

Councils' 11-year history boasts accomplishments

Editor's note - Following is a chronology of major events in the 11-year history of community councils in Anchorage. The listing was prepared with the assistance of the staff at the Federation of Community Councils' office.

By Suzanne Millard
 Although Anchorage's 35 Community Councils are relatively young, they boast significant accomplishments.

1973

The Community Council program grows out of the activity and hearings which are part of the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan.

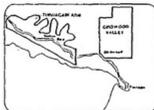
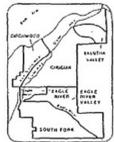
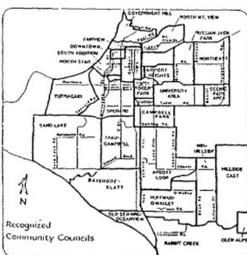
1974

An ordinance authorizing the recognition of Community Councils is approved by the Anchorage Borough Assembly.

1975

The city adopts a similar ordinance and Community Councils are recognized in the Bill of Rights and Article VIII.

The first councils officially recognized by the municipality are: Government Hill, Sand Lake, Scenic Park Area, South Addition, Tudor Area, Turnagain and Turnagain Arm.



1976

Birchwood, Chugiak, Eagle River, Eagle River Valley, Fairview, Girdwood Valley, Glen Alps and Northeast Community Councils are recognized by the municipality. There is increased organization and visibility of neighborhood councils. The first workshop called "Getting the Word Out" is on the use of public service media by volunteer groups. The newsletter *Neighbor to Neighbor* begins with a circulation of 300. A 15-minute radio program on KANC, "Your Voice," is also initiated. It features interviews with people involved with Community Councils and announcements of meetings. The first "Community Council Week" is held in September.

1977

More workshops are held and public interest in Community Councils grows. Councils recognized are: North Mountain View, Seward, Russian Jack Park, Hillside East, Downtown, Old

Seward/Oceanview, Campbell Park, North Star and Takuk/Campbell.

At a meeting of Gov. Jay Hammond and council representatives, Jessie Dodson, of the governor's office, is named the liaison for the councils and state government. By-laws for the Federation of Community Councils are written.

North Star Council receives a Community Development Block Grant for construction of a stairway at the intersection of 22nd Avenue and Blueberry Street.

1978

The Municipal Assembly adopts guidelines on the relationship and responsibilities between the councils and the municipality.

There is a marked increase in community council volunteers as well as in the support for the Federation. Councils recognized are: Airport Heights, Eklutna Valley and University Area, Tudor Park Community Council expands its boundaries.

Mid-Hillside, Rabbit Creek, Abbott Loop, Rogers Park and Huffman/O'Malley hold council meetings but are not yet officially

recognized by the municipality.

Hillside East Council defeats a proposal to establish a commercial gravel pit in their area.

1979

The Mid-Hillside Council and Huffman/O'Malley Council are officially recognized.

In December, a long-range comprehensive plan for the Girdwood Area is agreed upon by the Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission and Girdwood residents. As a result of the council's efforts, a bike trail along the Alyeska Highway (from Seward Highway three miles to Alyeska) is included in the 1980 Trails Plan.

Construction of a stairway at the corner of 22nd Avenue and Blueberry Street is started.

Takuk/Campbell Community Council purchases land at the corner of Rovenna and 75th Streets for Wovetina Park in the Campbell School area park.

Through its efforts, the Spenard Community Council receives funds from the state and federal governments. The funds are used for park acquisition and development, for removal of architectural barriers to the handicapped, and for street improvements.

1980

A portion of the 1979 state grant received by the Spenard Community Council is used to pave 42 streets.

Several councils participate in the development, review, and completion of two studies. One is on the allowance of urbanization in the Sand Lake area without the sacrificing of water quality. The other study is on the development of the Anchorage Area Wetlands and its possible environmental effects.

1981

Spenard Community Council dedicates Sisterhood Park and Brotherhood Ballfield.

A study to determine which areas of the Hillside should or should not have on-site wastewater disposal systems and whether an on or off-site system would be most cost effective, is reviewed and incorporated into the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan. The Hillside Community Councils involved are: Abbott Loop, Mid-Hillside, Hillside East, Huffman/O'Malley, Rabbit Creek and Glen Alps.

Campbell Park Community Council's traffic committee alleviates the traffic/pedestrian hazards on Lake Otis Parkway between Tudor and Dowling Roads. Through their efforts, the State Department of Transportation lowers the speed limit on Lake Otis Parkway. Its efforts also result in the assigning of a temporary school bus for children on the east side of Lake Otis Parkway from Tudor to 53rd Avenue until a crosswalk is installed. Through the committee's work, the Municipal Improvement Plan for 1981 includes funding for a four-way traffic light at Lake Otis Parkway and Dowling Road. Funding for a pedestrian overpass on Lake Otis Parkway is promised.

1982

Rabbit Creek Community Council is officially recognized.

Long years of planning and raising funds culminate with the opening of the Fairview Recreation Center.

The Birchwood Community Council area has 11 roads upgraded.

The Eklutna/Klatt Community Council's mail delivery designation is changed to regular street addresses. In Airport Heights, community members assess themselves to acquire several acres for use as a neighborhood park. The council begins a development plan.

1983

The Airport Heights Community Council works on a beautification project at 16th Avenue and Lake Otis Boulevard as well as on the development of Tikishla Park. The council also monitors the establishment

of Charter Medical Center and the Humana Hospital expansion.

Eldon/Klatt Community Council changes its name to Bayshore/Klatt to reflect the council's extended boundaries. Eagle River Valley Community

proposed Huffman Road Extension.

The South Addition Community Council works on the problem of commuter parking along residential streets. The Tudor Area Community Council



Council distributes 3,000 questionnaires to determine residents' preferences on zoning.

Government Hill Community Council participates in the Annual Government Hill Day in July.

The North Star Community Council works on a coastal trail design. It is also working on an area-wide rezoning study. The zoning is being changed to reflect existing use.

South Fork Community Council, now officially recognized, works on the final draft of its by-laws.

The Tudor Area Community Council works on a controversial rezoning proposal to develop a wetland into a shopping mall.

The Turnagain Arm Community Council, one of the oldest in the Federation, works on area-wide rezoning of the Bird-Indian Community.

1984

Bayshore/Klatt council members participate in the design of a major development in their area.

The first planned community district in the municipality, Birchwood Community Council, prepares testimony on the proposed Eklutna Water pipeline route.

Anticipating a municipal areawide re-zoning of the area, Birchwood and Chugiak Community Councils mail out zoning questionnaires.

The Government Hill Community Council observes the 70th Anniversary of Anchorage's oldest neighborhood, with a Father's Day picnic in June and the Annual Government Hill Day in July.

The Old Seward/Oceanview Community Council modifies the

continues efforts to preserve its wetlands from commercial development.

1985

The Airport Heights Community Council celebrates the completion of the first phase of the Tikishla Park development.

The Chugiak Council adopts new by-laws which specify notification procedures and detailed job descriptions for council officers. The Federation modifies and uses the by-laws as a model for other councils.

The Eklutna Community Council becomes particularly active on the need for road improvements and extended utility service.

Fairview Community Council sponsors a successful block party.

Government Hill Community Council works with Port officials in developing a truck route to divert noisy truck traffic from residential areas.

Hillside East Community Council reviews and comments on several proposed changes to the Hillside Wastewater Management Plan.

The Sand Lake Community Council tries to secure more park land for their community. It also keeps tabs on developments in the gravel pit area.

The South Addition Community Council passes an ordinance for a residential permit parking system. It sponsors a debate on the Krik Arm Crossing, and modifies the route of the Fur Rendezvous Grand Prix Race projected to pass through some South Addition neighborhoods. A summer solar sculpture program for children is sponsored.

South Fork Community Council works on the design of the Hilland Bridge. The Turnagain Community Council receives full funding for the West Northern Lights Boulevard project.

1986

Abbott Loop Community Council is successful in changing the intended use of land at 88th Avenue from business into Eastwood Park.

The Airport Heights Community Council raises funds and is successful in keeping the Grandview Gardens Library open. Improvements to Tikishla Park continue.

In June, the Basher Community Council (Stuckagain Heights) becomes the 35th council to gain official recognition from the Municipality.

The Bayshore/Klatt Community Council wins approval for the C Street expansion from the Minnesota By-Pass to Klatt Road.

Bear Valley, a council in the process of organizing, is involved in park development

and road improvements.

The Chugiak Community Council prevents use of the Peters Creek Wayside as an overnight campground and organizes a Clean-Up Day.

The Eklutna Community Council participates in rezoning activity and on a contract for electrical service in their area. The Huffman/O'Malley Community Council alters the plans of several developments in the area to correlate with the surrounding neighborhoods and prevents zoning for multi-family dwellings.

All of the Hillside councils play an active role in the development of a golf course, equestrian center and a network of connecting trails.

The North Mountain View Community Council, working with the Parks and Recreation Department, develops an exercise-fitness trail and is responsible for the removal of 400 junk cars from the area.

The Rogers Park Community Council gets a traffic light for the intersection of Northern Lights Boulevard and LaTouche Street, and has a stop sign at the corner

of LaTouche Street and Fireweed Lane installed. The council also changes the design of the 36th Avenue regrade project and scales down the bike path, allowing property owners to keep more of their easement property.

The Sand Lake Community Council, concerned about the operation of gravel pits in its area, sees most of the commercial activity in its area cease.

The Scenic Park Community Council is successful in obtaining a pedestrian overpass over Muldoon Road. It also obtains roads, traffic lights and an addition to its school.

The South Addition Community Council projects include a crossing guard, school zone lights, speed signs, and other safety features at 13th Avenue and L Street.

Takuk/Campbell Community Council succeeds in opposing the establishment of a liquor store in the neighborhood.

Turnagain Community Council gets a bike trail built down Wisconsin Street.

Turnagain Arm Community Council completes the Bird-Indian pathway and obtains equipment for Boulder Stadium ballfield.

Center provides support for councils

By Linda Whitton
 Walking into the Community Council Center's offices one senses immediately that they stay quite busy there.

Today there are two organizations present. One is a non-profit organization and the other is a group of council members preparing for a meeting. Tom Anthony, member of Bear Valley's organizing council, is asked what he thinks about the center and its staff.

"This is basically a nerve center for communities and a center of communication for staying in touch with local issues," he said. "The center enables councils to communicate more effectively to influence city government."

Judy Stansik is manager of Anchorage's Community Council Center, located at 801 W. Fireweed Lane, Suite 103. The office is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Other opening times are available to individual community councils by appointment.

Organization of Anchorage's community councils began in 1973 when a Citizen's Advisory Committee began working on the goals and objectives of a comprehensive plan for Anchorage held public hearings.

Among major concerns voiced was that the municipal government should be more responsive to its citizens and that citizens should have more of a voice in government. The organization of community councils was the response.

In 1974 a central council office was opened in the home of its first director, Lanie Fleischer. In 1976, the office moved to the basement of the Fourth Avenue Theater building, changing its name to the Federation of Community Councils. In 1978, the municipality established the Community

Councils Center at its present Arctic and Fireweed location.

The center works through the Federation, which is a non-profit corporation made up of one representative from each of the 35 councils. Besides Stanek, the office is



Photo by Yale Utzig
 Kris Barnes-Duncan, Community Council Center assistant manager.

staffed by Kris Barnes-Duncan, assistant manager, and Lisa Larson, administrative assistant.

About 60 different non-profit organizations (an average of one a day) utilize the center for research or for supplies and equipment at a minimal cost. All services are free to councils.

Mailing lists of property owners, occupants, or registered voters within

council boundaries are mailed with the aid of bulk and return mailing permits.

The center provides graphic supplies, office supplies, electric typewriters, mimeograph and photocopy machines. Center volunteers serve as consultants on the most effective ways to approach, research, and publicize community issues. They publicize community councils, promote awareness of the center, and encourage participation in councils and municipal government. Other aid is given with changes of boundaries and the organizing and reorganizing of councils.

Files of council by-laws, minutes, and historical information are available at the center. There is also information on state and federal agencies' procedure, community development, public participation, councils in other cities and community grants.

"Neighbor to Neighbor," the center's monthly newsletter, is a major project that helps community councils communicate with each other. Monthly the center prepares, prints, and mails 2,000 copies of the 12-page publication to community council members and many municipal, state, and federal officials and agencies. It is also distributed to the Anchorage Welcome Services. Included is a calendar of dates and places of community council meetings, public hearings, and events of special interest to councils.

The center also prepares booths for the Alaska State Fair and continually maintains contact with national organizations for neighborhood organizations.

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