

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, April 9, 2025

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Clayton Chapman, Mark Eisenman, Sam Garcia, Deepika Ramesh Perumel (AK Literacy Project), Yarrow Silvers, Anna Bosin, Brad Coy, Will Schneider, Amy Devereux, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Daniel Volland, Will Schneider, Genevieve Mina, James Holzenberg, Margo Bellamy, Maxine Laberge, Ted Eischeid, Marie, Remington Purnell, Nate Graham

(About halfway through the meeting our internet connection was lost. Although we logged back into the meeting, no one on the ZOOM link came back on. (Will Schneider came to the meeting site and participated in person.)

Meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by President Clayton Chapman

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement We are meeting on Dena'ina Land – grateful for their care and sharing the land with us.

2. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Bill Wielechowski – (Seat K) Maxine provided report – Budget deficit appears to be growing as stock market fluctuates. House is still working on operating budget. Bare bones capitol budget will be going to house shortly. Constituent meeting will be held at Kaladi Bros on Tudor (near Patterson) this Saturday at 10 am.

Sen. Forrest Dunbar – (Seat J) James Holzenberg provided report – SB 1 – Civil Legal Services; SB 111 Digital Services; SJR outages passed and headed to house. Upcoming bills – to establish AK Gasline Finance Corporation; old defined benefit retirement system reimplemented; regulate the practice of pharmacy benefit businesses (middle men and large part of pricing). Couple of events – April 25 Re-entry Coalition (for those released from prison training). Clayton asked if there's discussion of making agreement with SS for Section 218 agreements? SB55 asks for some adjustments to SBS.

Rep. Genevieve Mina – Seat 19 – Remington Purness provided report – HB 69 education bill; HB 26 statewide transit plan; HB 27 emergency services; HBR9 – tax credit resolution; HB 138 surcharge on phone bills; HB 166 – wage salary information; HB 178 medical debt.

Rep. Ted Eischeid – Seat 22 Talked about the UAA Town Hall – many testified re: education funding. He also had a Ted Coffee Talk that morning – weekly newsletter. HB 132 payday lender reform bill (Stanley Wright had that bill last session). Still has bipartisan support. HB requiring high school financial literacy. Works closely with Sen. Wielechowski to coordinate efforts. He appreciates constituent visits. Pharmacy student visited and advocate for SB 8 that improves education for deaf and hard of hearing. Sherry offered kudos for the bill regarding finances that will hopefully get full support as a common sense bill. Clayton noticed a lot of people signing up to testify that may have dominated the comments. By having people say what category they want to talk for, perhaps it will allow a more rounded conversation. Also it would be good to allow CC members in attendance an opportunity to invite public to CC meetings.

Rep. Andrew Gray - Seat 20 - Nate Graham provided report – HB 36 protects foster children in mental health; HB 101 raises age of consent from 16 to 18. Podcast meeting with North Star Borough – Great to see people at the Cuddy Hall caucus. No other meetings planned during session.

3. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Christopher Constant Seat 1B – no report

Daniel Volland Seat 1L – no report

Yarrow Silvers Seat 5H - Sworn in April 22. Ed talked about Davis Park homeless problem. Open up the snow dump across Mountain View, allow them to come in w/RVs. City spread out dumpsters among the location along the tree line. Clayton mentioned that the dumpsters that are provided are always full.

George Martinez Seat 5I – no report

4. School board report (3 minutes each) – Carl Jacobs / Margo Bellamy - no report

5. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett – Did FCC training in March with Clayton and Tara. Recap of homeless response. FCC web site is updated.

6. Neighborhood/Community Announcements – Sam Garcia talked about the Anchorage Recovery Center timeline update – outpatient services starting May 1. Detox around mid-June. Sober living residence is probably about 1 year out – lots of structural issues. Main building should be operational this summer. They are working with community patrols to offer help for those in crisis.

7. Department of Transportation & Public Facilities – Vision Zero Presentation – Anna Bosin came with a few others from DOT. Anchorage Vision Zero Task Force is calling on Anchorage residents to provide input in ways to keep pedestrians and others utilizing our roadways safer. They offered a resolution for our support (which we will review and vote on next month). They are looking at a safe system approach that will include effectively reducing speed limits in high incident locations, reducing or narrowing lanes (example of Dimond Blvd – 7 lanes reduced to 5), speed feedback signage, increased enforcement, use of roundabouts and neighborhood greenway programs. You can provide feedback and get more information at www.muni.org/departments/traffic/pages/greenways.aspx. You can report a safety concern <https://dot.alaska.gov/besafe/> They provided a handout with places that have been identified for neighborhood greenways. Ed shared his concerns about jaywalking.

8. YMCA of Alaska - Nate Root no report (Clayton told us that Nate's primary plan was to inform us that the East High pool open. Sherry added they have great hours and prices.

9. Catholic Social Services – Amy Devereux – located at 4600 DeBarr. She spoke about various facilities and partner agencies. They have received an Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant and are helping revitalize the Williwaw Park with a community garden, signage and resurfacing and painting the basketball court. Late July is the anticipated time for the work. Ed asked about the nationalities of refugees getting assistance. Afghanistan, Swahili – so many!

There is a high percentage that obtain work and are successful. RMP program is on hold (no new refugees coming in right now). 1200 people are currently in the program and typically help people for the first 5 years with things like family mentors, school registration, introducing people to Anchorage. They have many volunteers and donors to keep that going. A flyer on the bulletin board at East High would let the kids in the neighborhood know when the revitalized basketball court is available was suggested by Clayton.

10. Catalyst Cannabis Company – Will Schneider Sherry Wright moved to accept the Memorandum of Understanding as amended. Ed Leach 2nd. Motion carried with 5 in favor, 2 opposed. Sherry will type up the MOU for Clayton and Will to sign.

Next meeting scheduled for May 14th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Sherry Wright, Secretary