

Minutes of the Government Hill Community Council Meeting
February 20, 2003
Government Hill Elementary School Library
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

1. Introductions
2. Approval of January Minutes with the following correction, the Abbotts were originally proposed as co-presidents, but could not and instead offered to serve as members at large.
3. Legislative Report. Robin Phillips was on the line from Rep. Dahlstrom's office, and had a note from Sen. Dyson, who was not able to make it, but offered to take phone call questions. Johnny Ellis stated that they had a slow start, as most were waiting for the Governor to make his wishes known. The Operating budget was originally scheduled for Dec 15, now estimated sometime in March.
Rep. Gara asked for our position on HB 97, which would extend railroad lease to Mark Marlow from 55 years to 70 years for the property near the Hollywood Vista Site. This issue came up last spring when Anchorage Neighborhood Housing, another applicant who wanted to lease the site, withdrew at the last minute, due to not being able to get HUD money due to the also last-minute change in HUD Policy. Suzanne DiPietro responded to Les Gara that we procedurally are not able to have a GHCC position on the Bill, because it was not on the agenda. The GHCC did vote last spring opposing the sole source application for the lease. The issue will be on next month's agenda, and Mr. Marlow has been invited to come. If it comes up for a vote before that time, we will try to address it with the Executive Committee. Residents expressed their disappointment that Mr. Marlow had stated last spring that the lack of HUD funding was not a barrier to his leasing the property, but has now revised that position and asked for a lease extension.
Other residents expressed their concern about why legislation that only benefits a single person is being pushed through the legislature?
Alan Tesche offered to act as go-between GHCC & Marlow. He has always respected the GHCC for being responsible advocates for community planning, and pushing for communications with potential adversaries, or potential threats.
Wendy Lindskoog, spokesperson for the Railroad affirmed that Marlow has been given a 55-year lease, but the ARR has not taken a position on the Bill. They would need approval from the Board of Directors for this kind of change in lease terms, and BOD has not been briefed. Their next BOD meeting is March 10, but it is not presently on the agenda.
Stuart Hall, recognized that Mr. Marlow has built most of the senior housing in Anchorage, but was concerned that we still don't have a neighborhood plan. He also wants the ARR to be subject to municipal planning & zoning laws.
Bill Bobrick, relating a conversation with Mr. Marlow. Mr. Marlow felt that he was attacked personally, and feels that he has been trained to not come to GHCC meetings. Mark Marlow has put over \$4 million into McKay Bldg, but has not gotten any tax breaks or any other help from the Municipality. He feels that the reputation of the McKay Bldg has overshadowed his contributions to the state, as he has been the largest provider of senior housing in state.
Thomas Pease felt that GHCC treated Mr. Marlow fairly when this issue came up last spring.
Les Gara General concerns. No budget yet, the discussions are yet to come. He is on the education subcommittee and was concerned about proposals to flat line education funding or leave it behind last year's level. Would like to keep it at 1998 levels accounting for inflation. Regarding moving the habitat division from Fish & Game to the Department of Natural Resources, he would prefer to keep in F&G.
Les also discussed how the Federal Government had evaluated DFYS and said that \$15 Million was needed for more staffers, but stated that the proposed budget will apparently not include any of the federal recommendations that will cost any money.
Alan Tesche, Their biggest issues coming up are the \$250 Million in school bonds, \$42 Millions in renovations throughout city, including \$42 Million for a new ASD headquarters bldg. There are also \$38 Million in road bonds, and Parks bond did not pass last year, so they are more important this year. There is also a new Ballot proposal that would dissolve the present Assembly, and set a new 11 single member districts, and 3 year terms. New redistricting board, similar to redistricting apportionment districts, w/ tiebreaker. Another Ballot Proposition would eliminate run-off elections for School Board, Assembly, and the Mayor's office. This one would be retroactive to April 1 election. There also is an advisory vote for cities & Municipalities to allow reduction of voting age from 18 to 16.

With corrections from March 20, 2003 meeting

4. John McPhearson from the Alaska Railroad presented a preliminary Ship Creek Inter-modal Transportation Plan. The ARR is...

Transportation Plan. The ARRC is developing plans for a Transportation Center and associated improvements (pedestrian amenities, transit infrastructure, parking, track modifications, etc.) in the Ship Creek area. The purpose is to facilitate connections from one transportation mode to another, including rail, public transit, air, marine, bus, taxi, private vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian and to improve links to Anchorage's downtown business district to meet passenger transit needs over the next 30 years. The existing Depot has capacity for 300 or so, forecast of 1200 people in a peak hour in 20 years, including commuter rail, and airport shuttles. Depot is not big enough now to handle traffic, parking, etc. They began 4 years ago working on the initial planning document as part of the Ship Creek Multi-modal Plan. The scope of work was developed last October to assess the availability of federal money, and what would be needed for an Environmental Impact Statement. They plan to keep the existing Depot and have the new terminal pay tribute to its Art Deco architecture, which has made it a National Historic site. Cost is estimated at about 11 Million with Railroad paying 20%, the remainder in federal matching funds. They are now working on the EIS, and will keep GHCC informed about it.

2 main schemes, proposed alternative, new terminal/baggage, transfer center on N side of tracks. Terminal waiting area over the top of the tracks with escalators down to tracks. Would allow 4 sides of platforms. Parking garage accessed from 2nd Ave., being terraced into hill, with parking under a park over the top. The parking structure would be part waiting area, as well as the connection to downtown. 2nd alternative, same parking structure, new terminal bldg in location of existing metal baggage building to the east of the exist Depot.

Alan Tescha asked if the parking garage with 650 spaces would be used exclusively by the railroad? Or if it would be available other downtown users? ARR would have first priority in summer, but others could use it in the winter.

5. South Coastal Trail Resolution. A resolution supporting the south extension of the coastal trail was thoroughly discussed. 8 persons from outside GHCC wanted to testify and tried to coordinate their comments to not repeat. After discussing if we should be addressing this at all, we went ahead using 1-minute limit for everyone. Comments ranged from: "Not feeling like this is an issue for our Community Council"; "All of the AMATS money for trails will go to this trail for the next 6 years"; "This is a regional trail that will connect us to south Anchorage"; "All 3 community councils in south Anchorage have opposed the trail on the bluff and are in favor of an inland trail to connect schools, fields, etc."; "The Fish & Game are on record as opposing the "Orange" route"; "The affect on the wildlife, especially the voles was ignored"; "EIS does not have enough information for a person to make a judgment"; "Lives 1/2 block from existing north Coastal Trail, and originally opposed it, but are now strongly in favor of the Coastal Trail, and a mostly coastal south extension"; "Hydrology hasn't been studied, and the trail may cause the bluff to be unstable"; "Not comfortable about voting about something that takes neighbors property for my recreation"; "Hunting is already allowed along the entire coastal trail and the wildlife refuge, impact of the trail is minimal compared to hunting pressures on the wildlife"; "this is not an enhancement of wildlife experience"; "So-called maintenance costs have been artificially inflated by opponents to include repaving, when actual routine maintenance is the same as other trails at \$1500/mile/year and only includes cleaning and repainting signs, etc." Eventually a motion was made and passed to take no action at this time to either support or oppose the EIS about the proposed routes of the south Coastal Trail Extension.
6. The Nominating Committee reported that they had no volunteers for the office of president. The bylaws require the existing officers to remain until a replacement is found, or we can choose to dissolve the community council and go into abeyance. There were discussions about having a joint meeting of the Nominating Committee and the executive officers to try to decide what to do. The issue was postponed until the March Meeting.
7. Community Forum. There was a proposal to put signs on street corners, to get more people to the meetings. During the fireworks, some traffic issues came up, no parking on signs on Harvard and Delaney were totally ignored, and we need to ask the police department to come up and police the event, which they would have done if Mayor Wuerch had not stopped the Community Policing program. The event also essentially blocked access to GH for several hours.
Next month's agenda includes: What stage is the ARR at in their Gravel Extraction? Discussions of the Bond issues, Anchorage Now, and a report from the committee that meets with the Railroad.
8. Adjourned ~9 p.m.