

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 11, 2020 held at Credit Union 1

The meeting was called to order at 6:38pm by Chair Ed Leach.

Present: Ed Leach, Fred McLeary, Kendra Kloster, Renea Miller, Bob & Kathy Skaats, Dan Wright

Legislative Reports

Bill Wielechowski – The State House passed the operating budget and is now in the senate. The Senate is working on the capital budget. Mental health budget passed the house as well. Senate passed mental health budget that contained \$13 million for COVID-19 funding: \$4 million in state and \$9 million in federal funds. No instances in Alaska at this time. The state is getting prepared and Governor doing briefings. Legislature is committed to doing whatever is necessary to fund activities. Senate is closing out budget subcommittees – which evaluate departments budgets. I am chairing the Military and Veterans Affairs and Judiciary budget. Expect to pass budget in 2-3 weeks. Huge issue right now is for the PFD and stocks that are plummeting. PFD starting to be more conservative so not as much suffering with the current drops in the market. Oil prices down to \$34 dollars a barrel. It will be a tough year all around with the stock market, lower oil prices and impact to the cruise industry.

Loki Tobin with Senator Begich – Senator Begich appointed to COVID-19 preparedness committee, today was their first committee meeting. Preparing options and recommendations going forward to do if COVID-19 has a breakout in the capitol. Begich also serves on two budget subcommittees. Advocating for DEED budget is the AK reads act. SB6 and HB153 that bill has received hearings and in senate finance. A comprehensive legislation for pre-k education and reading instruction. Next public comment is this Saturday at 1pm, can also provide written testimony. SB106 is another bill he is working on – it closes a loophole that exists in homeowners and renter's insurance that would allow insurance people to close their insurance after a claim is filed. Passed the senate and making its way through the House. SB8 is another bill that Senator Begich has sponsored has a hearing this week as well. Sen. Begich and Rep. Tarr have a constituent meeting on March 21 at Mountain View Library. Working on making a determination if they keep or postpone the meeting.

Ed – comment – Enstar came over to my house to look at my meter. The earthquake the ground shifted and the Enstar line was under stress. There is now a flexible loop piece so the gas line will not break if more earthquakes happen.

Ivy Spohnholz – On COVID-19 response, getting out information regularly, as is Senator Wielechowski, it is a matter of when COVID-19 comes to Alaska so we are preparing for that. \$13 million dollars in COVID preparedness funding was passed. Because of budget cut-backs, there are numerous cuts to public health nurses and other cuts that will impact the COVID-19, which is also effecting oil prices and stock market – we are experiencing a financial crisis. Expecting a \$550 million deficit next year because of low oil prices and market drop. This is a serious situation and our budget has already been cut way back. I am worried about public safety

and public health funding. \$30 million dollar cut to education is very possible this year. Our revenues have dropped from SB21 already, if we don't see more revenue we will see more dramatic cuts. It is time that we need to have a fiscal plan and finally people are starting to want to have the conversations about revenue. Passed legislation - HB29 insurance coverage for telehealth and going to the governor for signing. Timing is good with COVID-19. HB175 – we underfunded API so this bill would put in an oversight board that is needed. HB265 would cap insulin costs to \$100. Costs have tripled over the past decade and we have people who are rationing their insulin when they need it. Drug companies are gouging Americans. Constituent coffee this Saturday at Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

Ed – briefly notes from Senator Elvi – Honored to be a part of Bettye Davis Summit. Constituent coffee was held on Benson Blvd. If you are not on her e-news send her an email.

### Assembly Report

Pete Petersen – Forrest cannot make it tonight because of a statewide conference call with Dunleavy and AK municipal league to give updates on COVID-19. Pete will send information to Ed and have Ed forward the email to everyone else. At the last Assembly meeting they spent about half of the meeting dealing with a liquor license renewal. Midtown community council had a liquor store in their community sign an MOA and gave them a list of things to do, they followed it for a couple months and then did not follow through. Midtown CC were serious about them not approving the liquor license because they did not follow through with their actions. Assembly forwarded the information, including the concerns, to AMCO.

Pete passed a resolution with a list of trails where trapping is not allowed within 50 yards of an organized and established trail. The municipality created maps so trappers can look at the maps and see where they are and will know if they are in a trapping or no trapping zone. Just short of 150 trails. So far this winter have not heard from anyone where dogs have been caught in traps. Passed the Assembly unanimously.

Assembly is working to update pawn broker regulations. The last time it was updated the Assembly added a section that stated when the pawn brokers buys items they have to take a picture and put it online within 24 hours. Often times people steal items and then sell at a pawn shop. This regulation was adopted hoping that this will allow APD to catch up with thieves.

Passed an ordinance that will allow you to build a 200 square foot porch on your house that doesn't go against your house square footage. Contractors were being contacted to put porches on, however, houses were often built up to the line so couldn't add porches.

Midtown traffic relief – the people living in midtown are not crazy about the idea. Want to spend half a billion dollars to put the highway underground by the Fred Meyer and then build frontage roads along the side. An amendment was passed to add in sound barrier fence. Biggest issue is the estimate is \$500 million, but I think it will be more, so it will use up 25% of the budget for this one project. Will continue to be discussed.

### Council Comments

Kendra – Talked with Beth Nordlund at Anchorage Park Foundation. Talked about getting door hangers and getting them out to community council members to lit drop their neighborhoods. Northeast and RJ having conversations about a joint event. Will follow up on the event and door hangers and send out information to Ed to send around to the group. Will also post information on the park bond on Facebook.

Ed Leach - Neighborworks has Paint the town coming up. Brought forms if there are people who want to get nominated. Fred had it done. Taking nominations right now. Fred – Paint the town event he was a part of before was excellent. They painted and re-built the arctic entry way.

Question – Are there salary requirements?

Ed – there are funding blocks that are in the nomination form.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:09

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kendra Kloster