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June 2003

ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Newsletter for the Rogers Park, College Village and Anchor Park Neighborhoods

Growing Issue: Halfway Houses

At our May meeting, member Gary Zipkin presented concerns about a substance abuse recovery halfway house at Cottonwood and 36th, operated by a national organization called Oxford House (OH). Though Gary doesn't automatically oppose this, he is upset that it appeared with no notice to neighbors or hearing for a conditional use permit. Neighbors are concerned about the nature of the facility and its impact on neighborhood safety. The council passed a general resolution on the subject (see Minutes).

Since then, the local OH rep has told us that OH has also just signed a lease at 28th and Juneau. We have had reports that they were negotiating with a property owner at Drake and Dartmouth, though the negotia-

tion may not have worked out.

Here's what we have been able to learn about this from MOA Code Enforcement, OH's Web site (<http://www.oxfordhouse.org/>) and a talk that RPCC Vice President Dan Graham had with their local representative.

OH looks for locations in good neighborhoods near grocery stores and bus stops since some of their residents can't drive. There are currently five *cont. on back page*

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday, September 8, 7-8:30 pm
Rogers Park Elementary Library

Agenda—To Be Announced

*Meeting schedule: second Mondays
except in summer months.*

NEWS SHORTS

Greenbelt fire meeting

Learn more about wildfire, defensible space, home protection from AFD and State Div. of Forestry: Mon., June 23, 7:00 pm, Service High cafeteria. Info: 267-4956.

UMED report, comment period

We have the public review draft of the Univ.-Medical District master plan. Comments are due July 14 (July 1 for Planning and Zon-

ing Commission packet). Call Loren if you'd like to see the report, or our rep to the process, Bob Butera, with any questions: 276-2259.

EAST final reports

Final options and recommendations reports from the EAST transportation study are available on the study Web site (www.eastanchorage.net) and in muni libraries. Info: Carla SlatonBarker, HDR Engineering: eslatonb@hdrinc.com or 274-2000.

MAY MINUTES

Greenbelt fire risk

Anchorage Fire Dept. staff spoke about MOA's Firewise program. Greenbelt conditions are conducive to fires: We have fuel, an ignition source (campfires), and a slope for the fire to move up toward homes. AFD prefers to start with assisting residents in doing their own risk reduction, rather than thinning the greenbelt. If you see a fire in the greenbelt, please report it immediately (911). More info: 267-4902.

Bike trail spurs rehab

Dave Yanoshek of CRW Engineering, who is doing the project for MOA, reported that they did rehabilitation on Chester Creek trail and study of other trails last year. This year's project involves planning and design. Work on safety issues is a priority, but they also want to fix culvert heaving, root intrusion, and erosion. More info from Dave at 562-3252.

Cottonwood halfway house

RPCC member Gary Zipkin spoke about a halfway house-type facility at 36th and Cottonwood that opened last September without public notice, a permit, or conditional use review (see main article). This is apparently funded by State of Alaska Corrections, as a residence for recovering substance abusers. MOA Code Enforcement has reportedly sent a letter of intent to inspect. Council passed a resolution opposing the operation of facilities that have not gone through required permitting processes and other procedures.

Accessory dwelling ordinance

Assemblyman Van Etten's ordinance has been redrafted to reflect feedback on the initial version. Most RPCC members who spoke opposed the ordinance because of potential degradation of *cont. on back page*

ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

2640 Shepherdia Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99508
276-2955 / Fax -2989
marshallRPCC@earthlink.net

Loren Marshall President
Dan Graham Vice President
Diana Evans Secretary
John Christopherson Treasurer
Bob Butera Past President

<http://www.communitycouncils.org/rogers.html>

Minutes (cont.)

neighborhood quality and dilution of R-1 zoning standards, and expressed concerns about enforceability. Council passed a resolution opposing the ordinance as revised. Also passed: a resolution supporting the transfer of code enforcement functions from the Planning Department to Police.

Sign ordinance

Member Margaret Wolfe reported on meetings she attended regarding the long-awaited sign ordinance. Council passed a resolution opposing the placement of electronic signage in residential neighborhoods.

Announcements, misc.

RPCC needs someone to be our delegate to the Federation of Community

Growing (cont.)

of these houses in Anchorage; they're aiming for 30-40 total, so are looking for lots of properties to lease.

The residents come to an OH facility from the court system (instead of jail time), Akeela House (a substance abuse recovery program), and Alcoholics / Narcotics Anonymous. Many are on probation and probation officers make frequent visits to the house. Everyone is required to work; some are on electronic monitoring. There is a zero-tolerance policy on substance use: residents are expelled immediately if they relapse. An independent report about OH indicates that their residents nationwide have served an average of nine years of jail time..

Councils; contact Loren Marshall if interested. Partial funding for the sound barrier survived the legislature's capital bills and now awaits governor's signature or veto. Camping in the greenbelt: Anchorage Responsible Beverage Retailers and APD are cleaning up numerous homeless camps, including those in our area. Please do not give money to panhandlers.

We don't have a clear answer about whether a conditional use permit (CUP) and hearing are required for this type of facility. The wording for R-1 zoning suggests that it is required, but Code Enforcement says it is not for a strictly residential home with no counseling or rehab activities being conducted on-site. They do say that there would be a limit of four residents, beyond which a "rooming house" category would kick in, with different requirements.

We also do not have word back from Code Enforcement about an inspection they have promised on Cottonwood, which should lead to a more final statement of whether they believe the existing situation is legal without a CUP. We have had limited Assembly support on this issue, most of it from Janice Shamberg (S. Anch.), with not much indication that the Assembly or the Planning Dept. intends to do anything about the issue.

We are continuing to look into this, and our board will discuss it at a June 20 meeting. Please be in touch with V.P. Dan Graham, by e-mail if possible (dgraham@sbsalaska.com) or home phone if not (258-9203) if you have thoughts, ideas, or comments that you'd like included as we move forward.

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ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Federation of Community Councils
401 E. Northern Lights Blvd., #204
Anchorage, AK 99503-2814