
MONTHLY UPDATE

Current news and updates from the Anchorage Assembly

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Onsite Consumption

Two of our colleagues, Assembly Members Forrest Dunbar and Christopher Constant, would like to send the question of on-site consumption of marijuana via inhalation to the ballot for a vote of the people in April. The Assembly has spent the last month vetting the public health and safety concerns. We will hold a second public hearing at our regular Assembly meeting on Tuesday, October 8 before deliberation and vote.

Restructuring the Assembly

Forrest Dunbar, Chris Constant, and John Weddleton, have put together a ballot proposition to put on the April ballot asking the people to approve a Charter amendment restructuring the Assembly so each of the six districts have two members, so an increase from 11 to 12 on the body. Of note – although the vote may be in April of 2019, the changes would not take place until after the 2020 Census is completed and a reapportionment map approved, which will not happen until 2021.

Anchored Home Plan Receives \$40 Million Investment from Private/Non-Profit Partners

As you are likely aware, a \$40M announcement by private and non-profit funders is going to be a huge boon to funding key points in the Anchored Home Plan, which had no funding streams. To be clear, while we may provide guidance, projects funded are up to the funders. As for the city's part, the Assembly deliberated a \$444,330 contract for emergency shelter (up to 150 beds) at Bean's Café and decided to postpone taking action until October 8th.

Utility Updates

Assembly grants \$1.5 Million Loan to Stormwater Utility

The Assembly approved a \$1.5M loan to the Stormwater Utility. \$500,000 of those funds is to hire consultants to consider various parts of a potential utility, including a rate study, management and structure option, among other considerations.

The Assembly has a worksession planned to review the contract to the consultants and ensure the deliverables match the concerns we are hearing. The remainder of the loan will go towards setting up the utility if the Assembly believes – after receiving the consultant's report and public input – that the utility should move forward.

Assembly's Consultants Find Potential for \$600-\$900 Million in Port Project Savings

The Assembly received a report from our consultants, Ascent and Northern Compass Group, regarding the Port and some strategic decisions they believe the city should consider to reduce costs. Overall, our consultants are confident we will see a \$600 to \$900M reduction in the cost if we follow their recommendations.

ML&P Sale Before the Regulatory Commission

Hearings before the Regulatory Commission of Alaska regarding the sell of ML&P to Chugach Electric are going well. Our Municipal Attorney has been hard at work representing our interests in the sale. We hope to hear positive news soon.

SWS Rate Increases

SWS will be bringing forward rate increases for the Assembly to consider at our meeting on Tuesday, October 22. These rate increases are meant to help pay for work planned for the new Central Transfer Station, among other projects at SWS.

Assembly Receives Budget Books for 2020

The Assembly received our 2020 budget books on Wednesday, October 2. That began a lengthy review of the budget, with a series of worksessions through October and two public hearings (October 22 and November 5) with amendments and adoption of the budget planned for November 19. Please share any thoughts, concerns, or ideas on budget priorities you have with the Assembly. You can email all Assembly members at wwmas@muni.org.

Quick News

Building Permit Fee Increases

The Planning Department has proposed a number of increases to building permit fees for commercial and residential new construction and remodeling, with the goal of ensuring the department pays for itself. There are likely to be considerable amendments or changes to the proposed ordinance, so please reach out if you have any concerns or questions.

Municipality to Celebrate Ombudsman Day

On Tuesday, October 4, the Assembly will be honoring Ombudsman's Day, through a formal Assembly resolution. Ombudsman's Day will take place on Thursday, October 10th. As a reminder, the Ombudsman's Office is a great avenue to address issues you have with the city that you're having difficulty handling administratively. They are happy to help! The Ombudsman's Office can be reached at 343-4461.

2020 Census

For Midtown residents. who want to learn more about the 2020 Census, why they should take the Census (dollars and democracy), and learn how to become a #CensusChampion, please go to www.alaskacounts.org.

Plastic Bag Ordinance

Assembly Members Christopher Constant and Crystal Kennedy and members of the administration are working together on changes to the plastic bag ban ordinance to respond to the various concerns we have heard. Please send your thoughts to: plasticbagban@anchorageak.gov and 343-7123

Can't get enough?

The Clerk's office is a great place to go for the most up to date info on many municipal issues. Follow the Anchorage Municipal Clerk on Facebook:

facebook.com/ANCMuniClerk/