

PORTAGE VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2010

PORTAGE VALLEY LODGE

PRESENT

Jo Blackburn
Mitch Blackburn
Daniel Gutierrez
Julie Evenson
Emily Sakis
Marilyn Williams
Jon Evenson
Jim Magowan Turnagain Times
Mike Miller
Steve Mendive

Steve Mendive brought meeting to order with introductions introducing Jim Magowan from Turnagain Times. Steve noted that PVCC has thirty-three landowners with the greatest land area of all the community council within Anchorage. We exist we are a defined area from Girdwood to Ingram Creek. Discussion of PLI zoning per Municipality of Assembly (MOA). Discussion of short notice, known and unknown possible implications and any possible PVCC responses. PVCC's request was for 90 days to look at the implications. Blueberry Hill land owners did experience a reduction of the flexibility of properties to re-subdivide into two parcels of 2.5 acres in R11 status in the TA definition of R11.

Portage needs a comprehensive plan. This is the impetus for the funding request at Juneau. We are hoping for the \$20,000 to start. We have the Assembly's support so we can start our collaborative ideas to get us going instead of bureaucratic red tape. Jennifer Johnston has offered to be of assistance in seeing this through. Do we want grant writing? Do we want to spearhead arranging to receive the old townsite back? Who can we direct this money toward for just the beginning. The other communities of Eagle River, Girdwood have had their share of community planning funds upwards of hundreds of thousands of dollars with other possibilities being amenities like trash services and Heritage Sites for signage. This is a beginning of building the direction we would like to go.

Kate Walker, of the USFS is moving on and we don't know who will be the new district ranger. We will start all over again. The USFS has the choice among a good staff and we are fortunate there. The USFS head Mr. Joe Meade is gone also. We'll work through that process. Discussion of Iditarod and Blue Ice Trail.

Winner Creek and hardened bridges are being planned. Iditarod location was discussed. Environmental impacts could be very adventurous. Mitch Blackburn discussed the difficulty of the earlier location versus the location at the river, the crossing of wetlands and that cost. The design of the Seward Highway could have progressed if there was a Portage Valley Community Comprehensive Plan to help solve these issues and tie them together. Discussion of trail construction funding availability which funding always occurs before planning funding. Jo Blackburn noted that the Iditarod Trail is to celebrate it's authenticity not to be an impediment to property owners and says she would not even want to go to the current less than ideal location initially nepa'd because of the extreme steepness.

Discussion of the comprehensive plan not being in place actually inhibiting funding. The community planning must begin with the need of the Seward Highway to be improved, the access issues, will be tied together. Girdwood got a huge amount of money. BLM noted to State of Ak DNR that the actual location of the Iditarod Trail was actually the railbed itself and that is not being told to the public(s).

Portage has decided to stand alone for the foreseeable future. Girdwood has a bigger lobbying effort and are further ahead PVCC in terms of infrastructure and lobbying efforts.

Discussion of appropriate times for next Portage Valley Community Council Meeting and the importance of getting Planning and Zoning to PVCC. Marilyn Williams proposed initial meetings to take to the Anchorage and then use the space at FCC 1057 W Fireweed Lane. General consensus that we would meet in town every other meeting. Discussion of twelve month calendar. Discussion of FCC website. We have guest speakers, agenda, issues, good turnout. Focus on comprehensive plan.

Portage Valley is tough area to do business due to inadequate turnouts, parking and signage though assets are coming in to Portage in hopes that the bears' development will stimulate economy and preserves the area.

Question on who brought up R11 change. The 911 access is federally funded and Bird, Girdwood, were found to have inadequate addressing for safety vehicle locations. Planning and Zoning noticed that Portage also needed to firm things up. Discussion of running water requirements for R11. Iron content, leach rocks to conform with DEC etc.

Mitch Blackburn brought up coastal zone management plan which drove the need to mandate update of comprehensive plan.

Steve Mendive says the "R11" is a catch-all. The the residential PVCC properties had to get out of PLI which may be appropriate for railroad land. Property along the highway are zoned differently. PLI, is typically recognized in Anchorage for applications like jails, churches, or schools. So, PLI was completely inappropriate for the "home"stead historic land use.

We can identify our own needs in the comprehensive plan. We can engage in our own visioning process. Compared Portage to Homer Land's end. Land's End was not abandoned post the 1964 earthquake. Lots of money has arrived in Alaska and not much money has been spent here in Portage to date to support commerce in the area.

Mitch Blackburn said "Some of the money can be used to square away our zoning". Daniel Gutierrez says we are a "tideland" are we ever really going to be a community with fill etc. Discussion of New Orleans. Discussion of comparison with Kenai's ability to work with reasonable planning for tidelands versus Anchorage' reticence The zoning notices have blown away anyway. We don't even know the case number.

Daniel Gutierrez said who's in favor of this R11. Discussion of water installations and costs implications to private landowners.

Kay Johnson of the Kenai Historical Society, a non-profit organization gave a presentation regarding federal money available to national treasures and there will be funds made available to the communities while being locally planned and driven. Citizens and agencies can promote their areas through the National Park Service while working within existing local comprehensive plans. The corridor goes from Indian to Seward. Lisa Murkowski sponsored the bill. Trails Across Time is a book about our area and the others in the corridor. Interpretive Signs for Portage is being considered. Kay Johnson is writing the management plan. There are short term projects but the designation is up to ten years with a possible million a year. Need ideas recommendations for inclusion in the plan. A draft is due by June with comment and feedback then plan to Secretary of the Interior. There is a fifty/fifty match including in kind. Inventory of heritage sites. Coordinating with native organizations. There are informational meetings, May and June meetings, draft in June then August everyone can take a look at it. Discussion of identity of Portage. Questions entertained. We have a community council where else can we go? Businesses, and foundations, will be invited. Other communities have immediate needs too. May 15, Moose Pass is a public meeting. Contact Kay Johnson for ideas. Looking for longer-term non-infrastructure projects also. Hope has a proposal for a Hall. Portages' sign? Mitch Blackburn suggested that there was a nice little community before the earthquake and wants to see a community commemorative sign. Discussion of the Authenticated Iditarod trail is down on the flats with a commemorative sign at that location where the dogs actually ran. The community council should make a list. The homestead act land act is our message and the marketing message we would like to identify commemoration of the contribution of the homesteaders blood sweat and tears and not a government abandoned recreation area.

Kaylene requested a list of people who are interested in preserving their Portage historic anecdotes to Kaylene.Johnson@gmail.com

Zoning issues were discussed and tax valuations implications. Grandfather rights were discussed. Zoning is another issue. The different titles like Title 19 and 21 enforceability. Title issues are the biggest issue. Land use permits require conformance.

Submerged areas require a holding tank for septic and water. Building Codes are adopted by the state and ratified by the city. Then the coastal zone applications apply. Tax base rate won't change unless new structures are added. Taxes are raised incrementally. Discussion of resolutions that our existing structures can be found to be conforming. Discussion of "grandfather" if grandfathered and if "grandfathered" then you are by definition non-conforming. Any small improvements and the grandfathering passes away and it's a new day.

Discussion of Planning and Zoning. Title 21 is a huge document. Marilyn Williams wonders if this is going to change our lifestyle? The next PVCC meeting or prior can we do something that PVCC can do now? Discussion of Variance Notices. We do need a resolution. The notices have blown away. Discussion of Title 21 issues will be complex for our area.

Title 19 and Title 21 will have a huge impact on Portage. PVCC attendees want a stay of open comment period on the public record. The TA approval plan approval part of the approval was the rezone. How long was the notice posted? Notice was up for two days then the wind blew the notice away. Notice of Final Action of Rezone? The planning and zoning will be at the next meeting.

Steve is following up to find out why there is no Assembly Report.

Representative Hawker did get the \$20,000 approved for the first time and this is a great thing.

Signs should be large.

Discussion of accesses. The lane change got put on the muni CIP list. There was discussion that we would take our needs out of Girdwood's eight million. Not likely to happen.

No update from the railroad.

Discussion of existing "roads" and issues associated. Goals for the Seward Highway to eliminate driveways and unofficial turnouts unlike Girdwood where driveways occur every 100 feet on either side of the highway and consequently there is an affluent community replete with commerce, industry, schools etc. The state DOT should not get away with removing our underdeveloped inadequate accesses in Portage for safety, emergency help. Discussion of fire service areas. R11 requires fire safety. The municipality requires driveways to the nearest driveway.

Discussion of folklore and homesteads on Blueberry Hill the sawmill etc. Discussion of installing a septic system without a pump truck access. Municipal ordinance requires septic pumping every two years.

Discussion of AK Railroad crossings policies. The municipality can support the homeowners in their accesses needs. Residential needs are recognized as paramount in Portage as elsewhere.

The Community Comprehensive Plan is going to ask for road access.

Discussion of the grant and FCC will be our administrator. Assemblyman Johnston will help usher our plan through. We could hire a planner, organize meeting, take notes and do a report.

Discussion of signage matching out of the \$20,000 to make it go as far as it can go. Then we will clearly know how much we need to implement.

Steve Mendive will call about zoning. Monday May 10th at the FCC 1057 West Fireweed Meeting. We have been meeting the last Monday of the month. We could have a representative at the meeting. Marilyn Williams wants to know when the next meeting with agendas will be and feedback later .

Everyone agreed to meet at the May 10, 2010 at 1057 West Fireweed Lane start at 4:30 to get them set up and membership at 5:00.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted. By Joanne Blackburn