



KNIK ARM CROSSING PROJECT
Government Hill Community Council Meeting
April 21, 2005, 7 pm
Brief Dialogue on the Knik Arm Crossing Project

INITIAL MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting presided over by Stephanie Kesler, President and Mark Musial, Secretary. Approximately 25 people in attendance, including Col. Ribuffo, Roger Graves Port of Anchorage (POA), Wendy Lindskoog Alaska Railroad Corporation; a representative of Flint Hills Refinery; Richard Stern of Stephen Braund & Associates.

Kevin Doyle of HDR and Lindsey Holmes of Rise Alaska attended on behalf of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) team.

Government Hill Community Council (GHCC) Knik Arm Crossing Project (KAC) Subcommittee Report

Bob French gave a report on the GHCC KAC Subcommittee. He reported on the public scoping meetings, and stated that Government Hill comments were largely to ensure the EIS answers questions and concerns regarding the 3 proposed alignments, which he said currently run through the school, via Erickson Street, and at the base of the bluff by Brown's Point. All three connect to A/C Couplet. He voiced concern about downtown traffic. He stated that the Area of Potential Effect stops at 3rd Avenue to the south, and at the tie-in to Point MacKenzie road to the north, and expressed concern that the area was too small, eliminates some options, and may not adequately address some traffic effects.

Bob French introduced a resolution:

April 21, 2005 Government Hill Community Council Meeting

Subject: KNIK ARM BRIDGE RESOLUTIONS:

While we hope and anticipate that individuals and businesses in our Community Council will provide separate public comment, the following resolutions were voted on and approved at the April 21, 2005 Government Hill Community Council Meeting related to the Project Scoping Meetings of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA).

- a) Government Hill Community Council *Supports* the principals of economic expansion and growth for the future of Anchorage and Alaska.
- b) Government Hill Community Council *Opposes* all three of the proposed routes that would impact or potentially destroy Government Hill, the oldest neighborhood in Anchorage.
- c) Government Hill Community Council *Requests* that the EIS be enlarged to examine other rational, viable alternate routes that are not in the present scope of the EIS.
- d) Government Hill Community Council *Requests* that the EIS be enlarged to examine true traffic, societal and economic impacts to the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska / Susitna Borough.

All resident of Alaska deserve to be given the opportunity to make an informed decision based on fair evaluations of the full range of alternates. The limited scope of the proposed Environmental Impact Statement and Area of Potential Effect presently ensure that will not happen.

Stephanie Kesler, President
Robert French, Co-Vice President
Dan Lowery, Co-Vice President

Wendy Lindskoog offered an amendment to add the word “residents” to section (b), as industry doesn’t *oppose* any routes at this point, but wants to look at all options. Several residents opposed the amendment, stating that it is accurate to say that the Community Council as a whole opposes the three routes, and that it would weaken the resolution to state that it only came from the residents rather than the entire Community Council. Bob French noted the drafters were going to say the Community Council unanimously opposed the three routes, but removed that word as they realized there might not be unanimity. One resident asked whether the resolution might harm the community’s relations with industry. Wendy Lindskoog responded that she didn’t think so, she just wanted to address the industry concerns. Bob French suggested adding an introductory paragraph to the effect that there was not unanimous approval, but several people suggested that unnecessarily showed division in the Community Council.

A resident asked what industry thought about the routes. Wendy Lindskoog responded that it was too early to tell, as industry needed more information and was not yet sure of the effects. A proposal was made to have the resolution come from the executive committee. This suggestion was discarded. One resident commented that if the Community Council as a whole doesn’t say they oppose all three routes, it appears as though they are okay with the routes. One resident noted that some people prefer the port route, which might eliminate some of the tanks.

The vote on the amendment failed. The resolution passed.

Bob French announced the May 16 public comment deadline. Wendy Lindskoog mentioned that the North Ship Creek Coalition might hold a May 5 meeting.

Stephanie Kesler announced that the Community Council had attended a number of meetings with the Knik Arm Crossing project team, and encouraged people to submit comments, especially in regards to expanding the Area of Potential Effect.

Lindsey Holmes discussed the various ways to submit scoping comments, and announced the May 16, 2005 comment deadline.

Comment: The website should be updated with more information, including graphics presented at the scoping meetings.

Comment: We would like to see images of what the different routes would actually look like.

Kevin Doyle responded to questions:

Q: How many lanes are we talking about?

A: The current thinking is 4 lane approaches, with a 3 lane bridge.

Q: Have you done any traffic studies?

A: They are underway. We had to work around the different models used in Anchorage and the Mat-Su, and LRTPs (Long Range Transportation Plans) currently being updated in both jurisdictions. We are working on it.

Q: What is the design year?

A: The design year is 2030, in accordance with FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) standards.

Q: Has AMATS (Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions) done any traffic studies?

A: They are ongoing.

Q: Who is doing the study?

A: CH2MHill.

Kevin Doyle clarified that an Area of Potential Effect is a term of art from the National Historic Preservation Act, and really only applies to issues relating to that Act. The EIS process looks at what are called indirect and cumulative effects, and each category of effects will have its own boundaries, so they are not necessarily limited by the project study area boxes shown on the maps.

Q: Dave Shaftel. Are there any upcoming meetings with the military?

A: Col. Ribuffo: There is a meeting scheduled for next week, including the Alaska Army, 3rd Wing, and Alaska Command. It will be attended by engineering

officers, with the goal to tell the project team what areas on and around the bases will prove problematic. Their goal is to hear where the project team is considering so that the military can evaluate those proposals.

Q: Will information from that meeting be disseminated by May 16?

A: Col. Ribuffo: Probably not.

Q: Will that be a problem?

A: Doyle: There will be later opportunities to comment after the May 16 comment deadline. There will be opportunities for the public to comment on alternatives, on design concepts, on the draft EIS, and at the formal EIS hearings. Public hearings are expected around November or December of 2005.

Comment: The Community Council does not meet during the months of June through August. I'm concerned that all this work is being done while we are on hiatus.

Comment: Stephanie Kesler. The sub-committee will remain active over the summer. We are being given a project liaison. The project team has been very helpful, and met with us several times. We have met Edrie Vinson of FHWA, and she is very open and concerned with process. We are very impressed with her. The team is not trying to pull the wool over our eyes.

Q: Stephanie Kesler. Does the military have any additional comments?

A: Col. Ribuffo. No. I don't think we need to clarify our position.

Q: Is the team looking at military alternatives?

A: Col. Ribuffo. We intend to show them where they can't go. In 1984 there were proposed routes through military land. We need to look at all of the information and see what is still valid. The contractor will decide the final option. The military won't take stands on preferred routes—that's not our place.

Kevin Doyle: Just to clarify, it is not the contractor who decides either. It is Edrie Vinson and FHWA who will make the final decision. We're looking at all of the options. The 1984 studies showed two options: a downtown and an Elmendorf option, neither of which proved very popular. The cable stay bridge option studied proved to be very expensive. There were also routes studied in 1999.

Q: What do the Mayor and the Assembly say?

A: Stephanie Kesler: We're talking to the Mayor's office. There are some concerns about increased traffic in downtown and C Street.

Q: Who is "we"? The committee?

A: Stephanie Kesler: Yes.

Anchorage Historic Properties Presentation

Stephanie Kesler announced that there is an historic properties study being conducted as part of the APE, which should provide a good overview of historic properties. Gina Holliman updated the group on the status of the Brown's Point Cottages, the refurbishing of the wireless building, and the Anchorage Opera as a potential new renter for the wireless building.

Richard Stern, of Stephen Braund & Associates, introduced his company as a subcontractor to HDR, looking at cultural effects. He announced that they did a literature study last fall, and undertook a property database study, looking at public records, and had identified some 600 buildings within the lines on the map and were researching these buildings. They are now doing a survey of the neighborhood, continuing through summer. They are looking forward to working with the community on the EIS, and hoping to get good information for the decision-making process.

Q: What's the tie-in with the Knik Arm Crossing?

A: The various proposed routes could affect properties. We need to know where they are and have information about them.

Q: There are properties and Erickson & Manor, and Erickson & Harvard. Will these affect the Erickson Street corridor?

A: We don't have enough information yet to answer that.

Q: If there are historical properties that will be affected by the project, what does that mean?

A: Kevin Doyle. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) looks at approximately 27 categories of effects. It's like a balancing act. Historical properties have special sanctity, and we need to take steps to avoid them. SHPO (the State Historic Preservation Officer) gets involved. But there are other categories to consider as well, such as wetlands, people, relocations, eagles' nests, costs, etc.

Q: Stephanie Kesler. What effect does remodeling have on historic status?

A: The devil is in the details. It is a question of degree, of how the building's integrity is maintained, how it relates to historic significance.

Comment: My understanding is there are different categories based on age.

A: Gina Holliman. There are restrictions if you accept federal dollars. If not, there are very few restrictions on owners of properties on the historic register.

Announcement was made that the historic properties subcommittee is gearing back up.

Government Hill Redevelopment Committee

The Community Council is waiting to hear back from the Heritage Land Bank, etc. regarding a proposal for the Hollywood Vista. They are behind schedule. Heritage Land Bank was preoccupied with Eagle River issues, but said they will send out an RFP. The Motel was looking to sell to a non-profit. The community was not in agreement. Talks

with Heritage Land Bank regarding their obtaining commercial buildings and rehabilitating them is stalled. Heritage Land Bank expressed concern about the Knik Arm Crossing project, as the motel is in one of the proposed corridors.

Discussion occurred on other non-project neighborhood issues and concerns.

The meeting concluded at 9:15 pm.