



Municipality of Anchorage
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Anchorage Women's Commission



AWC Meeting 3/11/2021 5:30 – 7:00 pm Microsoft Teams online meeting

Commissioners Present: Margaret Duggan, Monica Elkinton (Co-chair), Kami Hutchins (AHD Liaison), Sheri Lisenbee, Cambria Patz (AHD host), Joan Ryan (Chair)

Guests Present: Assembly Member Rivera, Assembly Member Weddleton, Assembly Member Zaletel

I. Call to Order

- Quorum established & Call to Order at 5:31 pm.

II. Introduction

III. Approval of Agenda

- Motion to approve agenda (Co-chair Elkinton)
- 2nd to approve (Chair Ryan)

IV. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes – February 2021.

V. Old Business

- Answers from Assembly Member Dunbar from February 2021 meeting.
 - If anyone has questions you can ask now, or you can email questions to the Anchorage Health Department Director, Heather Harris:
heather.harris@anchorageak.gov

VI. Public Comments

- No public comments.

VII. New Business

- AR No. 2021-62 – A resolution of the Anchorage Municipal Assembly recognizing March 2021 as National Women's History Month
 - Thank you to the Assembly for this recognition

- Q&A with Assembly Chair Felix Rivera, and Assembly Members Jon Weddleton and Meg Zaletel
 - **Co-chair Elkinton:** What can we do as the AWC or as citizens of Anchorage to help make sure all adults can get vaccinated?
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** Multiple Assembly Members talked about their experience with getting the shot at the Assembly meeting on Tuesday. It is important to talk about it. The State of Alaska in partnership with the Muni is working to make it as easy as possible to get vaccinated. They are doing home visits and offering transportation and translation services.
 - **Rep. Jon Weddleton:** One barrier is having concern about getting sick from the second vaccine, and maybe not having the ability to take a couple of days off work to recover.
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** Got her vaccine yesterday, and the whole process took about an hour. It was nice to see that folks were able to bring their kids. Folks should be more vocal about how long it can take for a vaccine appointment. Hopefully, employers can give their employees time off to get vaccinated.
 - **AHD Liaison Kami Hutchins:** The State and the Muni are joining forces and trying to get as many vaccines out as possible. AHD is doing pop-up vaccine clinics in March and April. AHD is partnering with the Polynesian communities, Alaska Literacy Program, Alaska Black Caucus, Boys and Girls Club, and refugee communities in Mountain View. The State has strike teams for those folks who are homebound, and they're focusing on homeless populations and partnering with home health nurses.
 - **Co-chair Elkinton:** What can we do to increase childcare?
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** The Assembly did a really good job with assisting childcare with the CARES Act funding and needs to reexamine this with the next round of funding. One thing to look at is if there is a childcare option that can be supported in a way where parents can still work if there happens to be a classroom closure due to COVID-19 exposure. The second issue is that there has been older sibling childcare happening at home, and now middle and high schoolers are going back to school. The State subsidy does not really cover non-traditional hour childcare, and the Municipality should explore this. There is a gap in the traditional childcare hours from about 3 pm to midnight.
 - **Rep. Jon Weddleton:** There might be more folks working from home so the need for childcare may decrease.
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** There might not be a decrease in the demand for childcare, but perhaps the model through which childcare is delivered might change because the model for how we're working might change.

- **Chair Ryan:** How do your thoughts get put into action? Do you work with other commissions?
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** With this last round of funding, the Assembly really worked together and reached out to community experts in the childcare sector. However, if there are commissions offering to bring ideas forward, that would be fantastic. The alcohol tax funding might be something the AWC would want to look at.
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** If there are long term solutions to be discussed beyond the CARES Act funding, those discussions could likely happen with the Health Policy Committee.
 - **Rep. Jon Weddleton:** The Assembly receives packages from certain commissions and encourages other commissions to bring ideas. Those can be submitted to anyone on the Assembly or the Chair, Felix Rivera.
- **Co-chair Elkinton:** What does the second round of CARES Act funding look like and how is the Assembly thinking about it?
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** The Assembly does not have the final numbers, but there will be several different buckets such as for transportation, rental and mortgage assistance, and COVID-19 relief bucket. With the first round of funding, the Assembly did programs for existing licensed childcare facilities. In this next round, we will assess how those programs went and see how we build up those programs or build new programs. The Assembly's process for this round of funding will begin next week and will likely be done by the end of April.
- **Commissioner Duggan:** Was Thread one of the organizations the Assembly worked with in the first found of funding?
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** Yes.
- **Co-chair Elkinton:** What is next in line for addressing homelessness in the community?
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** The Sullivan Arena is our congregate shelter for about 400 individuals, and there about another 400 individuals in non-congregate shelters. Our homeless numbers are elevated almost by half. HUD has agreed that we have FEMA funding through September 30th, 2021. It costs about \$900k per month to run the Sullivan Arena shelter. The great thing about the Sullivan is that it works with the 6 ft. spacing and there are day services and case management on-site. Now we are overlaying the day services and case management on the non-congregate shelters to focus on outflow and getting folks moved into housing in the next 6 weeks to 3 months. The EOC brought on David Parker from UAA to work on the transition plan. The Assembly will receive additional emergency solutions grants and community development block grant funds. The alcohol tax was used to

fund a healthy spaces initiative which is year-round camp abatement and litter clean-up patrol through Parks & Rec. The treatment center at the Golden Lion location will soon be online, and the mobile crisis team should soon be online through AFD which will be a 12-hour mental behavioral health response.

- **Rep. Jon Weddleton:** Running a shelter is fairly new to the Muni since COVID, and there was a misperception that the Muni ran shelters before. The Assembly is working on a proposal to allow shelters in B-3 zoning (general business) under conditional use permits that would help keep the surrounding neighborhood from being negatively affected. We are working on a license that shelters would be required to have and figuring out what that would look like.
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** I think shelter is going to be the biggest conversation we have going forward. I know that our community can have this conversation, and I hope that we can do it with compassion.
 - **Commissioner Lisenbee:** There is a local non-profit called Choosing Our Roots which works with housing queer youth up to age 25. Organizations like this would benefit from this information and might be able to expand their services if they had access to the funds and resources. Another need relating to mental health is for a centralized location or hub where folks can go to find resources for long term case management.
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** The State is working on implementing the Crisis Now model which would include a statewide call center, the mobile crisis team, and crisis stabilization centers which would direct folks to key resources and give them more options.
- **Co-chair Elkinton:** What measures are being taken to reduce the spread of COVID or increase the vaccine availability in the communities of color, such as the pop-up clinics in these communities?
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** These clinics not only give access to the vaccine but also access to information, which is a critical piece in communities where English may not be their first language. Another piece is helping these community leaders to be more comfortable with the vaccine and share information with their communities.
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** The school district is often a trusted entity for communities of color, and it can be a good way to share information.
 - **Commissioner Lisenbee:** Has there been an effort to do vaccinations at the Sullivan Arena?
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** Yes, there has been homelessness outreach and vaccinations happening. The outreach is

focused on making sure folks get in for their second vaccine dose.

- **Co-chair Elkinton:** How can the AWC support the Assembly members, and help them support Anchorage women and families?
 - **Rep. Felix Rivera:** As we move forward through this second round of funding, I think it would be great for the AWC to leverage any knowledge or resources it has. Two million dollars will come from the alcohol tax to support pre-K. When there is a discussion to expand to a universal pre-K system, it would be great to have the AWC involved.
- **Rep. Jon Weddleton:** How does the AWC see your role, and how do you keep up with what the Assembly is doing?
 - **Chair Ryan:** This last year we invited all of the Assembly members to our meetings so that we could get to know you better and give you help where you need it. That was our first step to figuring out how we can work with the Assembly. Many of us our new and work full-time. When COVID first hit, childcare became very important to us and we asked a lot of questions about that to the Assembly.
 - **Co-chair Elkinton:** In the last year we sent a letter to Governor Dunleavy through the Mayor's office as a formal statement. We also have a role to reach out to the Assembly, and we could attend committee meetings.
 - **Rep. Meg Zaletel:** We can flag the commission on the committee agendas that may be of interest. One topic might be how the Assembly can get more families into the chamber to participate.
- Events (All Commissioners)
 - Vaccination clinic at Gallos on the 18th & 19th of March (Chair Ryan)
 - Business and Professional Women local chapter is doing a Women's History Month program on March 27th at 11:30 am (Commissioner Vines)
 - Women's History Month Special from the Alaska Black Caucus on March 17th at 11: 30 am (Commissioner Vines)
 - Co-chair Elkinton will email the meeting information from Commissioner Vines to everyone
- Next meeting we can vote on having a meeting in July this year (Chair Ryan)

VIII. Adjournment, 6:59 pm

- Motion to adjourn (Commissioner Duggan)
- 2nd to adjourn (Co-chair Elkinton)

IX. Next Meeting – April 8th, 2021 5:30 – 7:00 pm