

UACC MINUTES

October 2, 2024

1. **Opening**

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Callaghan. Steve chaired the meeting, and Al Milspaugh presented the UACC Zoom Guidelines, covering member and guest identification protocols, voting rights, and online meeting etiquette for virtual and hybrid attendees. Members were reminded of the meeting's public nature and the use of closed captioning to ensure accessibility.

2. **Approval of Prior Month Minutes**

None to approve.

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Steve Callaghan opened the floor for any changes or additions to the agenda. Al motioned to approve the agenda as presented, with a second from Russel Kell. With no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. **Informational Reports**

1. **Kim Mahoney, UAA Updates**

- **Enrollment and Scholarships:** Kim Mahoney, Associate Vice Chancellor, provided updates on university enrollment, reporting a 6% increase compared to last year, attributed in part to the LAS former scholarship changes. This scholarship generated \$3 million in funds this fall, up from \$2 million the previous fall.
- **Art Gallery:** The UAA Art Gallery, located between the Consortium Library and Kaladi Brothers Coffee, currently features Susan Share's exhibit, *Breathing Both Sides*, available through November 1.
- **Small Business Development Initiative:** The UAA Small Business Development Center, in collaboration with the US Treasury, announced an \$83 million initiative supporting small business loans for 125 tribes statewide. This funding complements an existing state-focused program (SSBCI), which previously brought \$59 million in federal funds to Alaska, assisting over 100 businesses with loans, including 76 led by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

2. **Representative Andrew Gray**

- **Betty Davis East Anchorage High School:** Andrew Gray shared that the high school pool would reopen on October 7, with free open swim sessions available throughout October from 5 to 7 PM on weekdays. Addi-

37 tional activities, including lap swims, are anticipated in November as
38 staffing allows.

- 39 ▪ **Community Safety:** Gray addressed the recent APD officer-involved
40 shooting, encouraging community members to review the body cam
41 footage available on the APD website.
- 42 ▪ **Podcast:** Gray continues his healthcare-focused podcast, *East Book*
43 *Club*, with recent interviews with prominent healthcare leaders, including
44 Dr. Anne Zink, Lawrence Weiss, and Dr. Bill Sage. He encouraged coun-
45 cil members to tune in for the upcoming episode featuring Lisa Aquino
46 from Anchorage Neighborhood Health.

47 **3. Dave Donley, School Board Representative**

- 48 ▪ **School Closures and Budget Deficit:** Donley discussed the district's fi-
49 nancial challenges, including an \$80 million deficit and ongoing school
50 closures. The board's main focus has been on creating a rubric to deter-
51 mine which schools may close to achieve a 90% occupancy rate. He also
52 noted the board's adoption of new, more attainable proficiency goals for
53 reading (46%) and math (42%) by 2028, a significant decrease from the
54 previous goals. He also highlighted the board's passage of the patriotic
55 activities policy.
- 56 ▪ **Operational Constraints:** Due to staffing and funding shortages, the dis-
57 trict has experienced difficulties with facility maintenance and snow re-
58 moval. Donnley mentioned that only one of five district-owned dump
59 trucks was operational last winter. Upgrades to the fleet are planned, but
60 the funding remains a constraint.
- 61 ▪ **School Property Reuse and Community Needs:** Council members dis-
62 cussed potential reuses of recently closed school buildings, such as con-
63 verting them into childcare facilities or charter schools, as per the state's
64 mandate. Additional community suggestions included using these spaces
65 for arts programs or neighborhood resource centers, addressing multiple
66 community needs.

67 **4. Assembly Member Karen Bronga**

- 68 ▪ **Homelessness and Winter Shelter Plan:** The council heard of the Ad-
69 ministration's winter shelter plan, which includes securing non-congre-
70 gate hotel rooms for 500 individuals to ensure safe housing during colder
71 months. Assembly Member [Karen Bronga] expressed concerns regard-
72 ing contractor accountability and previous ethical issues, emphasizing the
73 need for stringent oversight. A new APD HOPE team has been stood up

74 to The assembly will work to ensure transparency and ethical practices
75 within the winter shelter system.

- 76 ▪ **Pedestrian Safety Initiative:** Karen is working with Assembly Member
77 Zaletel on a resolution to address rising pedestrian fatalities, focusing on
78 increasing street lighting, reducing speed limits, and launching an educa-
79 tion campaign. Improved lighting on key roads has already shown posi-
80 tive results.

81 5. Assembly Member Felix Rivera

- 82 ▪ **Next Step Housing Program:** Assembly Member Rivera discussed the
83 potential expansion of the Next Step Housing Program, which aims to
84 house unsheltered individuals and provide support services. So far, the
85 program has successfully housed 195 individuals, and the assembly is
86 considering funding a Phase 3 to continue this progress.
- 87 ▪ **School Property Reuse and Community Needs:** Council members dis-
88 cussed potential reuses of recently closed school buildings, such as con-
89 verting them into childcare facilities or charter schools, as per the state’s
90 mandate. Additional community suggestions included using these spaces
91 for arts programs or neighborhood resource centers, addressing multiple
92 community needs.

93 6. Senator Forrest Dunbar’s Office (with Forrest and Arielle Wiggin)

- 94 ▪ **Legislative Updates:** Senator updated the group on notable bills that be-
95 came law: SB 103 – Confidentiality for Peer Counseling Sessions for
96 First Responders, SB 159 – Veterans Poppy Day, HB 228 – Task Force
97 for Psychedelic Medicine, HB 148 – Increase in Performance Loss for
98 University of Alaska Students, HB 344 – Broad-Based Categorical Eligi-
99 bility for Food Stamps
- 100 ▪ **Foster Care and Homelessness Support:** A question was raised about
101 finding relatives for foster children, especially among Alaska's homeless
102 population. The example of Washington State’s efforts to trace family
103 members up to the third cousin was discussed. This idea could potentially
104 be applied in Alaska to help find familial support for children in foster
105 care or experiencing homelessness.
- 106 ▪ **Children’s Services:** There’s a push in Alaska to revisit the eligibility
107 thresholds for children needing early intervention services. The state cur-
108 rently requires a 50% developmental delay for children under 3 years old
109 to qualify for federal services through IDEA (Individuals with Disabili-
110 ties Education Act). However, this is higher than in other states, where
111 the threshold is often 25% or 33%. The concern is that Alaska’s high

112 threshold may be delaying services for children who could benefit from
113 early interventions, leading to long-term developmental challenges.

- 114 ▪ **Diaper Bank in Mountain:** View There was mention of a free diaper
115 bank available in Mountain View for families in need. This service is
116 available for anyone, with no restrictions, and provides free diapers to
117 help families struggling with the high cost of raising young children. The
118 diaper bank is open from noon to 4 PM.
- 119 ▪ There were also a couple of technical legislative discussions about food
120 stamp eligibility and the Federal Government's role in food assistance
121 programs, but the key takeaway is that the state has relaxed the asset test,
122 making it easier for people to qualify for food stamps without their sav-
123 ings or vehicle being a disqualifying factor.

124 5. New Business

125 1. Project Anchorage Overview (Jenna Wright)

- 126 ▪ Goal: Implement a 3% sales tax in Anchorage with two main objectives: Two-
127 thirds (66%) for property tax relief. One-third (33%) for capital improvement
128 projects to enhance the city's quality of life and attract investment. The sales tax
129 would replace existing property tax collections, maintaining the same total
130 amount under the current municipal tax cap. An average household in Anchorage
131 could expect about \$100 in savings on their monthly mortgage payment, repre-
132 senting roughly 20% property tax relief. The one-third of the tax revenue dedi-
133 cated to capital improvements will fund specific projects voted on by the public.
134 Projects would be aimed at making Anchorage a more attractive place to live,
135 work, and invest, improving the overall community and economy. The initiative
136 is modeled after Oklahoma City's successful 1% sales tax, introduced in 1993.
137 Over 30 years, it has helped Oklahoma City attract billions in private investment
138 and seen population growth of over 40%.
- 139 ▪ Public Call for Projects: From June to September 2023, over 300 proposals were
140 submitted from the Anchorage, Eagle River, and Girdwood areas. The organizing
141 team is now reviewing these projects to prioritize the most popular and cost-ef-
142 fective ones, which will later be presented to the Anchorage Assembly. The final
143 project list will be passed to the Anchorage Assembly for further review and con-
144 sideration. The aim is to present the initiative as a ballot measure in April 2025.
- 145 ▪ Tax Structure: The sales tax will primarily target consumer goods but will ex-
146 empt essential items such as food, medical services, childcare products, gasoline,
147 and financial transactions, to reduce the burden on lower-income households.
- 148 ▪ Questions: During the meeting, participants asked questions about the sunset
149 provision, exemptions, and whether alcohol and marijuana would be taxed. Jen-

150 na clarified that the tax would apply to these items despite existing taxes on
151 them. The proposal will have a 7-year sunset provision.

152 **2. Anchor Gardens Overview (Larissa Wright-Elson)**

153 ▪ Anchor Gardens is a community-based organization that started during the pan-
154 demic. It aims to help Anchorage residents grow their own food through neigh-
155 borhood-based gardening support. The organization provides resources, educa-
156 tion, and hands-on gardening assistance, especially in areas where people may
157 not be familiar with Alaska's unique climate and growing conditions. Anchor
158 Gardens operates with local neighborhood coaches who assist people in their
159 communities. The organization is looking to expand its network of coaches, par-
160 ticularly in neighborhoods that lack them.

161 ▪ Community Engagement & Garden Projects: Anchor Gardens has been involved
162 in building community gardens around the city, including the Ice Street Garden
163 (next to City Market in downtown Anchorage) and Fairview Community Garden
164 (recently built with the help of a grant, this garden features shared plots for lo-
165 cals). The organization partners with Solid Waste Services and other local gar-
166 dening groups to help repurpose materials and offer educational resources.

167 ▪ Collaborations & Future Plans: Anchor Gardens collaborates with Neighbor-
168 Works Alaska and is actively seeking grants to fund new garden projects. Larissa
169 mentioned a new garden initiative in the Muldon area and plans to expand the
170 Fairview Garden by adding new garden beds and paths. She will be presenting at
171 City Nerd Night on October 17, where she will discuss creating Lasagna garden
172 beds using waste products. The organization maintains a Facebook page and
173 group for public engagement and community sharing.

174 **3. Veteran's Group to Speak about Ballot Measure 2 (no presenter)**

175 **4. Goose Lake Improvements/Discussion (UACC members)**

176 ▪ Plan is to knock down existing building and do something? UACC members dis-
177 cussed the improvements to skating infrastructure, gear rentals, pavilion, basket-
178 ball courts, x-c skiing grooming, skate park development, potential pickleball fa-
179 cilities, playground improvements, etc.

180 ▪ UACC members expressed interest in creating a working group in conjunction
181 with the Parks Department to act as a conduit between UACC to develop com-
182 munity input on long term vision for the park. Members will discuss and form a
183 committee between now and January.

184 **6. UACC Committee Reports**

185 **1. President’s Report (Steve Callaghan):** Reported 42nd Avenue improvements and tree
186 work and some members shared thoughts about the work. Progress will stop for the win-
187 ter and resume next spring.

188 **2. Planning & Zoning Committee (Mark Fink):** Gave updates about the Girdwood com-
189 prehensive land use plan and proposal to allow mixed development on some lots adja-
190 cent to the Alyeska Highway. Will require code changes to implement. Discussion here
191 about the intricacies and vagaries of the Planning and Zoning process.

192 **3. Public Safety Committee (Al Milspaugh):** Reminded members to watch for pedestri-
193 ans. Also discussed pedestrian safety and walking against traffic but not in the roadway.

194 **7. Public Comments - Open Dialogue**

195 **1. Tudor Road Safety**
196 Discussion of lowering the speed limit on Tudor Road and whether UACC would be in
197 support.

198 **2. 42nd Ave. Project**
199 Barbara discussed ongoing issues and displeasure with construction and tree removal
200 and traffic patterns.

201 **8. Adjournment**
202 Motion to adjourn made by Mark Fink, seconded by Al Milspaugh. The meeting was adjourned
203 at 8:53 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6, 2024, in a hybrid for-
204 mat.

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209 Ian Blake, UACC Secretary

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211 Atchs: 1

212 1. Attendance Roster

213 **Attachment 1 Attendance Roster**

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Attendance Roster	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Steve Callaghan	Member, President, in-person
Al Milspaugh	Member, Vice-President, online
Remington	Guest, online, Staff for Rep. Gray
Mark Fink	Member, in-person
Adam Lees	Member, online
Ariel Wiggins	Guest, online, Staff for Senator Dunbar
Assembly Member Felix Rivera	Guest, Presenter, in-person
Assembly Member Karen Bronga	Guest, Presenter, in-person
Barbara Gardner	Member, in-person
Russ Keil	Member, in-person
Paul Stang	Member, online
Marguerite Iverson	Member, online
Rep. Andrew Gray	Guest, presenter, in-person
Sen. Forrest Dunbar	Guest, presenter, in-person
Kim Mahoney	Member, presenter, in-person
Karen Workman	Member, in-person
Larissa Wright-Elson	Guest, Presenter, in-person
Kyle Ivacic	Guest, UAA student, in-person
Iqlas Dubed	Guest, UAA student, in-person

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