowitz replied that we need to run two academies each year to replace the officers who are leaving. In the meanwhile, we can look at deployment issues. Officers should be able to enforce laws both in and outside of bars. There needs to be an evolution from a “Warrior model” to a “Guardian model” because a preventive police force makes for a safer community. A follow-up question concerned the time frame for the onset of community policing. Mayor Berkowitz said 1.5-2 years was possible. There could be a shortened academy for lateral hires, perhaps of former Alaska State Troopers. He added that APD should reflect Anchorage’s different people and neighborhoods.

Heidi Heinrich asked about Mayor Berkowitz’s vision for Gambell Street redevelopment. He said he hopes to get Carrs/Safeway interested in a remodel. Assembly member Patrick Flynn said a traffic study found that three lanes is wide enough for Gambell Street, but the state DOT has buried this. Mayor Berkowitz said wide sidewalks are good and a three-lane Gambell Street sounds like a good idea. The state doesn’t have the money it used to have, so the Municipality is in a stronger position than before. Christopher Constant said the neighborhood is a transportation vortex with various projects (such as the Knik Arm Crossing) affecting us, but there is no plan to look at all these traffic issues in a cohesive way.

Amy Coffman introduced herself as the mayor’s liaison to the Fairview Community Council.

Regular legislators’ reports began with Senator Johnny Ellis who addressed three issues: 1) A big project now is “Justice Reinvestment,” based on a model out of Texas. They discovered there that the “tough on crime” attitude was too expensive, and that it is insane to put some offenders (such as drug addicts and the mentally ill) into prison beds. Prison should be used for murderers and rapists, and addicts and the mentally ill should be put into treatment instead. The Pew Charitable Trust is providing technical assistance to the state. 2) There is a bill moving forward that would allow people to easily reverse heroin overdoses with naloxone. 3) There will possibly be a special legislative session in October regarding natural gas.

Assembly member Patrick Flynn commented on three issues: 1) Safe Harbor will be the last of this type of facility in our neighborhood. He has talked to Amy Demboski about developing standards for this type of housing to let neighbors know what they are getting. 2) He is working on regulations about consumption of marijuana at trade shows. We need to find a venue for adults to safely consume marijuana. 3) APD is working on the spice issue. It’s a public health crisis too.

Christopher Constant recognized Albert Wall from the state Department of Health and Social Services. Mr. Wall said he was at the meeting to listen. There are a lot of players trying to address these problems, and we should let him know what he can do to help.

Tyler Robinson from the Cook Inlet Housing Authority made a presentation on their development of four lots in Fairview. These are part of a larger project to develop 200 units of scattered-site duplex housing

on vacant R3/R4 lots. CIHA is using its own cash for these developments. The units are not income-restricted. Rents will be high. In Fairview, there are three lots on 9th Ave off Ingra and one on 12th Ave between Denali and Eagle. The ones on 9th Ave will be duplexes with garages. One of the units will be a triplex.

Thomas, a resident on 9th Ave, expressed concern that CIHA, as a public agency, had to be invited to the community council and had not initiated discussions with the neighborhood about your projects. He also said they are starting construction very early each day—at 7 am. Mr. Robinson said these housing units are a by-right use, and CIHA had not come to the community council when they built three single-family houses in Fairview last year either. He added that the new units will be third-party managed by Jack White Realty.

Gary, also a resident on 9th Ave, expressed a number of concerns about the building location: there are already too many cars in the alley, you cut down a beautiful blue spruce. The neighborhood is single-family residential, and we need more single-family, not multi-family. Mr. Robinson replied that it is not in fact a single-family neighborhood; it is zoned R4 for highest-density housing. He said we think our attempt to build small duplexes is compatible with neighborhood. We are responding to a demand expressed by Fairview for more redevelopment. What we are doing is consistent with the Fairview Neighborhood Plan.

Patrick Flynn said it is fair to criticize CIHA for a lack of outreach to Fairview, but added that they did a great job on this in Mountain View. He encouraged the neighborhood to continue efforts to communicate with CIHA, and he hopes for a positive relationship.

Dan Loring thanked CIHA for coming into Fairview. He said he appreciates their efforts in Mountain View and encourages them to communicate better with our neighborhood. Mr. Robinson said this is not the start of a stealth entrance into Fairview. CIHA does not intend to tear down lots of old buildings like we did in Mountain View. We are testing the market with these types of rentals and the triplex design (with the third unit over three garages).

Robert Jones from the Anchorage Memorial Cemetery made a brief presentation seeking continued support and endorsement of the plan to build a carillon bell tower. Christopher Constant asked if anyone objects to the Fairview Community Council supporting this and sending a letter indicating this support. There was no objection.

Dwayne Adams from the Robert O. Robertson Naming Committee made a brief presentation. Mr. Robertson was the Director of Recreation for 19 years; one of the possible items to be named for him is the Anchorage Football Stadium. Christopher Constant asked if anyone has any objections to this. There was no objection.

Following a brief break to fix some sound systems problems in the room, discussion resumed about the CIHA project. Claris Syren asked how can be contacted if there are problems with bad tenants. Christopher Constant said they would be managed by Jack White Realty, and that market rate housing is good for Fairview. Johnny Ellis said he will call Carole Gore (CEO of CIHA) to make sure she sends a message to her staff to communicate better with neighbors of their development sites.

Treasurer's Report – balance largely unchanged except for bank fee of \$7. There are some bills from the block party that need to be resolved. A final report on the block party will be ready in September.

Christopher Constant gave a brief report on the block party. He said not enough people showed up and we need to figure out whether it is worth it to continue. One issue might be conflicts between events; people in the region are working on a central clearinghouse for event scheduling. Dan Loring said there needs to be more activities for kids at the block party. Sage Cohen said there was no recycling at the block party and there was also poor advertising.

Christopher Constant gave an update on Spirits of Alaska. It has been closed since April 29. He expects a report from APD on calls-for-service at that location in the last quarter. A hearing on September 28 is the next step. The Municipality has retained Dennis Wheeler. He has contacted Christopher Constant and Sharon Chamard for depositions. If Spirits of Alaska is successful at this hearing, it will go back to the ABC Board. If they are not, it will go to Superior Court. If it is overturned there, we could go back to the Assembly, because there has been a big drop in police calls for service already. Ron Alleva asked if we can use a drop in crime to shut down a legitimate business, why can we not shut down Beans Café and Brother Francis Shelter for the same reason? He said there is a health crisis there. Seven people have died. Mr. Alleva moved that we shut down Beans Café and Brother Francis Shelter, seconded by Claris Syren. The motion failed with a vote of 3 Ayes and 9 Nays.

Christopher Constant reported on the Gateway Element. Thanks to Johnny Ellis and Les Gara, the funding was retained and the process is moving forward. He added that copies of the Fairview Neighborhood Plan are available.

New Business

Chalk the Walk – if anyone wants to go to the Fairview Elementary School the day before classes start to write positive messages to the students on the sidewalk by the school, they can contact United Way through Christopher Constant.

Sage Cohen said the schoolyard is covered with trash at the end of each day, and the trash cans are far from the playground. She thinks there should be a contest or a way to pay kids to keep the playground clean. Christopher Constant created an ad-hoc School Cleaning Committee, and appointed SJ Klein as chair. Dan Loring and Sage Cohen said they will be on the committee as well.

Lisa Sauder from Beans Café reported that her organization has acquired 1020 E. 4th Ave (the JC Marketing Building) to set up Children's Lunchbox. There will be a kitchen on the first floor and the second floor will house the Beans Café executive offices, currently located behind the Marriott Hotel.

Lisa Seifert commented on the irregular value of lots. A lot within four houses of hers is assessed at \$60,000 less.

Christopher Constant pointed out the available copies of an email from Scott Christiansen, arguing for a new health care center in Fairview. Mr. Constant mentioned the possibility of putting the municipal Department of Health and Human Services office above a potentially new parking structure at 15th Ave and Gambell St.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sharon Chamard, FVCC Treasurer