

November 5, 2009 Minutes

Scenic Foothills Community Council

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Mark Hill; 65 people attended.

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

Reports of Officers:

Vice President — Cathy Carte said Scenic View neighbors have been told they are liable for accidents in the wetlands there and have blocked access with a fence; Scenic Park neighbors who cross the new fence are now threatened with arrest. This blocks a route children have used to walk to Scenic Park Elementary School. The liability is a problem left over when the subdivision was built on wetlands and the builder defaulted. Residents need help from the Municipality to straighten out several problems.

Scenic Foothills has always been a quiet neighborhood, she said, but lately there have been more crime problems, including burglary and a home invasion.

Sgt. Dennis Allen, APD, said it was not so much a change in the amount of crime in the area but increased awareness that had made it seem like there had been a big jump in criminal activity.

President — Mark Hill said we need someone to take over the secretary and treasury duties for SFCC as both of the office holders want to be released from their commitments due to the press of other matters. He is also looking for someone to take charge of a Public Safety Committee.

On Monday, November 2, Mark Hill met with Ken Post and MOA personnel about Chugach Foothills floods. Homeowners say floods have occurred each spring since the Fort Richardson fence was built in 2004, though they had not had drainage problems in the area before. They want the Municipality and/or Fort Richardson to fix flooding they say was caused by leveling an intervening knoll. A MOA project manager and a watershed hydrologist inspected the area.

FCC Advisor — Lance Pruitt reported that FCC had completed downsizing its office to reduce the rent but more budget cutting was in the offing. Postal mail accounts for a quarter of their budget and needs to be converted to e-mail. This month SFCC's postal mail newsletter got hung up in FCC's office, was mailed late and mostly did not arrive in time to advertise the meeting.

Publicity Chairman — Jerrienne Lowther reported that FCC's computer crash necessitated going to the new Constant Contact system immediately. The e-mail list is being converted and using both lists resulted in some duplicate e-mail newsletters this month. E-mail postcard reminders were sent out today. The web site is our main source of information: www.scenicfoothillsc.org

Representative Reports:

Mark Hill stated his expectation that elected representatives would be regular attendees at community council meetings so they could get first-hand knowledge of their constituents' needs, but that only Rep. Harry Crawford was physically present again this month. He said their help was needed on issues such as Chugach Foothills flooding and Scenic View problems caused

when wetlands were filled in and people bought homes without realizing these converted wetlands would lead to residential flooding affecting their homes.

Mayor Dan Sullivan brought Policy Director Larry Baker and Greg Jones from MOA Public Works to the meeting to address these and other SFCC issues.

Mayor Sullivan said he and the Municipal Assembly are working to bridge the budget shortfall and trying to balance priorities with two public hearings so far. Getting chronic inebriates out of illegal camping places in municipal parks and into required treatment began this fall. Clitheroe Center is now doing involuntary detox treatment. In response to a question, the mayor said social service personnel met with the displaced campers after they were evicted.

Natural gas concerns led to a recent test of how much consumption could be decreased by voluntary effort in a non-crisis situation. Mayor Sullivan said he considered the test a big success with an estimated 2%-4% reduction during a two-hour test period in Anchorage. Elmendorf AFB and Homer were able to reduce their energy use by up to 6% during similar tests.

Bob Miller wanted to talk about the Fire Chief having his daughter taken home from school in a fire truck. The mayor said it cost the chief twice the usual cost of a school promotion trip (usually \$50) and a reprimand in his personnel file.

Rep. Harry Crawford, whose wife was struck and injured by a drunk driver while on foot several years ago, asked the mayor to support his campaign for adding a red stripe to the driver's licenses of repeat alcohol offenders so they could be barred from buying alcoholic beverages.

In response to a question about what happens to displaced illegal campers, Mayor Sullivan said if the courts decide they are a danger to themselves or others then they must go to Clitheroe for treatment. Kids were afraid to go to school past inebriate campers in the woods, he said.

In response to another question, he said the day after the community council meeting Anchorage School District and the military would take part in a table top exercise. All major power users and producers were to work out who does what when to prevent a power crisis.

Mark Hill said Scenic View subdivision had 60 homes or more with significant drainage problems; it backs up to Scenic Park, which never had problems before. MOA needs to help them. Northrim Bank has responsibility for codes and covenants in the subdivision now that the developer (Lee Baker) is out of the picture. The municipality needs to make sure they act.

Alex Monterrosa, a 25-year resident, asked about Crime Watch as a participant. He was concerned about losing a positive, progressive program that helped residents work with each other. The mayor said Crime Watch would continue but would be administered differently -- by an APD senior officer.

Michele Pamer pointed out that Scenic Foothills is a huge volunteer community. Sixty-one park volunteers logged 531 hours and Parks and Rec. brought in 170 more volunteers for two days in the summer of 2009. On Halloween night, 12 volunteers took shifts from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Chugach Foothills Park. They were encouraged to do this by Rep. Harry Crawford, the police and residents.

Committee Reports:

Parks: Mark Hill said Scenic Foothills contains five parks and borders on more. Erika Wolther answered the call for a volunteer to wade through the Chugach State Park Trails Plan and report. Adopting parks will be necessary and as budgets tighten our responsibilities will grow.

Public Safety: Mark Hill said the Public Safety Committee would meet November 19 at Wayland Baptist University. Getting to know your neighbors can make your neighborhood more secure, he said.

Brittany Place residents reported on a home invasion -- a man reportedly told a person with Alzheimer's disease that he was there to check her heating system. "He tied her up and cleaned her out." Sgt. Dennis Allen was unable to corroborate some of the details with the police report on the incident. The repairman at the door wasn't reported. (The differences were not immediately resolved.) He said we are getting a better look at crime but it isn't exploding and we don't need to get paranoid. The APD crime map <http://www.muni.org/Departments/police/stats/Pages/Crimemaps.aspx> shows all calls in the previous 24 hours.

Schools: School Board member **Jeff Friedman** reported a school budget planning meeting was scheduled for Monday. The upper spending limit is based on expected revenues and then they deal with priorities. Legislature's three-year plan calls for an increase in this third year. Other revenue is expected to be flat but next year will cost \$15 million more.

Dave Harbour asked about unnecessary spending. Jeff Friedman said he thought it was all important and that he had voted for the budget.

In response to a question, Mr. Friedman said about one third of the students go to summer school. High School students include those getting ahead by taking extra work but elementary students in summer school were all doing remedial work. We're making good improvements in performance, he said. One good thing about summer school is that it keeps students in learning mode so they don't forget things and lose their learning edge.

Walk To School Day — Dawn Groth reported on Walk To School Day. (There is a [report](#) and a web gallery of [photos](#) on the SFCC web site.) Sponsors: Anchorage School District; Dept. of Health and Human Services Obesity Prevention; Fire Department; Anchorage Police Department, McGruff the Crime Dog; Alaska Safe Routes to School; PTA, teachers, principal; ASD Transportation; Municipality Traffic Engineers; Director of Diabetes Prevention, ANTHC; Alliance for a Healthier Community; Army National Guard; Sen. Bettye Davis; Rep. Harry Crawford; Rep. Les Gara; Assemblywoman Sheila Selkregg; Gov. Sean Parnell; Green Star; Bagpiper, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau.

On Wednesday, November 11, Dawn said they plan to kick off "Walking Wednesdays" by having kids walk to Scenic Park School with volunteers. Gathering points are to be Madelynne and James Streets and on 36th Avenue. She's looking for volunteers to walk to school with the kids to keep them safe and reinforce community values (no vandalism!). This dovetails with a Healthy Eating, Healthy Lifestyles approach to fight childhood obesity.

Anchorage recently won a bronze bicycle-friendly award for a strong education campaign at local schools. The city provided bike education kits, including horns and helmets, to all

Anchorage School District elementary and charter schools. The Anchorage Bike Plan is out of Planning and Zoning and gone to the Assembly. Students are designing bike racks at King Career Center. Bike to Work Day will be in May 2010. Dawn would also like to organize a Walk to Scenic Foothills Community Council Meetings.

Streets: Alaska Rep. **Harry Crawford** said materials for the James Street Sound Barrier Wall along Tudor Road had come in. DOT has the parts and will replace the posts. Paul and Harry will replace the panels. It will get fixed now, or if freeze-up prevents it, they will do it in the spring.

Senator Bettye Davis and Rep. Harry Crawford met with DOT about 32nd Avenue and other area streets. MOA moved the 32nd Avenue upgrade from 2011 to 2013 and they are looking for ways to move it to 2010. They need matching funds from bonds so they still need more dollars. They got money for traffic light and engineering so there is still some money but more is needed.

MOA and Alaska DOT met about 36th Avenue (west of Muldoon Road) and MOA thinks DOT owns it. Common practice is that DOT upgrades the street and then MOA will take it over and maintain it. It's still in the legal department but they think they will have an answer pretty soon.

32nd Avenue Upgrade – Draft plan public meeting was held in October. Pioneer Drive meeting is coming next, probably in December or January. 36th Avenue is still looking to get upgraded.

U-Med Access plan involves extending Bragaw and maybe punching 36th Avenue through APU.

Highway To Highway (H2H) official comment period closed October 30. There is still concern that they might want to look at an east side bypass option.

KABATA: Mary Anne Pease gave an overview of the Knik Arm Crossing, a proposed toll bridge over Knik Arm, between the Port of Anchorage and Point MacKenzie. The Knik Arm Bridge And Toll Authority (KABATA) web site is here: <http://www.knikarmbridge.com/project.html>

KABATA, which currently is funded only for planning, says construction of the two-mile-long bridge would be financed by a public-private partnership. The environmental process is now underway. According to Ms. Pease, if the project doesn't pencil out, it won't get built.

Susan DiPietro of the Anchorage Citizens Coalition <http://www.accalaska.org/> presented contrasting views of the project. She said a bridge would save driving time only if you live past Wasilla or Palmer; from those towns it would take more time and more miles than driving the Glenn Highway. She said public-private partnerships typically want to take the private equity out early and shift the risk to the state. Jobs and tax revenue would go from Anchorage to the Valley. Economic development would be short term and long term would yield no net benefits for Anchorage, she said.

Alex Monterrosa asked, "What does it cost for KABATA annually?" Ms. Pease said it has cost \$43 million for engineering and environmental studies so far. Mr. Monterrosa said he had a cabin at Big Lake and that land rushes start out as opportunity and then disillusionment. He also noted that the train station at the airport cost a lot and got little use and was a wasted resource. He said he had heard minimal talk about mass transportation options.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.