

**Scenic Foothills Community Council
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 5, 2013**

Call to Order: President Alexander Monterrosa 7:00 p.m. May minutes approved. President introduced executive board.

Assemblyman Adam Trombley: East Anchorage District Plan draft expected in September, originally expected June or July, then Planning & Zoning will hold hearings on the plan. Tied with that, he introduced, pre-emptively, Anchorage Ordinance 2013-73 to make the old Alaska Greenhouse property designated park land for a community park. The process requires the property to be intended for a park in a master plan, the East Anchorage District Plan, before the site can become dedicated park land, probably after the first of next year. The Eagle River and South Anchorage delegations have promised to support the park land designation. Trombley is also working with Mao Tosi and others on a community center for East Anchorage.

Dan Gallego, Principal of Bartlett High School: Bartlett High School turf fields last of six turf fields being installed in Alaska this summer by the same company, delayed by permits and weather, on hold until they get 3-4 rainless days. Football-soccer fields built to drain toward edges. Rubberized material goes under Lego-like squares put together so rain falls through plastic grate into rubberized material, then into drains along the edges. They roll out material on top, cut lines and sew it all together. He showed photos and maps of the complex. Bleachers will be installed in the spring. They are raising funds for a new scoreboard and will request more funds to light it, re-do the track and add bleachers. The Legislature gave \$3.5 million (for Phase I). Originally called for football-soccer, baseball, softball, track but company drainage specs changed so baseball field will also be a softball field. Fields will be used next fall, after they get a scoreboard. Home side bleachers will hold 1,500 fans. Area is closed now for construction but when it's ready for visitors to view it they will plan for a grand opening.

Brian Singleton, Principal of Begich Middle School: (Formerly principal of Government Hill Elementary School, he succeeds Jeanne Fischer, who retired this spring. He lives in Scenic Foothills; his wife is a teacher at Rogers Park and they have two children who will go to Begich when they get to sixth grade.) My goal is to connect with kids. I believe that for kids to have academic success, they need to feel connected to the school environment they're in and the adults who are working with them in that environment. They need to feel they have a place in our community, in our city, and in life. So that's what I want my staff to do. We have many different tools for getting kids prepared for life. Things like standards and curriculum. You may not remember the specifics of the curriculum from your school but you remember how teachers and administrators treated you. That's of utmost importance. I know if I feel good about myself, if my basic needs are met, I can go out and do great things. Then it gets more complicated, after we establish the baseline and go out and support kids that way. That's when we get into the technical aspects of educating students. State standards have raised the bar for kids and educators alike and I think that's the best thing to happen to our district since I've been a part of it for 13 years. I'm encouraged because we are doing great things in our schools but I know we are capable of doing more. We want our kids to go anywhere in the country capable of entering college or entering the work force at some point so we are looking at the whole child. We are looking at their academic and emotional needs. I don't know how familiar you are with social-emotional learning, but that is an extremely important part of what we are doing in the Anchorage School District. I've been involved in that my whole career, both as a teacher at Wonder Park and assistant principal at Susitna and at Government Hill and Begich. We are a community school in the neighborhood and we are going to continue being a community school. We are going to continue with the programs that are currently running and we hope to grow them more, maybe in connection with a community center. We want them to be able to use our facility. If you go over to Begich on a weekend, you see tons of stuff going on on the football field and track, inside and out. We want to continue serving the eastside community, the children and also their caregivers and parents. I am completely accessible; call the school and ask for an appointment. I love to sit down and work out problems.

Assemblyman Paul Honeman: Downtown Market is entering a new contract phase, discussion of whether it should move or stay. Hearings on public hearings before the Assembly. A task force has been created. Assembly hearings are televised, three minutes to present, with a buzzer. It's a little intimidating. I'd encourage you to get involved in that. Budget is coming up in October. We've never been in trouble; we've had surpluses. Moneywise, I think we're looking good. Where we have problems: retirement funds. Years ago, Municipality opted out of Social Security, then changed from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans. We're not retaining quality employees like we used to, for years. On retention, we're not able to compete statewide; we're seeing it now in police and fire services locally and we've got it even worse coming up. We're losing ground; not enough are signing up for police and fire academies and we're losing 25-40 policemen by the end of this year. We wanted 30 for police academy and we're getting about 20 – maybe. We have problems that we've got to deal with.

AO 2013-37 (employee compensation) repeal, if signatures come in could be a special election or regular election next April. Taxicab permit revisions, problems with access to handicap-accessible taxis. People have come up here for conventions or to work and have reported difficulties in getting a cab even though there are some permits dedicated to accessible taxicabs only. Towing enforcement ordinance also is being rewritten because of problems with towing enforcement. Another current issue is complaints about fluoridating water supplies. This one comes up every so often; there are some very strong opinions about it.

Alex Monterrosa asked about the seasonal flooding in Chugach Foothills streets off Steller Drive. A delegation from the Municipality, including Municipal Manager George Vakalis, and military personnel from Joint Base-Elmendorf Richardson (JBER) went out and toured some of the homes that have had \$5,000 to \$10,000 in damage. They went all the way out to the tank trail (Bulldog Road) and found that when that gravel road was reconstructed for the Stryker forces, instead of one culvert, there were now two. One appears to be misdirected. The bottom line is JBER is saying it's much too early in the process to determine whether JBER should admit any responsibility for the damage to these homes. I am working to get the Municipality and JBER to develop a positive working relationship and it isn't happening. The long and short of it is the MOA and homeowners are pumping water out as fast as possible, whereas JBER is not doing anything. Honeman suggested that it is time to get help at the federal level from our Congressional delegation. It's cheaper to fix things before freeze-up. One of the culverts apparently freezes and that diverts water along the path of least resistance, toward Chugach Foothills.

Michele Pamer asked about People Mover shelters at bus stops, noting that there were lots of shelters in south Anchorage but almost none in east Anchorage. Honeman said many shelters of various materials have been put in and later taken out due to constant vandalism that destroyed expensive public property. Most bus stops now have only a concrete bench and a trash can.

Harry Crawford suggested putting roofs over the bus stops even if they didn't go for the more destructible windbreaks.

There was also discussion of the transfer hub being moved from Fred Meyer to Tikhatnu Commons. This creates problems for some users, even if it's more efficient for People Mover. Honeman said UAA uses smaller shuttles and something like that could run smaller routes and let the big buses make more trips on heavily used routes. He said he'd look into handicap access.

Representative Lance Pruitt on Alaska Legislature: Clarifying earlier point made by Assemblyman Trombley, Pruitt said legislative funds could be reappropriated for different projects but generally go back to the same legislative district, not to a project in a different district. Redistricting: he said there is a court challenge, but for now his new district was the same size and shape as before but it would be grouped differently with another district represented by Senator Cathy Giessel (South Anchorage Hillside and Seward Highway communities) instead of Senator Anna Fairclough (Eagle River). It's early to talk about legislation for the coming session but expect something about taxing gas. Exxon-Mobil has not hit some benchmarks specified by Governor Parnell so planned discussion didn't happen. He attended a Gas Symposium, noted that we talk a lot about oil but gas is its own world. The Legislative Office Building downtown is being completely remodeled into standard space plus some larger spaces on the first floor. It's still under negotiation on details. No state ownership stake at this point.

Questioned about his highest priority for UAA, Pruitt said a big issue is campus life. He said students go Outside because UAA doesn't really have the residence culture needed if we want to keep some of our kids. Harry Crawford said UAA needs to be expanded; that it has taken extra years for excellent students to graduate because they can't get the classes they need.

Another attendee noted difficulty of traveling by bicycle around the University area, that a bike trail was dangerous, full of holes and suddenly ended, leaving her riding the wrong direction on the shoulder of Tudor Road. Pruitt said he recognized that some roads and trails in our area are coming to the end of their life or they weren't developed to what we could consider our standard today, and one of the biggest struggles for him has been to get Scenic Foothills upgraded to that point. He cited the cost of upgrading 32nd Avenue and Cherry Street and noted that all the streets between 32nd and 36th Avenue need it.

Bettye Davis, Anchorage School Board said ASD and teachers had come to an agreement on a contract, the teachers had approved it and the School Board would vote on it on Monday night. She will report in more detail at the October meeting.

Mark Hill, FCC Representative: FCC looking at Community Council issues, including leadership training and recruitment to attract more people to represent our communities. Scenic Park community has major street drainage issues. Neighborhood Watch, Emergency Watch, Community Patrol needs to focus closer to home, on how to keep us safer in our neighborhoods.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.