

Minutes: Scenic Foothills Community Council – October 6, 2016

Call to Order: President Roger Shaw. September Minutes approved as presented.

Sadly, Cathy Carte has died and we are very sorry about her passing. She was a former President of SFCC and a wonderful addition to our neighborhood. Memorial service: 10 a.m. Saturday, November 5th, at St. Patrick's.

Legislative Candidates Forum: Candidates for Alaska State House District 27 (Harry Crawford / Lance Pruitt) and Alaska State Senate District N (Vince Beltrami / Cathy Giessel) were invited to discuss their campaigns and be available for questions at 7:10 p.m. so the Senate candidates can move to the contemporaneous HALO on the Anchorage Hillside meeting after our forum.

Harry Crawford: There's hardly a face I don't know here. Lots of issues over the years – flooding in Scenic Foothills / Chugach Foothills. We've got a problem. Legislator for 10 years in the past. In 2010 I offered a constitutional amendment to take savings and turn into endowment – only spending the earnings. The majority did not want to hear Harry's bill. That \$1.5-\$1.8 billion dollars would have helped us to not be in this current situation. We really have to do something to get our fiscal house in order. We have got to go back in, redo SB21 to get a fair oil tax. Lance said they just cut DNR budget – they're the people who permit and develop oil fields and permit. Those are stupid cuts. We cannot cut people out of DNR. We want as much new development as possible. We are 7 years behind in the audits – statute of limitations is 7 years. We're the only the USA and in N. America that has natural resources tax. Iron worker – spent 10 years in the Legislature – worked on the pipeline since the 1970s. People that we need, Harvard grads, are leaving AK because of the downturn. 1986 downturn, when similar happened in Texas – they diversified, doubled down on university system, etc.

Budget today versus then. Q: How about owning what you did? You didn't solve it then, how will you solve it now? Tried pushing constitution amendment multiple times while he was in office. Harry said he passed bipartisan bills only. He had no money bills / tax bills go through. He believes if they would have listened to him back then, we wouldn't be where we are now. It wasn't for lack of trying, it was because I was in too small of a minority.

Guns on campus: bill stopped and went nowhere, but Lance would have voted for it. People are going to enter campus with guns. Many people carry – if a bad guy carries in, somebody else will be there with a gun.

Harry: no, never. I would not give guns to teenagers and young men who might lose tempers with guns. No place for guns on campus. More security and panic buttons would be better for the classrooms, not gun fights!

Q: Why do you favor approaches that leads to job losses for people? Cannot do just one thing. Must look at many different things: merging departments. Talk about efficiencies. We need to think about efficiencies.

Q: What is so bad about Affordable Care Act? All I hear is talk, talk, talk. What's so bad?

Lance: here's Alaska's challenge. It has pushed most of our insurance out of Alaska. Some of this is out of our control. We need Medical reform, not just Medicaid reform. There's a challenge in Alaska – specialists charge 400% more than in the Lower 48. Why is that the case? Are they taking advantage of Alaska? I don't like big handed government, but is this appropriate?

Harry: what's wrong with it? Congress took out the public option to make it all work. Now we have a monopoly in Alaska! We don't have other choices. Medicaid up here has so many things wrong with it! Kidney failure constituent was on dialysis at \$25,000 per month, got a new kidney so could go back to work, needed \$5K per month in anti-rejection drugs that insurance wouldn't pay – so the kidney failed so he went back on dialysis, which costs \$20,000 more per month.

Savings from travel:

Lance: no, he did not know the numbers.

Harry did not respond because the question was for Lance.

Q: Medicaid / insurance reform

Lance: I don't know enough about the system

Harry: I like to see competition. LA has really high workers comp that competed with private sector – which lowered the cost of worker’s comp insurance. It could work the same in AK with medical insurance.

Q: No questions about education and no details about that with the budget. How will you fix public education?

Lance: we’ve increased education. That’s a conversation that’s different from funding. What are we delivering? We’re very successful with what we’re delivering. We have silos. I’d like small schools to have the same or similar resources as ASD. We need to talk about the things we are delivering. Boarding schools – let’s talk about that. It’s the children’s outcomes. We need to especially focus on the kids. I don’t want to add anything. I’d like to step back and stop changing what is required by teachers – stop changing rules.

Harry: education is job #1. It should come over everything! Roads, prison, etc. Education is #1. Lower class sizes K-3, early education, especially kids that need it before K. It benefits kids all the way through. Rapid learners program: bused and pushed to be more capable. Every kid needs the best education possible.

Lance Pruitt: knows most in here. Talking about schools. Real ID. The next two years are going to be very challenging because AK hasn’t had to deal with them much before, if ever: Medicaid reform, cut millions from the budget, must cut more, prior the state was on a growth spurt. Looks forward to again to serving in Juneau for us. DNR cuts by 20% - there were other places I would have liked to have seen more cuts. Cut, got support from both sides. Government is the crux of the problem right now – the State allowed this to happen. If the operating budget wouldn’t have grown, this is the crux of the challenge. We need to cut it – to an appropriate size.

Cathy Giessel: born and raised in Fairbanks before Statehood. Husband Rich came along / DOT employee / civil engineer. Married 42 years. Same house x32 years. Kathy is a nurse practitioner, at by Begich/volunteer. Works someplace else 1x/week, too. She was here during the crash – her husband didn’t have a job, they had three little kids. Agrees we haven’t reduced the budget enough – reformed Medicaid. Reformed oil tax credits and cut in half. SB21: we’re bringing in more money now, we reformed tax credits. Diversifying our economy. Cook Inlet and brown out exercises – do you remember that? Agrium fertilizer plant in Nikiski – plant had to shut down when gas ran low. There were significant jobs when Agrium closed, now the plant is back up to production and those jobs are coming back. Project passed 52:8. Asian price market is 6-6.50 and it costs 5 dollars to get the gas to Nikiski. We’ve been exporting gas to Asia for 40 years. Plant needs upgrades, but because the prices changed world economic leaders told them to stop working on it. LNG plant: 600 acres, ground needs to be able to support this structure – the only place in AK that can support this is Nikiski. North Slope has the highest CO2 in the world, CO2 needs to be pulled out and re-injected into the ground – this is very expensive. No pipeline could be put into the ocean on the North Slope. Exporting from the NS is not viable. \$45-60 billion dollars in the North American continent and we would need to hire people in. There would be a lot of people that make a LOT of money in order to get this going – it would be extremely expensive.

Vince Beltrami: Independent. 28-year state resident. Airport Heights and South Anchorage raised children. Balances the needs of employers/families. Has run million dollar companies. He has a fiscal plan: Alaska’s Future. Cuts and efficiencies where possible, broad based revenue, some structured use of PDF earning. Must be fair to companies, but it should not be balanced on the backs of Alaskans. If we don’t come up with a plan: bond ratings, house prices, deficits! Voters are smart and thoughtful. Senate Leadership has been unwilling to listen to us. Working families, kids, grandkids, etc. We need action in Juneau and get the job done. No diversification of the economy, no increase in revenue, tax structure is problematic. Everything needs to be put on the table – net operation loss needs to come forward. A lot of the reform Giessel talks about affects the small guy. He’s pro-business. Not a fan of SB21. Oil companies have the smartest auditors and we have a constitutional mandate to get the best deal we can get for our state. I’m a good negotiator. Pipeline: I have wanted to build a gas pipeline since I worked as an electrician in Valdez – it seems like a pipe dream ... Wants to see what Keith will come up with ADGC. Our gas needs to get marketed someday – but we need to look at other alternatives. 200 days per year of open water – LNG plant on the North Slope! Maybe in 10 years ships can pull right up without needing a pipeline. More experience getting people into jobs, knows how to come to consensus, great at finding solutions. Please check my website: beltramiforalaska.com (907) 244-6852 personal cell phone.

Assemblyman Pete Petersen: reported real property taxes are going up 12%. \$15-22 million less in revenue coming in. State is giving less revenue. Passing additional bills onto us. All departments will be cut except APD. Services will all be reduced. Snow removal, permitting will have longer lines, etc. It’s just the reality that we’re in right now. First marijuana retail licensed passed. Two more are coming up. 71st & Arctic.

Vote by Mail will be delayed to 2018 because of the RFP process plus special machines that we're adding. Homeless committee: United Way from Boston, MA, showed them a plan they're working on for the last 1.5 years – housing first type of plan, but financing is different. Homelessness is a priority in Anchorage.

Assemblyman Forrest Dunbar: MOA budget \$500,000 for new park at Muldoon on park bond 2017, work for 2018. Nothing in SFCC to fix the streets, at least for the next six years. Most of the funding for East Anchorage is being consumed by the Duben Street repairs – by far the largest capital project on this side of town.

University CC: 100 unit senior center – right on the edge of Scenic Foothills near Baxter Road. Should be moving in 2018. 40 units of memory care. Capital expenses have all gone live – operating budget might go up a little bit. Private development. Horizon House was there last night..

Question/comment from Melissa Morse: Please don't cut permitting – it's all local jobs. She would recommend doubling fees, if necessary, to keep the jobs in Alaska.

Pete: PFD / GF: budget is really cut this year. More is going on the bond in the future because we're not getting money from the State.

School Reports:

Bettye Davis, Anchorage School Board: handout provided. Education = we always have challenges! New superintendent is making the rounds, pleased to have picked her and she's helping us more forward. 48,000 students in ASD. Schools are closing in the states, segregating schools, etc. We are a very diverse group in AK and do it very well! We do need a bit more time, for graduation however – 5-year graduation rate is 86%.

Jennifer Schmitz – principal at Scenic Park Elementary School. 450 students. 17 teachers. 6 specialists. Chinese teacher with Chinese immersion classroom: 50/50. First language program on the Eastside. DOD grant: apply each year. Challenges: Lots of partnerships, great community support!

Mr. Singleton at Begich Middle School – 4th year at Begich. 1,100 students. 120 staff – teachers, specialists, etc. University report = Clark and Begich two most diverse middle schools in the United States. 106 languages at the school. Begich is a community school ... farmer's market, facilities used all the time for school and community related things, open to the public. Community based health center and behavioral health center as well. This supports our families so kids don't have to get pulled out of schools. Biggest challenge: our size! He would propose another middle school on the east side but he knows funding is not there – because it would decrease our classroom size. We're a huge mixing pot and provide quality education – son goes there now, daughter will be there next year. February is Visit Our Schools month – Tuesdays.

Adam W. Mokolke, Principal at Anchorage STReAM Academy, a new charter middle school that meets at Wayland Baptist University. STReAM is an acronym for science, technology, research, engineering, arts, and math. Wayland has been a wonderful host. Mokolke grew up in rural Alaska. He used to work for our new ASD superintendent. Hasn't lived in Anchorage before – and he is in love with ASD. Awesome. So incredibly supportive and top people he has ever worked with. Incredible leaders. At ASD – can really see the big picture of education in Alaska. STEM and Art and Research = STREAM. Hands-on, interactive learning. A little off-shoot of Begich – Begich educators are still over there. They founded the school and they stay there to teach but serve on the STREAM board. 76 students – wants to be at 80. Good first year starting numbers. Leaving flyers on the table. Six teachers, one part-time. Students have been counting spawners – Dolly Varden counted last week. Next week will be out in Birchwood.

Public Comments and Neighborhood Concerns:

There is an abandoned homeless shelter at the end of Williwaw Street, but on JBER. What and who do I contact? #ANCWORKS! an online tool at [muni.org](http://www.muni.org) : <http://www.muni.org/Residents/Pages/AnchorageWorks.aspx>

Meeting adjourned.