

Minutes: Scenic Foothills Community Council

January 9, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Alexander Monterrosa; Minutes approved.

President's notes: President Monterrosa thanked us for attending, being community servants and exercising civics. This can be as small an action as how we drive our vehicles. He is indebted to those who have kept the Council going in his absence. Everyone is important.

Municipality of Anchorage Reports:

Adam Trombley, Assemblyman: Some of the issues the Assembly has been working on include the rewrite of Title 28, including looking at the entire election code to make sure the problems from 2012 won't happen again and Charter changes that would require eight votes to make it onto the ballot. They also dealt with Assemblyman Chris Birch's Election day change, which would need an ethics change. Trombley says he has brought forth an ordinance to dedicate Alaska Greenhouse land as parkland. He feels he will have the support for this.

Harry Crawford says it looks like the election date change is for personal benefit and he suggests if they want to change the election date it should be a separate issue. Trombley says others have made this comment.

There was discussion about whether or not the parkland could be dedicated before the East Anchorage District Plan is approved, the timing of the Assembly acting on this and making sure that it is known that we want a park to front Muldoon, not be located behind businesses.

Vice President Roger Shaw reiterated our Council's position on the changes to community councils. Our council is opposed to allowing a 16-year-old voting rights and is also opposed to the proxy possibilities that the representative vote change might bring.

Paul Honeman, Assemblyman: Not present.

Legislative Reports:

Lance Pruitt, House Majority Leader, was unable to attend.

Senator Fairclough's legislative aide Erin Shine represented her, since she was traveling. SFCC's Parks team suggested that if there is park money that comes available we'd like to be flagged to get matching money for parks with Chugach Foothills Park being a priority. They have met with Holly Spoth-Torres, Parks Superintendent, about this. Specifically, they'd like to add handicapped playground equipment to this side of town. Currently, there is none.

Anchorage School District Report:

Bettye Davis, School Board: State has not increased the funding formula for the past three years. If they don't do it this year, school will see four years of flat funding. We cannot keep doing business without changes in funding. All of the schools in the state are struggling with this. For our kids to get a quality education, funding must keep pace. This year Anchorage schools have to cut \$23 million out of the budget on top of last year's \$21 million.

Ms. Davis encouraged us to come to the Anchorage Caucus, 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, January 11, 2014, at Loussac Library.

Harry Crawford concurred with all that Bettye Davis said. He has seen that even in tighter years the legislature has funded the formula. The base student allocation absolutely has to be increased, he said.

Question: Will Benny Benson School be closed? Ms. Davis says there are lots of rumors. No one is sure what changes are ahead.

President Monterrosa thanked Ms. Davis for being a “warrior and a champion for education.”

New Business:

Harry Crawford, Activist, Treasurer, Resident: Move to Amend Resolution. This is a national movement to overturn the Supreme Court decision of Citizens United and limit the contributions of certain organizations to political campaigns through a Constitutional amendment. The Supreme Court is treating money as free speech and saying that it can't be limited. We all know that huge money can overwhelm an election. Move To Amend group says corporations aren't citizens. Only humans are entitled to constitutional rights. Money is not speech and does not have the same rights.

Harry asked for a non-binding resolution from our council in support of Move to Amend Resolution. Some discussion of the wording of the resolution was asked for, and there was a question of exactly what part of the Constitution needs amending and exactly how this resolution would effect change. Roger spoke in support. Harry reiterates that this is the worst legislation being put forward in memory. Harry assures that this resolution won't mean you can't sue a corporation, but will ensure elections cannot be bought. In 96% of recent elections, the person who spent the most money won. Jerrienne Lowther questioned whether this amendment should be more clearly written. There was a question as to whether it was appropriate to vote today. Roger assured that this was a noticed item, so it was not improper to vote. It was moved to vote on the resolution and it carried, with a vote of 10 to 2.

Old Business:

East Anchorage District Plan, Roger Shaw: Roger explained the process of the district plan being brought to the Assembly. This will take several months and there are still opportunities to comment and become involved. Eight attendees said they have attended meetings for this East Anchorage District Plan. Comments can be made here: eastanchoragedistrictplan.org

Proposed community council changes: Changes will come up for public testimony at the Anchorage Assembly. Our council disapproved of allowing 16-year-olds a vote, due to them not being taxpayers; they would be welcomed to speak if they live in this area. Youths from other areas who were invited to share info would also be welcomed to speak. Member wonders if there has been an issue in the past. He feels that there are students who could appropriately vote. Schools have student governments that are full of hard-working students are involved in the community. These students would feel more welcomed with a vote.

Harry Crawford feels that this would lead to stacking the deck. Other members wonder if students have the maturity to understand the issues enough to vote and others say the voices

of our youth need to be heard. Alex counters that there are adults engaged in life and others not, just as youth.

There was spirited discussion about national voting age being 18, therefore councils should be no different. A member worried about youth voting in marijuana and another worried that youth would vote funding for popular amenities such as bike trails and playgrounds over basic needs such as roads and drainage. Still others saw school government as a chance to exercise civics and that just attending our meetings would be enough enticement for youth to become involved as they get older. Participation in our council could include advisory voting.

A decision was made to invite student government representatives from both Bartlett and East to present about their projects in our community and ask about their community concerns. President Monterrosa is for encouraging attendance to get their “skin in the game.”

Campbell Airstrip Road Upgrade and Trail Project: Resolution to Support Basher Community Council’s Request to Secure Funding for this Project, Roger Shaw: A presentation of the proposed Campbell Airstrip Road upgrade and trail project was made at the December SFCC meeting by Tom Bronga. The council recognizes the grave safety concerns of the lower portion of Campbell Airstrip Road and though it is not on SFCC’s CIP list, wishes to support Basher in their efforts to get upgrades to the road funded and has brought forward a Resolution to show support. Motion to vote on this resolution was seconded and the vote carried 12 to 1.

New Business:

Member Curtis Hupton asked how do new lights in Little Dipper Park get fixed? Lights were vandalized seven days after installation. Parks chair Michele Pamer says they just need to be told. Hupton says he did this two months ago. Jerrienne Lowther says she has spoken with the Parks Department and they are aware of the problem; they said the lights would be fixed in four weeks but that was more than four weeks ago. Steve Million said motion sensor lights have to be mounted low enough to detect motion and this makes them vulnerable to vandalism. It was noted that a cage might be need to protect the sensors.

Executive Board will meet Monday, January 12, 2014, to plan the course of upcoming council meetings. Input is welcomed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.