

PORTAGE VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES 3/22/10

PRESENT:

**Daniel Gutierrez
Jon Evenson
Jenny Szepanski
Steve Mendive
Julie Evenson
John Bridges
JT Malone
Larry Albert, Attorney for JT Malone
Thede Tobish MOA
Chris Birch Assembly
Rick Ellis
Kenny Barber
Lynn Keogh
Rick Sinnott, St of Ak, Fish and Game
Kate Walker, USFS
Damon Blackburn
Joanne Blackburn**

Steve Mendive reviewed with attendees his service as President of Portage Valley Community Council (PVCC) for four years noting Mike Millers's prior service. Attendees mentioned concern regarding lack of knowledge of meetings going on. Concern that community council activities were put in the paper and some did not know meetings were going on and there were questions about homeownership and residency versus business interests and leadership from those living elsewhere. Steve Mendive mentioned that the business interests have one vote as does anyone else. Joanne Blackburn stated she and Damon considered the meetings urgent since the properties are being rezoned with negative economic implications for homeowners and noted that home owners in the PVCC area have to aggressively interact with all the agencies.

Discussion of Zoning.

Steve Mindive officially opened the meeting agenda items and opened an open comment period. Steve Mendive explained that two meetings had been held at the location, 1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 for the use of copiers, free, public availability noting the business locations are business schedule dependent or Girdwood area. Free space, non-profit, centralized, website, support for website. We would be happy to change venue and have more people in attendance. Late rezoning change in December 2009 resulted in action being taken without any

concerns of the Portage landowners considered. The rezoning was changing everything to R11. The question then came up: “We’ve been rezoned and we don’t know about it”? This was affirmed. That’s why the priority. The contact information has not been complete or current, therefore Steve Mindive said: “I’ll be the first one to welcome you all here and we’d like to energize and touch all the issues”.

Discussion of small maps brought by MOA. The small lots of Portage ownership is being sought about. Minutes of the 2/22/2010 PVCC meeting were copied and passed out for review.

Chris Birch spoke of two issues access across the ARRC and individual who applied for a land use permit and his property was PLI which was not a residential zoning and therefore was a non-conforming use so no financial institution would lend on the non-conforming use.

Thede Tobish, Sr. Planner presented the current rezone. Turnagain Arm Comprehensive Plan was approved and the final document will be printed in a couple of weeks. As a result of that plan, there were parcels zoned differently as PLI as a result of poor record keeping. Data not compiled properly in the eighties which led to the rezone. Private property is typically not zoned PLI. PLI would be for libraries and other public uses. There was a previous rezone for ten to twelve parcels where the municipality to do the rezoning three years ago. As a result of the plan efforts other properties were found to also be incorrectly zoned. Land use code R11 is a “catch-all” for Turnagain Arm. The development is based on the land use classification, mixed-used rural homestead. Aggreicultural homestead is encompassed in R11. The rezoning is to bring to developable state. The underlying land use is rural homestead. A housekeeping item. To make the land more developable of avoid conditional use. The rezone will be at municipal cost. Chris Birch noted the rezoning can be a significant cost otherwise to the property owners to avoid a cost to the homeowners. The land owners and recommendation to go to rural homestead . Questions regarding density. Language was taken from the homestead act. The text was written to accommodate that use. Zoning that Mr Birch initiated in 2006 allowed two residences per five acres R11 zoning at that time allowed two residences one residence per two and half acres. The new TA designation rezone has changed that to one residence per five acres. Thede said he’d send a map to JT Malone. The controlling language is five acres. Muni does the designation. The verbiage is not available. The old designation was “R11”. The new designation is TA. The TA uses apply to everything. Thede offered to send map to Attorney Mr. Albert. Discussion of homestead act language. There appears to be a distinguishing among homestead properties. The ten or twelve homestead properties were under the homestead language as well as the other properties.

Steve Mendive reminded that PVCC homeowners had seven days notice at Christmas. Jennifer Johnston made assurances that none of the R11 would change at this time. Open Comments until May 3. There are some properties in the old

townsite that are privately owned. The state may have final records of ownership. The townsite has some “abandoned” property. PVCC needs any abandoned available property for community uses. Tidelands discussion. Steve Mendive noted that tide lands are leased from the state. Joanne Blackburn mentioned US Survey 4597 which contains a transportation corridor for the public the tide line is still as surveyed the exclusionary townsite of Portage in 1962 from the USFS. Later surveys depend upon that survey. Boundaries of tidelands are described and platted. Mr. Albert had a larger map which was placed for review.

Thede Tobish spoke of Portage Townsite which needs a title search. Discussion of ANILCA amendments surface management authority. Thede mentioned the lots were developed in the 1950’s and are not legal. The 50’s and 60’s the lots were privately owned. The long term thought is to consolidate to find out what the state’s intent is. The issue is the size to tracts are not residential use size but more of a commercial zoning. Very little and available for commercial except the railroad. To allow small commercial would be beneficial for the community. Some would like to see the small commercial remain dedicated as commercial.

Questions regarding addressing of these properties. There are some addressing efforts that have been done.

Kate Walker remarked that the addressing has been beneficial for emergency response.

Planning route for a trail is happening now. Scoping has been done. Request for Proposal was recently awarded for design and build. Discussion of private homeowners on Blueberry. Vandalism, break-ins, hunters, trapping impacts the residential areas. Discussion of the Iditarod Trail location.

Kate Walker invites homeowners in to discuss all concerns.

Discussion of state of Alaska and grant of easement for a trail in the tidelands.

Discussion of ARR regulations, private land owners, and USFS trail adjustments. Answers aren’t clear. The railbed and alignment of the Seward Highway are considered and not funded.

Kate Walker said the trail is funded for this summer and snowmobile bridges in the Pass and the portion going through the Berry Pass. Proximal to Seward Highway but Winner Creek is first. PVCC gets squeezed out of the decision-making process just like with the Blue Ice Trail. The voice of community is saying the same thing that the funding sourcing tends to decide. Would like a heads up instead of a swath of survey tape in the trees. Kate Walker said she’d be happy to come monthly for updating the community efforts exactly what is being done next summer and steps.

Steve Portage noted that Mr. Hawker, Representative, stated that Portage really is the spoke for transit, commerce, railbelt link and is therefore a dynamic area.

US Postal discussion to continue at another meeting.

Kate Walker spoke of Trail of Blue Ice usage being family, and visitor use. The BBVC has been open on week-ends.

Nonmotorized designation for the Blue Ice. Five Fingers area was discussed and parking on the road and spending eight hours on the mountain. Snowplowing discussed. Whistlestop, outhouses and pavilion and eventual trail. Awaiting legislative change to put receipts into the site development, reclamation, trailbuilding. Quarry Rock has a draft gravel extraction is waiting for legislative issue to be completed. Prospectus for three rivers guiding plan at Spencer area. A guide plan for Placer area, lodging alternative to USFS, and other proposals.

Discussion of trapping. Some favored more trapping. Some disliked the activity. Discussion of specific trapping incidents. All were invited to contribute their thoughts to the Turnagain Times. Input by trappers of their activities. Rick Sinnott discussed legalities. USFS discussed willingness to consider buffering. All inputs were welcomed. Discussion of coyote problems for skiers in Portage Valley using the trail and railroad tracks. Coyote in the article was caught in a small rabbit trap. Discussion of USFS training how to get animal out of a trap.

Damon Blackburn MOVED to Pass the Minutes of the 2/22/10 PVCC meeting. It was not seconded. Attorney Albert objected to the motion. Joanne Blackburn said the Minutes were intended as a record of what exactly occurred at the 2/22/10 PVCC meeting.

Portage Lodge was selected as the next meeting location, April 26, 2010 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by Joanne Blackburn

