

MEMO

TO Yanert community planning workshop attendees; community members
FROM Agnew::Beck Consulting
DATE 03/2/06
SUBJECT Workshop Notes

The following notes were taken during the Sunday, February 12, 2006 Community Workshop held for the Yanert community planning effort. The meeting was held at the McKinley Park Community Center. The meeting began at 1:00 PM and lasted until approximately 4:00 PM. Notes supplied here are based on notes taken by two community members, and Agnew::Beck Consulting.

Two appendices attached to this memo provide a list of workshop participants, and the workshop agenda (*these need to be added*).

The following notes were generated during the workshop:

Topics Discussed During the Workshop:

1. Yanert Community Vision

What do you most value about the Yanert area? (people, places, services...)

2. How has the area changed?

- What changes are expected near & longer term?
- What is driving change?

3. What do you want for the future? Categories for consideration:

- Land use, Environment, Recreation
- Community Services & facilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Leadership Communication

1. What do we like? What do we value about our place?

- Easy to ski, run dogs, etc. from front door
- Good place to raise a family, children; people take care of each other, inter-relationships
- Trail access – trails aren't busy, few others out there
- People here are adaptable and hardworking; relax during downtime
- We don't have highly restrictive planning & zoning
- No litter

- I can afford to live here- flexible lifestyle and high quality of life are compatible
- Value living next to a National Park
- Can walk outdoor and be with nature; silence, opportunities for exploration.
- Beautiful scenic stretch of highway we still have and live in
- Silence & darkness
- Trail-less wilderness is in our back/front yards
- Community: people matter, everyone helps each other wherever there is a need
- Example: King house fire – the next morning many people without being called responded to help rebuild.
- I can ask and receive things I need even from people I don't know well.
- People will help you no matter what. People might have very different views, but pull together when there's a need
- Quiet
- People value children – kids are safe here. Very different from what exists in Anchorage, in the lower Mat Valley
- I can run a seasonal business here and support my family
- Most businesses here are locally run and operated
- Even though we have few institutions we are becoming a real community
- People who come in summer now stay due to increased comforts (electricity).
- Services/employees presently contained in smaller area.
- Privacy- not on top of neighbors. Comfortable separation.
- Tourism is seasonal – down time in community to catch your breath.
- Community becoming one (a community) as we look at future together.
- Maybe we should be careful about letting the world know just how nice it is up here

2. How have we changed? How will the Future Differ from the Past?

Community Character

- Needed to be self reliant before, more services available now. Many now feel they don't need to do as many things on their own - people want more.
- Access easier - don't need to stock up on groceries for full winter
- Things are easier: power – heat – access – climate
- Have quick access to town. Parks highway connects us to Fairbanks and Anchorage
- More people buying property – property values going up.
- General sense of an acceleration of growth and change

Tourism

- Total numbers of park visitors was flat over past several years; but package tourism growing, independent travel is declining.
- Cruise ship related changes – development related to land packages: increased length of stay, lots more auxiliary tourism activities – not dependent on park road travel – now exist and affect our natural environment
- Increased stays provide better experience for park visitors. Before it was too short.
- Visitors seeking additional activities (other than trip into Park). Increase in other services such as helicopter tours, etc.
- Helicopter trips were proposed and refused by our community... we may have to shape ourselves more in this regard
- Changes in nature of tourism drives the type/quality of accommodations and activities – visitors will now spend two nights, means a need for more capacity

- Package tourism growth means that even an independent traveler business can expand
- Need to get better record of information on numbers of summer visitors, staff, others (change over time)

Services

- Landfill – water – waste management infrastructure driven by tourism needs. Summer tourism-related demands much greater than what is required by year-round locals
- Great demands for services on small community. Borough has to absorb this – Increase pressure to do so.
- Increased recycling taking place
- Tourism has meant we have more nice places to eat.

Seasonality

- More people here in winter – Park doing impact studies.
- Potential for visitor season to expand into winter.
- No major year round tourism business is here yet

Coordination

- Partnering between community & local (outside) tourism businesses has not been smooth so far.

3. What do we want for the future? What are the important issues, what should be the goals for our community?

Land Use

- Lets not make it like the place we left to get away from: not too much traffic, building regulations, codes
- No bill boards (signage)
- Maintain sense of privacy, separation from the traffic in highly touristed areas – maintain quality of the residential neighborhoods, maintain privacy
- Concentrated development – commercial and residential – maybe one node, maybe several, but not development along the whole length of the highway
- Two types of businesses – tourist and non tourist – everything in glitter gulch is tourist related – draw a line between businesses that are tourist related and those that are not – by allowing them or not allowing them
- Business along highway have established voluntary set back from highway, implement some sort of required set back
- Light pollution, noise pollution – keep it quiet, keep it dark, maintain visual quality, protect view shed, good environmental quality
- Potential of limiting air traffic
- Ahtna, Inc. owns lots of land in this area, as population increases, community needs to recognize Ahtna, Inc.’s claim to land
- Finding common ground between landowners is hugely important
- Ahtna’s place in community is important, need to have Ahtna involved in planning process
- There are existing rules, e.g., re signage, water quality – what are they and are they being enforced? Process needs to build from an understanding of these rules.
- Looking at potential municipal land entitlement lands – community could grow into these land areas. If these lands were suddenly in the borough’s hands, might need some sort of enforcement to guide use of these areas.

Community Services- Facilities

- Local school in future? At present Healy and Cantwell provide school service. Don't anticipate need for a school in the near term
- Set aside municipal lands for time when school, library, post office may be needed, perhaps also cemetery, parks (although "we've got a great big park next door")
- Fire service is volunteer – one truck available
- Community water spigot? Discussion of establishing community water service, water truck
- Water- explore options: private delivery business might be best, other option is an improved community well
- Need improved lettering/numbering system so that EMS services can find place when resident in need
- Regulations of fuels and fire causing hazards - public safety standards should be included in land use policy. This is a clear example of how use of private land in one place affects many other property owners
- Solid waste collection management

Transportation

General

- Potential for gas line coming through Parks Highway corridor
- Reduce 65 MPH limit on Parks Highway, roughly from Deneki Lakes to Park boundary
- Plan roads to meet standards – wide enough for fire response
- Turning lanes needed to handle traffic flow off highway to heavily used areas.

Trails & Recreation Access

- Value local trails and access to them. This system is precious to residents
- Sidewalks- pedestrian safety and community health well-being
- Work on continued relationships to allow use of traditional trails on private land
- Ahtna has system that allows people to purchase permit for recreational use of their lands. Problems with trespass on Ahtna land are mostly tied to people from outside the region.
- Borough should consider recreational trails on its land too, for residents and visitors, including municipal entitlement lands
- Bike Trail from Community Center to McKinley Village
- Bike Trail from Cantwell to Healy
- Explore uses for state land by Grizzly Bear

Economic Development

- Support for economic development, for tourism related to types of growth. Some types are disruptive, others fit well
- Categories of tourism to pursue:
- Encourage eco tourism - learning rather than consumptive uses; interpretative type tourism could offer a deeper experience for visitors
- Other types of business to encourage:
 - Home based
 - High wage
 - Develop jobs to keep grown families in our community
 - Living wage jobs; plumbers, mechanics

- Link businesses to our local values & culture
- Encourage private business development to provide services to residents year round - water wagon, plumbers, mechanics, development of support sector?
- Maybe we don't need to be self contained – we have other places nearby where we can meet our daily needs. Not all services/facilities need to be in community, as can be accessed elsewhere.
- Locally owned small businesses especially B&B's are a great alternative for independent travelers who want to avoid Glitter Gulch.
- Potential for additional development of private campgrounds, other visitor facilities.

Next Steps

The steps below were discussed and generally agreed to by meeting participants.

- Form Yanert Planning Team
- Collect background info
- Summarize workshop results
- Hold planning team meeting(s)
- Circulate draft “issues & goals” paper
- Hold second workshop:
 - Confirm goals
 - Begin to flesh out strategies to reach goals
 - Focus on land use

“Free Parking”

The following comments were collected on the “Free Parking” poster during the workshop. Comments were written on post-it notes and fastened to the poster.

- Encourage partnership between Borough and Ahtna, Inc., and NPS re: trails, bike paths, fire protection.
- Need to research the legal status of local trails.
- Is there a scheduled upgrade of the highway between Cantwell and Healy?
- Need to discuss leadership and communication.
- What are the standards for road width in subdivisions and elsewhere? need to establish standards.
- Ahtna, Inc. lands managed by the Native Village of Cantwell; they're private, already have a name, are effectively part of Cantwell.
- What are the state/DOT rules already in place? e.g. about signage, R.O.W.?
- How will we manage the Nenana River corridor?
- Need to have conversations about limitations on air traffic.
- How will we maintain access to the upper Yanert?

APPENDIX (TO BE ADDED)

1. WORKSHOP AGENDA
2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS