

Mountain View Community Council

GREAT FAMILIES LIVE HERE

June 8, 2015

Ethan Berkowitz
Mayor-Elect, Municipality of Anchorage
632 W. 6th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mayor-Elect and Assembly members,

The Mountain View Community Council has learned that there is a possibility that Municipally-owned Solid Waste Services (SWS) may be sold. While a position on this action has not yet been discussed or taken by the Council, there are some considerations which we would like to bring to the table for discussion at the Municipal level at this time.

First, Mountain View, as one of Anchorage's first neighborhoods, has alleyways throughout most of our area. These alleyways provide primary access to many residences, and they also allow for alley-side refuse collection. It is imperative that residents be assured that alley-side refuse collection will be preserved indefinitely in the event of the sale of SWS. We ask that you make this a condition of sale, should SWS be sold. Alleyways are a priority of the council, not only for aesthetics purposes, but for sanitation and safety as well. The Council has been successful in requesting, and with the help of our delegation, securing state grant funding in the amount of \$250,000 for the paving of many of these alleyways. This work is scheduled to be performed by Municipal Street Maintenance as soon as June, 2015.

Secondly, it has come to our attention that SWS, subsequent to increasing collection fees significantly in 2014 (after years of flat fees), has found itself flush with an annual cash surplus of \$4,000,000 to \$5,000,000. Rather than reduce fees to residents, or use those funds for purposes specific to the area and residents who paid these fees, \$2,000,000 of this surplus was used in the current budget to reduce property taxes across the entire city. This is of great concern to residents in the Council. We can think of other good uses for these funds besides reducing property taxes to areas of the city where those residents do not have to pay these fees. Additionally, the utility's cash surplus fund remains over-funded at around \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000. According to the Alaska Dispatch on 5/4/2015, outgoing Mayor Dan Sullivan noted that this is about three times what it should be. There appears to be an unnecessary burden on SWS area residents.

Finally, the Council has just completed its annual week-long Spring Clean-Up, and removed hundreds of tons of dangerous and unsightly trash from our area. We were glad to see that you visited this event and met with volunteers, watching the important service that this all-volunteer event provides to our neighborhood. We feel that using a mere fraction of the surplus SWS funds for area Clean-Ups would be an appropriate use of these user-fees. There are many community council-organized events in the SWS area, with the Mountain View event being the largest. We propose using \$10,000 annually from SWS to fund these clean-ups, as it appears evident that organizations like the Mountain View Community Council will no longer receive state grant funding for this purpose beyond 2015. It is probable that this event will not be able to continue without significant alternative funding. Surplus SWS fees would be better put to use benefiting the residents of the community from which they are generated.

We've appreciated your attention to our community's concerns, and thank you for your attendance at our April Council meeting. We look forward to a close partnership with you and your administration in the years to come.

Thank you for making Mountain View a priority.

Approved by the Mountain View Community Council this 8th day of June, 2015, by a vote of eligible members present and signed in at a regular meeting. Approved by a count of ___ in favor, ___ opposed, and ___ abstain.

Daniel George, President

Diane Mead, Vice President

Melissa Houston, Treasurer

Lynelle Davis, Secretary

CC: Anchorage Assembly Members
Mayor Dan Sullivan
Solid Waste Services
Fairview, Downtown, Government Hill, South Addition, and Russian Jack Community Councils

TAKE PRIDE IN MOUNTAIN VIEW
Working Together FOR A DRUG & CRIME FREE Mountain View
Mountain View Community Council
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