

Scenic Foothills Community Council

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Meeting Minutes

Call to order: 7:07pm, 17 signed in and 23 attended

Approval of Minutes: February meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Assembly Candidates Forum:

Adam Trombley shared his experience serving as the chairman on the City Budget Advisory Committee this past year. He said his work on the committee with the municipal departments has helped save the city \$15.5 Million, allowing for a police academy this year. Trombley's goals as assemblyman are for a long term sustainable budget, preparation for economic hard times, city safety, and a community center in East Anchorage.

Mike Gutierrez has served three years as an assemblyman for Anchorage and currently serves on the Public Safety Committee. Gutierrez shared concerns with alcohol and drugs and degradation of police and fire. If reelected to the assembly, Gutierrez would like to address why taxes are increasing but services are decreasing.

Trombley shared statistics from the FBI that all crimes with the exception of aggregate assault and larceny/theft have decreased in Anchorage. Trombley said that the police chief says this is due to police being used more wisely as community officers. Gutierrez disagreed and said that if you talk with police officers they feel they cannot keep up with the policing needs in Anchorage. Gutierrez believes community policing is a good idea but requires a strong relationship is work.

Harry Crawford asked the candidates whether long term crime is down because police that were once serving as investigators are now working patrol again. Gutierrez believes crime is not down but arrests have decreased due to police decrease. Trombley believes that patrol has become the top priority making the decrease in crime. Jerrienne Lowther expressed disagreement that reported crime is the same as actual crime and said one instance did not mean a trend.

Bill Miernyk asked the candidates how as assembly members they could help SFCC. Gutierrez addressed the infrastructure of the roads in the council area. Trombley agreed with Gutierrez and added safety in our parks with cameras and lights, community patrol, school improvements, and public safety.

Cathy Carte felt that Mayor Dan Sullivan is trying to reshape the assembly and wanted to know if the candidates will work for the people or for the mayor. Trombley said he is proud to have the mayor's support but will represent the people as their assemblyman. Gutierrez shared Carte's concern with the mayor reshaping the assembly, yet he believes he will continue to speak up when he agrees or disagrees with the mayor or other assembly members.

Michele Pamer shared concern that East Anchorage is often left out of the municipality's plans and would like to know how the candidates could help reshape the administration in favor of East Anchorage. Trombley considers a good relationship with fellow assembly members would allow him to lobby for support in the administration to improve East Anchorage. Trombley plans to fight for funding for our libraries, public transportation, and work on the Eastside District Plan. Gutierrez shared that the relationship he has established with fellow assembly members and the city manager will allow him to

help East Anchorage. He noted his work in the past to get speed humps on the east side as well as working with local retailers to cease the distribution of “spice” in the area.

One attendee asked Gutierrez to address how taxing to the cap will help Anchorage weather another economic storm such as in 2008. Gutierrez said we cannot always tax to the cap, but the Municipality will have to plan for the future to be prepared for these strategic situations. Trombley also responded saying that he does not view taxing to the cap as a goal to obtain and told the council that with police and fire under budget this year they are still managing to function well.

Attendee Roger Shaw said that the police chief will lose his job if he disagrees with the mayor. He also noted if property taxes are lowered he wonders what services this will affect.

Harry Crawford encouraged SFCC to cast an advisory vote in favor of **Proposition 11: Mandatory Photo Identification for Sale of Alcohol by Package Liquor Stores** on April 5.

Harry Crawford also announced he will be running for Chugach Electric’s Board of Directors to help Alaska look at alternative forms of energy (wind, geothermal, solar, and hydro).

Propositions

Anchorage School District: Ed Graff, ASD Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, provided discussion and a flyer for SFCC on ASD Bond Propositions. Proposition 1 completes renovation and addition to Service High School, \$37,132,000. Graff said this renovation would decrease maintenance costs at Service, bring a 700-seat auditorium to South Anchorage, and allow for career, technical, and vocational education classrooms. Proposition 2 will fund building life extension and design projects district wide, \$16,865,000 with the state paying 60-70% of total costs. These projects include renovation design projects, varied education design, safety upgrades, roof replacement projects, communication systems projects, lighting upgrade projects, athletic facility upgrades, heating system projects, dressing room upgrades, and relocatable upgrade projects. Proposition 3 improves and expands career, technical, and vocational education programs at existing schools, \$17,000,000 with the state paying 70% of the costs.

Kathleen Plunkett said ASD has paid off \$150,000,000 since the last bond. She said ASD still has to maintain its facilities and assets. Steve Pfeiffer, a volunteer with the Citizen’s Capital Request Association, encouraged SFCC to take ownership as tax payers for facility maintenance and needs.

One attendee expressed concern for the continued debt of ASD. Graff said \$23,000,000 per year goes to maintain ASD’s ninety-six facilities. Plunkett said that the \$700,000,000 bond debt applies for 60-70% match by the state. An attendee asked the ASD to address the comparison of bond money versus the budget money for the taxpayers. Graff said general budget funds do not get the 60-70% reimbursement from the state. Plunkett said ASD is looking for alternatives to fund projects such CIPs and working with legislators. Attendee Shaw asked ASD why they are not making annual contributions to reserve funds. Plunkett said they have been flat funded and cannot contribute to reserves. Pfeiffer reminded SFCC that schools are not just education facilities but will be used in case of emergencies. Miernyk expressed appreciation for Kathleen Plunkett’s service for our community. Honeman stated that one prisoner costs the state \$38,325 per year and one student costs ASD \$16,000 per year.

Anchorage Tomorrow: (www.AnchorageTomorrow.org) Dean Karcz shared with the council information on **Proposition 4, 5, and 6** and distributed a flyer to the council. Proposition 4 includes Anchorage roads and drainage bonds, \$30,850,000. This will improve flooding, glaciation, and drainage in the East Anchorage area as well as pavement rehabilitation. Proposition 5 includes park bonds, \$3,000,000, improving neighborhood parks and area wide greenbelt trails on the east side. Proposition 6 addresses

public safety and transit projects, \$941,000. This proposition will include vehicle purchases, facilities improvements, management information and automated operating systems, bus and other capital maintenance and fleet improvements, and ambulance replacement programs.

East Side District Plan

Roger Shaw encouraged council to form a committee to advance planning for East Anchorage. Shaw would like to see SFCC support for an ad hoc steering committee. Monterrosa moved to adopt Shaw's resolution; the motion was seconded by Lowther. The resolution (text follows) was passed unanimously.

WHEREAS the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan was established to provide broad directions for the future of the Anchorage Bowl, and

WHEREAS it was envisioned that separate district plans would be completed for more area-specific descriptions of residential and commercial needs, and

WHEREAS a specific future plan for the East Side was referenced in the Anchorage 2020 Plan, and

WHEREAS other areas of the Municipality of Anchorage have either completed or are working on their area plan while the creation of an East Side Plan continues to be delayed by the Municipality of Anchorage, and

WHEREAS several citizens of the East Side have attempted to organize a planning effort, and

WHEREAS the Community Councils are established for the purpose of discussion of Municipal issues,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

the Scenic Foothills Community Council supports the creation of a steering committee as an ad hoc subcommittee of appointed representatives of affected Community Councils of the East Side, and

the Scenic Foothills Community Council shall inform the affected Community Councils of this preferred steering committee organizational structure, and

the Scenic Foothills Community Council requests that the Municipality of Anchorage provide adequate funding and staff support for the development of an East Side District Plan as soon as practicable.

Reports

Assemblyman Paul Honeman shared a crime report with the council and suggested crime is down because the community is healthy; people are taken care of so they do not have a reason to steal.

Carte announced that park improvements planned for this summer will be on SFCC's web site soon.

William Theuer has volunteered to assist with the area community patrol.

Alex Monterrosa said candidates for the Chugach Board of Directors will be at the April meeting.

Michelle Pamer encouraged the council members to call or write legislators.

9:00pm: Meeting Adjourned.