

September 3, 2009 Minutes

Scenic Foothills Community Council

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Mark Hill; 35 attendees signed in; at least 50 people were present for all or part of the meeting.

Motion and second was made to accept May's minutes, distributed by Council Secretary Shannon Dunlap; approved unanimously.

Reports of Officers:

Vice President — Cathy Carte reported on Public Involvement Efforts by Council officers who have visited 1,000 homes, of about 3,000 homes in the SFCC area, over the summer. The neighborhood door to door effort continues. The Council hosted a Community Pot Luck picnic Chugach Foothills Park in August to help get more neighbors involved.

Treasurer — Sue Dabelsteen sent a Financial Report (\$312.83 in the treasury). She requested that a replacement be found for the office of Treasurer.

Public Observer — Bill Miernyk. Community Issues Highlights. He noted that new roads crossing Tudor Road have increased traffic on Muldoon Road. Cotoneasters have been planted at the bases of some of the Chugach Electric towers on East Northern Lights Blvd.

Publicity Chairman — Jerrienne Lowther. Updates on PR Efforts -- Scenic Foothills web site designed and built by Shannon Weiss of Illusions too. New features at www.scenicfoothillsc.org include event calendars, photo galleries of the "Green & Clean" upgrades to Chugach Foothills Park, the Block Party and the Community Pot Luck Picnic in the park.

Wherever possible, newsletters and timely announcements need to be sent by e-mail to save time and resources, including postage. There is a link to sign up for e-mail newsletters on the web site. Jerrienne accepted an interim appointment as Publicity Chairman in July; the appointment was confirmed by the Council at the conclusion of her report.

FCC Advisor — Lance Pruitt reported on Federation of Community Councils news. No FCC meeting in May; the June meeting was the annual FCC picnic in Valley of the Moon Park. Four FCC representatives attended the 2009 Neighborhoods, USA Conference in Spokane, Washington, to learn more about organizing the conference to be held in Anchorage in 2011.

FCC funding has been flat for years and then cut 5 percent in 2009; additional cuts are expected in 2010. Mark Hill attended the August FCC meeting. Representatives shared what was going on in their Councils. Newsletter printing and postage are the biggest expenses for FCC and all of the Councils were asked to convert as much of their postal bulk mail as possible to e-mail.

Committee Reports:

Sign up sheets were available to organize the committees.

Standing: Parks, Public Safety (crime & preparedness), Schools, Streets, Utilities.

Special: Chugach Foothills Flooding, Scenic View Subdivision Resolution, & TBD.

Senior Captain Jim Dennis, Fire Station 14 (Tudor Road), reported on the current situation with rolling closures due to budget constraints. There have been 15 closures at Station 14 in less than two months. Rather than close entire stations, these are partial closures but firefighters can't do much with a skeleton crew -- no cardiac arrest capability, etc. Nearest alternate fire station is at Patterson and DeBarr. A 10-minute increase in response time is a very long time in a case of cardiac arrest. Roger Shaw suggested that Fire Department response times could affect insurance rates, etc. too.

Old/Ongoing Business:

Parks Update — Teri Peters, MOA NE Park District Manager, reported on Green & Clean 2009 in response to the Anchorage Park Foundation Parks Report Cards. Twenty-eight of the 53 parks in the Northeast District got report cards. Chugach Foothills Park was one of 14 neighborhood parks that got extreme makeovers this summer after scoring badly (D) on a report card in 2008.

Volunteers thinned brush and trees, trimmed shrubs, picked up trash, painted a hopscotch pattern on a trail, etc. The volleyball court was re-sanded, new park benches were installed and vandalized playground equipment was repaired. A "coal bin," where live coals from barbecue grills can be deposited safely, is coming.

More than 100 volunteers (including 40 from Home Depot) and neighbors celebrated the improvements at a block party on August 11th.

In other news, the Baxter Bog overlook is to be completed next week. (See photo of completed overlook in sidebar.) A bear got into trash cans in Baxter Bog this summer. Removing some trash cans wasn't effective. Bear-proof trashcans and more dog poop stations will be installed there.

32nd Avenue & Pioneer Drive Upgrades – Dean Karcz, Professional Technical Services, Inc., the lead engineer on the project, reported on status of these street upgrade projects. They have finished a draft plan for 32nd Avenue and expect to hold a public meeting in late September or early October; this Capital Improvement Project is still on track for construction in 2011.

The Pioneer Drive upgrade includes additional parking (20 to 25 spaces) for Chugach Foothills Park with a public meeting likely to come in late October or November.

Tudor Sound Barrier Wall Repairs — Paul Grossi from Alaska Rep. Harry Crawford's office, reported that Alaska Department of Transportation will get the parts for the repair and assemble them -- the hard part -- and volunteers will install them. If the parts don't come in until November, as now appears likely, the installation may have to wait until spring.

Highway to Highway Project (H2H) <http://www.highway2highway.com/> — Roger Shaw & Cathy Carte. A Muldoon corridor for this project is not favored now, but it is the least expensive option and so remains a concern that sentiment could still shift to an alternative that would impact the Scenic Foothills area. There will be a public open house from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. September 22, at Wendler Middle School, 2905 Lake Otis Parkway.

Totem Theater Future Plans — Mark Hill reported that it's not official yet that the Totem Theater is closing at its current location; it is adjacent to property set aside for a school and soccer fields. It's a commercial property and if an eating establishment were to go in there would be pressure for a liquor license next to school property. It is not clear how committed the school district is to building a school there eventually.

Chugach Foothills Flooding — Ken Post and Karla Jo Fargo reported that Fort Richardson denies responsibility for the flooding that has affected 15 families for the past two years, since the Fort Richardson fence was constructed. They have photos and video. The denial followed a claim for damages. Council resolution letter sent after the May Council meeting did not reverse decision.

New Business:

Representative Reports:

Alaska State Legislature:

Don Burrell, Jr. from Senator Bettye Davis's office reported that the federal moratorium on assisted living assessments has been lifted. There will be a hearing from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. September 17 to discuss money not received because of problems. She is working on raising Denali Kid Care <<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/Dhcs/Denalikidcare/>> eligibility limits (assistance for families and children). Formerly it was 200% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines then dropped to 175% and now 150% and she is trying to raise it back to 200%. October 6 hearing on Every Child Matters.

Sen. Davis is also trying to get Alaska's 8-cents per gallon gasoline tax moratorium re-instated.

Representative Harry Crawford (who is running for Congress in 2010 instead of running for re-election to the State House) talked about natural gas "shortages" -- Alaska has plenty of gas but not enough is being produced and stored here, though gas is still being shipped overseas. Prospect of rolling brownouts for long stretches of very cold weather if more storage isn't added. There are a couple of short term fixes but more storage won't come in time to help this winter. Additional drilling, bullet line from North Slope will take more time and large hydroelectric like Susitna Dam would take decades. More exploration in Cook Inlet could alleviate problem but energy companies don't want to do it because the price of gas isn't high enough to make it attractive. Also discussed: tip tax credit tied to minimum wage. He said it doesn't work equally well for high priced eateries and budget restaurants.

MOA Assembly: Sheila Selkregg & Mike Gutierrez were not present.

MOA Code Enforcement — Richard Novy, Code Enforcement Officer, talked about reporting municipal code violations. <http://www.muni.org/Departments/development/BSD/Pages/CodeEnforcement.aspx>

Report municipal code violations for Roads & Drainage, Health & Sanitation, Noise, Air Pollution, Fire, Water Pollution, Septic & Wells, Unsafe Buildings, Fences & Signs, Junk Vehicles, Land Use & Zoning, Garbage. Most frequent complaints are bear problems involving garbage and other food sources and junk vehicles. Rust in Peace program removes junk vehicles but lacks funding. Information on web site:

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/neighborhoods/Programs/Pages/RIP.aspx>

Street Maintenance & Construction — Jim Lamson, Capital Improvement Projects Manager in MOA Project Management & Engineering Department, brought maps of city streets with overlays showing the condition of streets that need upgrades. He is making a prioritized list. Our neighborhoods are short on storm drainage facilities. Fixing street problems begins with drainage or problems just come back. 36th Avenue west of Muldoon awaits a determination of ownership, which is under review in the legal departments of the state and the municipality. MOA is maintaining the street under a maintenance exchange program with the state but it is not clear whether the street has legally been turned over to the Municipality. They expect to have this figured out by October.

Foothills Storage Remodeling Plans — Mike Fuller, Owner, gave an overview of planned changes in three phases over the next couple of years at 36th Avenue & Muldoon Road. Eventually, the high walls along Muldoon Road, which are in a state of disrepair will be removed and the remodeled facility will have an entrance from Muldoon Road. In the meantime, black plastic has been stretched over the bottom portion of the missing panels. Bill Miernyk expressed his opinion that it wasn't enough of a fix to pass muster for a couple of years and that more needed to be done now. (See photo in sidebar)

Anchorage Bicycle Plan — Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage representative Dawn Groth requested a resolution from the Council supporting the revised bicycle plan.
<http://www.muni.org/Departments/traffic/AMATS/Documents/Chapter%201%20-%20Background.pdf>

She also said October 7 will be Walk to School Day. Dawn represented BCA at the Safe Routes to School national conference in Portland, Oregon, in August.

Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/chugach/planning.htm> — Recruiting Committee Chair & 2 Members. Plan Review Meeting 11:30 a.m. September 16, at 550 W. 7th Ave., Atwood State Office Bldg, Rm 240. Another meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. September 22 at Campbell Creek Science Center multipurpose room, 5600 Science Center Drive. A short presentation by park staffers will be followed by a Q&A session at each meeting.

Written comments are due by October 16; send them to Monica Alvarez, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Chugach State Park Planning, 550 W. Seventh Ave., Suite 1050, Anchorage 99501; Phone: 269-8145; Fax: 907-269-8915; E-mail: monica.alvarez@alaska.gov

Scenic Park View Subdivision — Sandy Mitchell, Homeowners Association President, reported that Sheila Selkregg advised that Municipal Planning Department needs a meeting to resolve issues. They need a stakeholder's meeting to get the subdivision warranted. It's not an official subdivision so code compliance doesn't accept responsibility.

Adam Trombley introduced himself and said he would be a candidate for election to the MOA Assembly next year.

Meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.