

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY

Assembly Chambers, Z. J. Loussac Library
3600 Denali Street, Anchorage, Alaska

Minutes for the Special Meeting of June 24, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Special Assembly Meeting of June 24, 2009 was convened by Chair Ossiander at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL A Quorum was achieved with Assemblymembers present.

PRESENT: Elvi Gray-Jackson, Patrick Flynn, Jennifer Johnston, Debbie Ossiander, Harriet Drummond, Chris Birch, Mike Gutierrez, William Starr (*communicating telephonically for noted portions of the meeting*), Sheila Selkregg and Dan Coffey.

ABSENT: None.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Assemblymember Johnston led the pledge.

Acting Mayor Claman reported the Anchorage Horse Council and Rainbow Connection had successfully secured a lease with the Municipality to jointly operate in the Ruth Arcand Park, which was approved by the voters in 2007.

4. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.A. Resolution No. AR 2009-129, a resolution of the Anchorage Assembly adopting recommendations to be forwarded to the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Policy Committee **deleting the Knik Arm Crossing Project from the Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan** and updating the planning and consultation requirements, Traffic Department.
1. Assembly Memorandum No. AM 277-2009. (*Carried Over from 6-9-09, Continue from 6-16-09 and 6-23-09*)
 2. Resolution No. AR 2009-129(S), a resolution of the Anchorage Assembly adopting recommendations to be forwarded to the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Policy Committee deleting the Knik Arm Crossing Project from the Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan and updating the planning and consultation requirements, Traffic Department.
 3. Assembly Memorandum No. AM 388-2009.

To Chair Ossiander, Municipal Attorney Jim Reeves addressed the complaint, the restraining order on holding a meeting, the injunction and a court hearing set for June 26, 2009. He responded to questions from Mr. Birch, Ms. Drummond and Dr. Selkregg, addressing the merits of the lawsuit and taking action on the resolution that evening being appropriate. To Chair Ossiander and Ms. Drummond, Deputy Municipal Attorney Rhonda Westover addressed the substitute version being valid and legitimate.

Mr. Flynn declared a potential conflict of interest due to the bridge being rail accessible and his working for the Alaska Railroad (ARR). He responded to questions from Chair Ossiander concerning the potential conflict. Chair Ossiander put the Question to the body.

Does Mr. Flynn have a conflict of interest?

Mr. Flynn responded to questions from Mr. Coffey, Ms. Drummond, Dr. Selkregg, Mr. Birch, Mr. Gutierrez and Mr. Starr concerning the potential conflict, including building the project in the future, his affiliation with the ARR, working in the best interest of the public, advising the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), the downtown district needing representation and revisiting the matter if his role with the ARR changed.

and this motion failed, 1-8.

AYES: Birch.

NAYES: Gray-Jackson, Johnston, Ossiander, Drummond, Gutierrez, Starr, Selkregg and Coffey.

ABSTAIN: Flynn.

Chair Ossiander ruled that Mr. Flynn did not have a conflict and ordered that he participate in the matter. She addressed closing Public Hearing at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Coffey moved,

Ms. Johnston seconded,

to close AR 2009-129 Public Hearing at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Coffey, Mr. Birch, Ms. Drummond, Dr. Selkregg, Mr. Gutierrez and Chair Ossiander addressed the legal issue, the matter affecting Southcentral Alaska, accommodating all those wishing to testify and the Assembly response to AMATS.

and the motion passed without objection.

AYES: Flynn, Gray-Jackson, Johnston, Ossiander, Drummond, Birch, Gutierrez, Selkregg and Coffey.

NAYES: None.

1 (Clerk's Note: Mr. Starr was temporarily disconnected telephonically.)

2
3 Municipal Traffic Director Lance Wilber summarized AR 2009-129 and AR 2009-129(S), addressing the Knik Arm
4 Bridge project. Chair Ossiander opened Public Hearing.

5
6 TOM McGRATH supported hearing all public testimony. The cost of construction would be recovered from the savings
7 of gas and time. He supported the S-version and creating an opportunity for the state.

8
9 DIANNE HOLMES supported removing the project entirely. She addressed the Comprehensive Plan, land use
10 planning, long term viability, the effects to downtown, costs, expanding highways and commuter rail.

11
12 ALLI HARVEY, with the Alaska Center for the Environment, recommended removing the bridge from the Long-Range
13 Transportation Plan (LRTP), as it would not accommodate a majority of commuters, was expensive and was being
14 paid for by Anchorage residents.

15
16 DENNIS NOTTINGHAM supported removing the bridge from the LRTP and addressed highway appropriations being
17 used for other things, construction dollars and the deterioration of existing roads.

18
19 RICHARD BRAUN opposed building the bridge, which would not pay for itself and would cost Anchorage residents.

20
21 ALISON ARIANS supported removing the bridge from the LRTP. She addressed the increased congestion through
22 downtown, too much speculation, there not being benefits and there being other important things to address.

23
24 WILLIAM BASSETT supported building the bridge now. He addressed the Valley being developed, the Glenn
25 Highway, cities in the Lower 48 moving closer to interstates and bridges being used successfully.

26
27 JUSTICE McPHERSON opposed the project. He addressed construction costs, Anchorage residents paying for the
28 project and a commuter rail to the Valley along the Glenn Highway corridor.

29
30 JAMES HELTON supported the bridge and making it happen, which would create jobs and save commuting time.

31
32 RAY DEBENHAM, resident since 1958, supported building the bridge. He addressed a delay costing more, lack of
33 developable land in Anchorage, alternatives not being effective and costing more.

34
35 PAUL D. KENDALL testified the bridge could be done better by adding hydroelectric generation. Having electricity
36 was the third element that helped make people free. He was offended that public testimony had been cut off.

37
38 SHAUN DEBENHAM supported leaving the bridge in the LRTP. He addressed land in Anchorage being limited for
39 economic development and the benefits of the bridge. He responded to a question from Dr. Selkregg.

40
41 LOIS EPSTEIN, Alaska Transportation Priorities Project Director and AMATS Technical Advisory Committee member,
42 supported the S-version. She addressed concerns of costs and using DOT funds elsewhere. She responded to
43 questions from Mr. Coffey, concerning rail, beluga whales and financing.

44
45 ALLEN BINGHAM supported the Knik Bridge and addressed commuters and future growth in Anchorage. To Ms.
46 Drummond, he addressed more residents being able to live on the Knik side.

47
48 KAY KNUDSEN, lifelong Alaskan and Knik property owner, testified that Anchorage needed room for expansion. She
49 could not imagine anyone not wanting the bridge.

50
51 CARL PORTMAN, Deputy Director of the Resource Development Council, supported keeping the bridge in the LRTP
52 and addressed benefits, the economy, commuters, creating jobs, expanding Southcentral Alaska and new commerce.

53
54 JAMIE KENWORTHY addressed needing a current financial statement, the city being responsible, using state bonds,
55 projected toll revenues and construction and operating costs. He responded to questions from Ms. Drummond, Dr.
56 Selkregg and Mr. Coffey.

57
58 RANDY McCain supported the bridge and addressed the public process and projected costs. He recommended
59 proposed changes to the resolution and improving the process.

60
61 BOBBI WELLS, Birchwood Community Council Chair, addressed transportation, benefits, using State money, beluga
62 whales, the Valley and the project not getting any cheaper. She responded to a question from Ms. Drummond.

63
64 STEPHANIE KESLER addressed the current bridge plan being flawed, incomplete, not economically viable and
65 impacting downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. She urged the bridge be deleted from the LRTP.

66
67 KATHLEEN KING testified the project would always have challenges and in this uncertain economical time, it was
68 prudent to maintain and improve the existing transportation sources. She urged removal of the bridge from the LRTP.

69
70 GARTH HOWLETT supported the bridge project. He addressed costs, effects, benefits and creating opportunities. To
71 Mr. Coffey, Mr. Howlett addressed industrial facilities relocating to the Knik side and losing the tax base.

72
73 AVES THOMPSON, with the Alaska Trucking Association, supported keeping the bridge in the LRTP. He addressed
74 future needs, Port access, population growth and improved traffic. He responded to questions from Mr. Birch and Dr.
75 Selkregg.

76
77 M. VREELAND opposed the bridge and addressed driving to Point McKinsey not saving time and costing more. She
78 supported Dr. Selkregg's stand, waiting for future development and the proposed commuter rail along the Glenn.

79

1 HELEN NIENHUESER supported deleting the bridge from the LRTP until the economic situation was better. She
2 addressed costs, available funding, affecting downtown, the Glenn Highway, property tax and property values.
3
4 LINDA KOVAC, with the Chugiak Community Council, supported keeping the bridge in the LRTP. She addressed the
5 benefits of creating an evacuation route and available land for residential development and economic growth.
6
7 GRANT HUNTER testified that Anchorage people needed land for expansion of residential and economic development
8 and he questioned why anyone would oppose the bridge project.
9
10 LEVI YOUNGER opposed the bridge project and would not pay for it. He addressed wasting money, young people
11 leaving Alaska, the cost of living, the cost of driving and the need for additional public transportation.
12
13 BRIAN LYKE supported Anchorage growing up, rather than out. He addressed becoming comfortable with the
14 density, growing in a sustainable way, improving bus transportation and not wanting to pay for the bridge.
15
16 JOHN WEDDLETON testified the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) had unanimously passed a resolution in
17 support of removing the Knik Bridge from the LRTP. He addressed population density, the Comprehensive Plan,
18 avoiding city sprawl and land being available in Anchorage.
19
20 BILL MARTIN supported the Knik Bridge project and addressed the benefits including reducing traffic, being an
21 alternative lifeline for Anchorage in an emergency and accessing land for future population growth and development.
22
23 JANET KINCAID, a Valley resident, supported the bridge, which would create opportunities for development and urban
24 congestion relief. The Valley and Anchorage would both benefit. She responded to a question from Mr. Birch.
25
26 MICHAEL FOSTER, Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) Chair, opposed removing the bridge from the LRTP
27 and pushing the project to 2018. He addressed following the process, federal and state positions and financial
28 sustainability. He responded to questions from Mr. Birch, Mr. Coffey and Dr. Selkregg.
29
30 State Senator FRED DYSON of Eagle River testified in support of keeping the bridge in the LRTP and urged the
31 Assembly to be visionary to future needs. He responded to a question from Mr. Flynn.
32
33 MARK GRABER testified in support of building the bridge as soon as possible. He addressed affordable housing,
34 residents needing room to grow and getting a choice of lifestyle.
35
36 JERRY BUDD, a business owner who transported goods to and from the Valley, supported building the bridge now
37 and addressed commuters saving time and gas cost.
38
39 CHUCK HOMAN, President of Anchorage Home Builders Association (AHBA), testified in support of building the
40 bridge, which would open many opportunities. He responded to questions from Ms. Drummond and Mr. Coffey.
41
42 HENRY SPRINGER, formerly with KABATA, addressed the process not being followed, two Assemblymembers and
43 the mayor being voting members on the advisory committee and lawsuits. He responded to a question from Mr. Birch.
44
45 STEVE STRAIT supported the bridge. He addressed improving transportation routes, helping growth and
46 development opportunities and the bridge linking Anchorage and the future.
47
48 DON CRANDALL supported deleting the bridge from the LRTP. He addressed not being able to afford it, not elevating
49 traffic congestion and having other plans that addressed future growth, transportation and highway projects.
50
51 JUDY McGRATH testified the bridge would create opportunity for future economic growth and responsible
52 development. She supported keeping the bridge in the AMATS LRTP. She responded to a question from Mr. Birch.
53
54 MIKE MENSE testified it would be less expensive developing a dense community in Anchorage, rather than expanding
55 and developing Point McKenzie. He responded to questions from Ms. Drummond, Dr. Selkregg and Mr. Birch.
56
57 MARION DeYOUNG supported the bridge and testified that she could not imagine why anyone would not support
58 resolving the density problem in Anchorage and creating new opportunities for future generations.
59
60 PAMELA JACKSON supported building the bridge to create economic development and to reduce pollution and save
61 commuter cost and time. It was irresponsible to suggest deleting the project before the completing the studies.
62
63 MATTHEW JACKSON testified that building the bridge now would be more cost effective. He addressed the benefits
64 of Alaska's past development, future population density and traffic congestion on the Glenn Highway.
65
66 ROY RANK, Wasilla resident, supported building the bridge, which would create lifestyle choices, economic growth
67 and opportunity for Anchorage and the entire state. He urged support.
68
69 RYAN McCLURE testified he could not afford living in Anchorage. He supported building the bridge to create
70 residential development and job opportunities. There was no more room in Anchorage and things would not change.
71
72 RON JORDAN testified that accidents on the Glenn often blocked the highway and cost the city, residents and
73 businesses time and money. The bridge was way over due and he urged the Assembly to move it forward.
74
75 SANDRA MORRIS testified the Knik Arm Crossing would increase opportunities, including affordable housing, in
76 Alaska. She urged support.
77
78 EDDIE BURKE supported free speech and testified that people had the right to abolish government that was not
79 representing them. He supported the bridge project and people not living in high-density, stacked site condos.
80

JESS ELLIS supported building the bridge and a larger transportation system connecting Bristol Bay. He addressed traffic congestion, the bridge creating opportunity and shifting development to the west.

JANEL WALTON testified that the bridge would not save commuters money. She supported the 2020 Plan and preferred spending the money on repair and maintenance of existing roads.

Mr. Coffey moved, to extend Public Hearing to 9:30 p.m.
Dr. Selkregg seconded,
and there were no objections.

KEVIN HEMENWAY, KABATA Chief Fiscal Officer, addressed bridge issues including private sector interest, completing independent revenue studies, state support, following the environmental process and obtaining the permits.

ANDREW NIEMIEC, KABATA Executive Director, opposed deleting or delaying the bridge project. He addressed the new amendment, AMATS policy and his recommendation to follow the 30-day public review policy.

DALE PAULSON, with KABATA, distributed copies of KABATA *Knik Arm Bridge Process* document, which described the process that needed to be followed, including a 30-day public review on proposed changes.

MARY ANN PEASE testified that additional public review was needed. She addressed there being no rush, keeping the bridge in the LRTP, providing a transportation link, expansion opportunities and infrastructure and economical development for all of Alaska.

DIANNA KUKOWSKI testified in support of keeping bridge project in the LRTP. She addressed needing room to expand, creating opportunities and taking longer would cost more.

JEFF COX supported building the bridge. He addressed the cost of living in Anchorage and needing open space, trees and vegetation, more opportunities to expand and a second exit route for emergencies.

BOB FRENCH urged the bridge be deleted from the LRTP. He addressed people not having a say, P&Z not supporting the project being in the LRTP, inaccurate traffic studies and studies on how the bridge would be paid for.

GLEN BIEGEL testified in support of keeping the bridge in the LRTP. The bridge was of greater economic importance than the gas line with impacts to future generations, with more benefits and opportunities.

WILLIAM A. GREENE, KABATA Counsel, testified the project was required to be in the LRTP and he addressed what the law required, sufficient public notice and provisions for growth provided in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

JOE BURNHAM supported building the bridge and could not understand why this project would be pulled from the LRTP. Expanding to the west made sense.

KEN FULLER testified in support of building the bridge and he addressed other successful bridges in cities across the nation. Everyone would benefit, with more land for expansion and development.

Mr. Coffey moved, to extend Public Hearing to 9:45 p.m.
Mr. Birch seconded,
and this passed without objection.

Chair Ossiander requested a hand count of those who supported deleting the project from the LRTP. (*Clerk's Note: Approximately fifteen individuals indicated their support.*) Chair Ossiander requested a hand count of those who supported keeping the bridge in the LRTP and addressing it in the future. (*Clerk's Note: Approximately thirty individuals indicated their support.*)

DAVID GILBARDSON testified in support of the bridge. He addressed housing opportunities, beluga whales, affordable housing opportunities, high density housing and supporting the quality of life.

MELINDA GANT testified that, based on the economic hard times and losing KABATA's financial backers, she supported the S-version, extending the time to consider the bridge.

PAUL FUHS testified in support of the Knik Arm Crossing. He addressed the need for expansion, economic development and this being a regional project supported by other communities.

WALT PARKER opposed the Knik Arm Crossing project, which had made no sense for the past twenty years, and he supported the Assembly cancelling the project.

LARRY FOSTER, a Valley resident, supported the Knik Arm Bridge and urged the Assembly to do what was logical, sustainable and environmentally sound. He addressed the city's tax base, carbon emissions and social justice.

Mr. Coffey moved, to extend Public Hearing to allow the last two people
Mr. Birch seconded, to testify.
and this passed without objection.

DONNA RYMUT, a Government Hill resident, opposed building the bridge and addressed the bridge making no economic sense, harming her neighborhood, the poor design and the impacts hurting downtown.

TROY KARLUK testified in support of building the bridge and addressed providing economic opportunity, consideration of future development and providing jobs for young people.

There was no additional testimony and Chair Ossiander closed Public Hearing.

Mr. Coffey moved,
Ms. Johnston seconded,

to approve AR 2009-129(S).

To Mr. Birch, Mr. Foster addressed the revised amendment not following the required 30-day public process and he supported extending the time until a court decision was final.

Dr. Selkregg addressed the increased costs, fewer private sector opportunities, being obligated, affecting other city projects, question of economic growth for Anchorage and confusion about the value of the bridge. She would support the ordinance, moving it out to the future which was a better option and would be in the best interest of the community.

Mr. Coffey addressed reassessing the financial plan, risk of having to pay back money, the need for a regional approach, resolving potential impacts to Government Hill and moving it out to 2011 or 2015, to allow additional time for review.

Mr. Coffey moved,
Ms. Johnston seconded,
and this was amended,

to amend AR 2009-129(S) on Page 2, Line [35] 41 by adding to read: [6] Section 4. It is not the intent of this resolution to delete the Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) from the L RTP despite the title of the resolution.

Dr. Selkregg and Mr. Flynn addressed the amendment.

and this passed without objection.

Ms. Drummond moved,
Mr. Gutierrez seconded,
and this was amended,

to amend AR 2009-129(S) on Page 2, Line 24, [Number 2:] by adding a new Section 5 to read: Section 5. Explore potential infrastructure associated with the bridge, such as solar, tidal, etc. as well as pipelines and utilities, etc.

Ms. Drummond addressed clerical corrections and proposed an amendment. Mr. Flynn recommended a change, which was accepted.

and this motion failed, 4-5.

AYES: Gray-Jackson, Drummond, Gutierrez (*participating telephonically*) and Selkregg.
NAYS: Flynn, Johnston, Osslander, Birch and Coffey.
ABSENT: Starr, excused.

Mr. Flynn, Ms. Gray-Jackson, Ms. Johnston, Mr. Foster, Mr. Coffey, Mr. Birch, Dr. Selkregg, Mr. Gutierrez and Ms. Drummond addressed supporting the Knik Arm Crossing, polling constituents, the Assembly response not affecting the AMATS Policy Committee's progress, DOT Director Gordon Keith and Mayor-elect Dan Sullivan indicating support of the S-version, reluctantly supporting the bridge remaining in the L RTP, the potential effects, this being the best solution, deleting the bridge entirely and Anchorage having the opportunity to plan for the future.

and the main motion, as amended, passed, 9-0.

AYES: Gray-Jackson, Flynn, Johnston, Osslander, Drummond, Birch, Gutierrez, Selkregg and Coffey.
NAYES: None.
ABSENT: Starr, excused.

Ms. Drummond moved,
Mr. Gutierrez seconded,
and this motion failed, 0-9.

for immediate reconsideration of AR 2009-129(S).

AYES: None
NAYES: Gray-Jackson, Flynn, Johnston, Osslander, Drummond, Birch, Gutierrez (*participating telephonically*), Selkregg and Coffey.
ABSENT: Starr, excused.

5. ADJOURNMENT

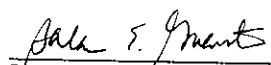
Mr. Coffey moved,
and there were no objections.

to adjourn the Special Meeting of June 24, 2009.

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

ATTEST:


DEBBIE OSSIANDER, Assembly Chair


BARBARA GRUENSTEIN, Municipal Clerk
Date Minutes Approved: August 25, 2009
MC/BG

(View Live and Archived Videos of Assembly Meetings and Approved Meeting Minutes online at the Municipal Web Site, www.muni.org or contact the Minutes Clerk in Municipal Clerk's Office, 632 West 6th Avenue, Suite 250, Anchorage, Alaska, (907)343-4505.)

