

Sand Lake Community Council Minutes

March 6th, 2017 -6:30PM

Welcome: SLCC President Nikki Rose called the meeting to order at 6:41.

- Nikki introduced Anchorage School Board Candidate James Smallwood and West Anchorage Assembly Candidate David Nees.
- ***A motion to approve the agenda was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.
- ***A motion to approve the minutes from the February meeting was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.
- Nikki Rose led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance
- Nikki Rose introduced the new Executive Board

Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Nikki Rose attended the FCC as the representative from Sand Lake Community Council. The appointed representative will attend subsequent meetings. The group discussed the West Anchorage Candidate Forum and encourages everyone to participate. Nikki Rose will be moderating this event and asks for help setting up and cleaning up at the event. Other topics of discussion included marijuana discounts for active duty military and upcoming bonds to be included on the April ballot.

Local Municipal Assembly and Anchorage School Board Report – Assemblyman Eric Croft, Assemblyman Tim Steele

Eric Croft:

- The assembly spoke at length on the issue of marijuana discounts for veterans. The proposal would ban discounts in order to protect the privacy of an active duty military member. The main debate was whether the bill was condescending or protective. Assemblyman Evans served in the military and opposed the proposal because he believes that military personnel can make their own choices.
- Another topic of discussion was the rewrite of ethics codes and preventing duplication. The proposal includes a ban on engaging with previous work for one year if you are returning to municipal service. Eric will propose a one year ban on being a lobbyist for assembly members and mayors leaving office.
- The assembly discussed the expansion of taxi permits. The implementing law would make it legal for Uber and other ride sharing programs to operate. Uber is allowed by state law but it hasn't been able to meet requirements. Part of the issue is required background checks and fingerprinting and Uber disagrees with requiring the latter. Taxi drivers want a level playing field.

- The assembly discussed requirements for record keeping on sales of gold and precious metals. There was originally a 30-day hold requirement. All items will be recorded and unique items will be photographed.

Tim Steele:

- The assembly also discussed taking over from the state to provide police services from south of Indian to Portage, including Girdwood. The boundary will be on the April ballot. The state troopers will stop patrolling the area as of May 1.
- The assembly is proposing an expansion of Girdwood's boundary to allow for more effective management.
- Several AWWU bonds are being refinanced. Some of these are for the water service and some for the wastewater service. These are bonds that were sold a while ago that are currently at 5% interest and we think that we can save about three percentage points by refinancing.
- The assembly is in negotiations with Eklutna over natural gas. To settle, Eklutna wants to do some subdivisions in Eagle River. We will put in the infrastructure for wastewater before we start building.

Sand Lake School Elementary – Park Update

Sand Lake Elementary School students and teacher Jenna Piacenti presented updates on their Sand Lake Makeover Project and the Outdoor Learning Lab. Last year the 6th grade class officially adopted the park from the municipality. The students made maps, repaired docks and signs, and evaluated the quality and characteristics of the park. Recently students have been working with landscape design professions to develop potential plans for the Outdoor Learning Lab. Site elements are to include perimeter designations, seating, lights, a path etc. Concept map design has been the theme and it is to be partially based on Japanese culture and water. Students created 10 designs that were voted on to narrow the field to three. The school previously received a \$2000 grant from Anchorage Park Foundation and is not seeking a Challenge Grant from that organization.

The school is seeking volunteers, monetary donations as match, and material donations from the public, as well as a letter of support from the Sand Lake Community Council. The municipality of Anchorage has already voiced their support for the project. More information is available on a student created website <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/sand-lake-park-makeover-project-sand-lake-elementary/>.

Suggestions from SLCC:

- Create a fund for people to donate to.
- Selling pathway stones with Japanese patterns as a fundraising tool
- UAA has a construction and management club that might want to participate.

***A motion was made for a resolution to support the efforts of Sand Lake Elementary School's Sand Lake Makeover Project. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Alaska State Legislative Report – Senator Mia Costello, Representative Matt Claman, Representative Jason Grenn

Senator Mia Costello – Not Present

Representative Matt Claman

- The budget is currently the legislature's top priority. There are over 300 amendments and everyone is working incredibly hard. He chairs the Judiciary Committee so is not involved on the day to day basis.
- A bill was passed that bring Alaska into compliance with the Violence Against Women Act. It makes sure they aren't at risk due to prior domestic violence.
- A bill was passed to legalize the taking of selfies in ballot boxes.
- Thanks to everyone that attended the West Anchorage caucus meeting.
- Budget reserves were spent in large part over the past three years due to deficit. The reserves are low because of they were used to cover the cost of government. The legislature has cut the cost of government over 30% but we are now hearing that it is starting to have impacts. The biggest complaint seems to be limited snow plowing in Anchorage.
- The prosecutor's office has cut over 20 positions and this impact neighborhoods and public safety. There have been no cuts to the victim's rights program and he supports prioritization of prosecutors and police. There are a number of nonprofits like Victims for Justice that can be learned from. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is another that provides volunteer services on a lean and efficient operation.
- He will check with his staff about creating a list of government cuts that have been made over past several years. Over a billion dollars was cut in undesignated general funds. One example offered from the judiciary is that the court system is now closed and Fridays and reduced staff for each function.
- Education is the best investment and is mandated in the state constitution. It is a constitutional duty and is not optional. Still, there are things that can be cut for efficiency. How many mid-level superintends are needed?
- The governor introduced a motor fuel tax that would raise 40 million this year and increase for two years. Other proposals have included an income tax and an alternative school tax.
- There has been a downward trend in borrowing for higher education through the State of Alaska. There may be opportunity lost with such a high interest rate. This issue has not been prioritized by the legislature and there are no bills at this time.

Representative Jason Grenn

- It is important to look for efficiencies in education. Superintendents may not be the

problem. The example of an island with four districts, one superintendent might serve all four. Efficiencies are already happening and we are looking at all of this under a microscope. The past three years have seen three billion in cuts and some departments have been cut to the bone. Everyday people are starting to feel it. It is tough after three billion in cuts to find big cuts.

- Thanks to everyone that attended the caucus meeting and town halls.
- He is on the finance committee and this week they are starting amendments on the budget. The House reduced the governor's proposed budget and the committee will be finding additional cuts. It is what needs to happen before we can talk about revenue. More cuts will be happening.
- We put together a bill that should be an economic driver for municipalities. It will allow them to increase development in urban areas. Excited for that to happen at no cost to the state.
- There are great bonds on the ballot next month including one to drainage modification in the Sand Lake district.
- We are still working on the idea of a farmer's market for Jewel Lake. A team will be working on it and we are still looking for volunteers.
- Anyone interested in the capital newsletter should email JasonGrenn@gmail.com. He will be meeting local constituents over coffee at Kaladi's on Jewel Lake on March 18 and 19 from 11AM-12:30PM.
- Don't forget that the PFD deadline is March 31st.
- There is public testimony this week for what to do with oil tax structures on HB 111.
- The house resource committee is hearing testimony from the public in the evenings from 6:30-8:00PM. People have a chance to testify in the evenings and on Saturday too. They can also email at any time. He reads each and every public testimony email he receives. Sometimes committee schedules don't work out well for the public but they try.
- Regarding HB 115, he wants to see capital gains changes. He supports the ideas and concepts but believes that long term fiscal planning first involves cuts and the stable ground. A broad based tax is needed. Right now revenue is only covering 25% or less of expenses. He doesn't want to use all of the savings. Alaskans need to be a part of the solution.
- Right now 96% of the budget is constitutionally or statutorily mandated. We have to start looking at those and we are in the process of doing that. Indirect expenditures of the DMV might be an example.
- He doesn't think that he should be taking per diem in the legislature. The per diem rate went up because the federal rate went up this week. He won't be accepting the increase. In the mid-90s the legislature got the federal rate instead of the state rate and it hasn't changed. There is a movement to change that as a reflection of our budget. Keep asking legislators about this. There is a cost to operating in Juneau but it should be more reflective of what state workers make. Moving expenses are separate from per diem.

Airport Update – Teri Lindseth

- There is nothing really new this month. There is a handout here that you can look at. The 2017 construction projects are listed there but nothing should be too impactful, just some taxiway reconstruction. In the terminal there is some construction to replace the

escalators.

- The airport job fair is April 8th and parking is free at the north terminal.
- For Lake Hood regulations there was a November public meeting on slips and tie downs. There is a technical advisory committee being formed to tell airport staff of potential changes.
- The smell of jet fuel is often caused by temperature inversion and weather. This usually occurs more in the winter than it does in the summer.
- The early morning hours are always busy at the airport and many flights leave at that time. The past week we have had to change flight patterns due to winds.

Anchorage Tomorrow – Erik

- This group's mission is to educate voters and promote municipal bonds. They are pulling in the same direction as the municipality but are a separate organization. Anchorage Tomorrow encourages a yes vote on the following propositions:
 - Prop 2 – Areawide Public Safety and Transit Bond Projects
 - Prop 3 – Parks and Trails Bond Projects
 - Prop 4 – 2017 ARDSA Road and Drainage Bond Projects
 - Prop 5 – 2017 Fire Department Bond Projects
 - Prop 6 – 2017 Police Department Bond Projects
- This year the municipality is paying back 35 million dollars and the new bonds amount to 46 million. This would be a \$12 increase per year per person. These are all projects that start at the community council level.
- Every project has to be looked at to see if it is good or bad. Infrastructure has to be maintained. Often the cost of a bond is offset with an increase in property value. It's not a zero sum gain and not a closed system but we promote continued growth and this is one way to do that.

Americans for Prosperity - Jeremy Price

- This organization is dedicated to limiting government and we are currently working on spending caps. There was a cap put in place in 1982 but you would have to spend like crazy to get to that limit.
- When revenue comes down the pipe, what keeps legislature from spending beyond the rate of inflation? The senate has a statutory spending cap in their bill. We support the concept but we want amendments to the state constitution that base the cap on prior year expenditures and the rate of inflation. If in place they are effective at controlling the growth of government. State spending cap is flawed currently.
- When the government takes more than it can spend with the cap it has to return the money to the taxpayers under our plan. Tax credits count as spending.
- The organization is affiliated with the Koch Brothers.
- At the city level there is a ballot initiative and the spending cap has been suspended for two years. The initiative would revive the cap but a court determined it restricted assembly's ability to allocate funds. It will probably be suspended indefinitely.

Community Neighborhood Crime Watch – Hans Rodvick

- There is a handout on how to report crime to APD. The application NextDoor can be a tool for discussing and following criminal activity. There are efforts to stay a neighborhood watch in the area and this seems to be a great way to get citizens involved. Lots of crime seems to be happening in the area and APD has a non-emergency line that is listed in the handout.
- The Neighborhood Watch includes keeping an eye on all houses that you can see in line of sight from your own. You should know and remember everyone's names in the area.

SLCC Member Response

- Concern expressed by one member regarding parameters for a watch program. Needs something to limit vigilantism and racial profiling.

Westpark Pond Update

- Nikki Rose had a meeting with Senator Costello.
- Three options were presented by the Mayor's office staff. The first option is the most expensive and includes installing a pipe that connects to the main outflow at West Dimond. The initial estimate is 1.4 million. The second option is to build a channel adjacent to the pond that would funnel into a new basin in the southeast corner. The estimated cost is 1.1 million dollars. The emergency overflow could still be capped with first two options. The third option would cost about \$300,000 and includes having a third party come in to look at all possible options. This would include public involvement and a comment period.
 - The option with the greatest capacity is the basin. The pipe is constricted by size of the pipe under Dimond and this would not be upgraded.
 - A gravel filter option was considered but it was very expensive.
- The municipality believes that the current system is adequate but they are working on options because residents appear to disagree. There is no evidence of contamination.
- If a school were to be built in that area, they would be responsible for a drainage plan to handle what they produce.
- In the spring we will continue to work with developer to make sure overflow functions as it is designed to. We will make sure that overflow works as intended. You are also talking about design criteria manual (DCM) changes over time. Today the pipe would be larger if built today.

SLCC Member Response

- This doesn't seem like it should be a problem of the municipality but rather with the developer.
- Answers are usually given after the fact. We knew nothing about the big man hole last summer until it was happening. The contractor broke the law to start all of this by digging the hole. He kept digging and selling the gravel in 1976. Nothing was done from then to now to protect the people there with the wells.
- If the municipality is saying there is no problem, wouldn't it be better to have the developer monitor the situation? They should do what is necessary to

protect public health and should thus be paying for water testing.

- The proper solution would have been to put all storm water under Dimond and into Turnagain Arm. That was promised to community members. We are concerned about drinking water and urban runoff.

***Motion by Hans Rodvick to postpone discussion and form committee within the council to analyze all three options. Motion seconded. The motion passes with 20 in support, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention. The opposition voter indicated a lack of support for sending to committee rather than keeping with the council at large.

*** Motion to adjourn made and approved by unanimous consent at 8:55PM.