

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 2, 2009

8:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Herron, Co-Chair
Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz, Co-Chair
Representative John Harris
Representative Wes Keller
Representative Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Sharon Cissna

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: ALASKA STATEHOOD COMMISSION

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 173

"An Act authorizing the conveyance of certain land of the Alaska Railroad Corporation to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 171

"An Act authorizing the transfer of two parcels of land from the Alaska Railroad Corporation to the Municipality of Anchorage; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 173

SHORT TITLE: TRANSFER RAILROAD LAND TO DOTPF:FAIRBANKS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KAWASAKI

03/09/09	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/09/09	(H)	CRA, TRA
04/02/09	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 171

SHORT TITLE: AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF RAILROAD LAND

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DAHLSTROM

03/09/09 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/09/09 (H) CRA, TRA
04/02/09 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

CHRISTOPHER CONSTANT, Vice Chair, Alaska Statehood Celebration
Commission

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a presentation from the Alaska
Statehood Commission.

KATHY HILDRE, Chairman
Capital City Celebrations
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Reviewed the activities celebrating
Alaska's statehood in Juneau.

LEO RASMUSSEN
Nome Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the 50th statehood
celebrations held in Nome.

MICHELLE ROBERTS, Executive Director
Festival Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the 50th statehood
celebrations held in Fairbanks.

DARYL SHAW (PH), Planner/Coordinator
Anchorage Statehood Celebrations
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the 50th statehood
celebrations held in Anchorage.

REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KAWASAKI
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as the sponsor of HB 173.

DAVID VAN DEN BERG, Executive Director
Downtown Fairbanks Association

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

DONNA GARDINO, Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator
Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Encouraged the committee's support of HB 173.

DEBBIE HICKOK, President/CEO
Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

REPRESENTATIVE NANCY DAHLSTROM, Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as the sponsor of HB 171.

LAURA PIERRE, Staff
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 171 on behalf of the sponsor, Representative Dahlstrom.

WENDY LINDSKOOG, Assistant Vice President
Corporate Affairs
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development
(DCCED)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During hearing of HB 171, answered questions.

BOB FRENCH, Co-Vice President
Government Hill Community Council
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 171.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR BOB HERRON called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Herron, Munoz, Keller, and Gardner were present

at the call to order. Representative Harris arrived as the meeting was in progress. Representative Neuman was also in attendance.

Overview: Alaska Statehood Commission

8:04:58 AM

CO-CHAIR HERRON announced that the first order of business would be a presentation from the Alaska Statehood Commission.

8:05:11 AM

CHRISTOPHER CONSTANT, Vice Chair, Alaska Statehood Celebration Commission, began by thanking the legislature for founding and funding the Alaska Statehood Commission ("Commission"); there have already been some wonderful celebrations. He then noted that the committee should have a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Constant explained that the Alaska Statehood Celebration Commission was established in 2005 and consists of five public members and four legislative members. During the planning phases, the Commission decided that its best effort would be to inspire communities to organize and hold [local celebrations] rather than a top down celebration. The Commission, he related, was charged with planning and administering all official statewide activities. The main directive of the Commission was to set policy and [prepare a timetable and budget]. Although the Commission experienced great success in organizing the larger communities to participate in statehood celebrations, there were great challenges in the smaller communities. He noted that some communities are planning, organizing, and holding events through the remainder of this calendar year. The vision of the Commission is to honor the state's history and celebrate its future and the mission is to inspire the people of this great state and the world to rejoice in Alaska's past, present, and future. Mr. Constant then related that the values of the commission were to honor and celebrate Alaska's Native heritage, culture, and those instrumental in statehood and Alaska's Constitution as well as Alaska's achievements and opportunities and Alaska's children and future. He then noted that the Commission recently began soliciting project ideas across the state and the Commission currently has some small resources available to help make the activities of organized communities successful. The most notable project, he opined, is the logo for the 50th statehood celebration.

8:10:53 AM

MR. CONSTANT, in response to Co-Chair Munoz, specified that Dean Potter, formerly a Sitka artist who now lives in Anchorage, designed the logo. Mr. Potter also designed the Alaska Statehood commemorative license plate that will be available through the end of this year. He then showed the committee the bronze Alaska Statehood medallion communities [could use to] fund activities they were already organizing. The U.S. Postal Service issued an Alaska stamp, which bent the rules by including a living human being. Alaska Airlines, he related, hosted, in partnership with the Department of Education and the governor's office, a "Paint the Plane" project that solicited designs from school children throughout the state. The design of an 11th grade student from Sitka was selected and the plane should be in service for the next seven years. The plane will make its first landing in Sitka and then make its way up to Juneau. Mr. Constant emphasized that the legislators will be surprised what local Alaskans did with few resources. In conclusion, he said that those on the Commission worked hard and the hope is that the legislature decides to organize for the 100th celebration. Now, he opined, is the time to start planning for the 100th statehood celebration. One event that's coming up is Perseverance Theatre's performance of Eight Stars of Gold, which is an interpretation of interviews of the founders of the state.

[8:17:31 AM](#)

KATHY HILDRE, Chairman, Capital City Celebrations, explained that Capital City Celebrations was formed in November 2007 in order to help plan and host events and projects to commemorate the 50th anniversary of statehood in Juneau. Capital City Celebrations consists of eight members who meet monthly and hold monthly volunteer meetings to attract volunteers to help with the events. Ms. Hildre highlighted that all the organization and work on projects and events has been [performed on a] strictly volunteer basis. The first event was done in partnership with the Juneau Symphony, which presented a piece entitled "The Alaska Symphony," which was written in the 1940s but had never been performed in the state. This event was held in June 2008 to celebrate the passage of the Statehood Act by Congress in 1958. Since that time Capital City Celebrations has hosted alone or in partnership the following: a desert competition, wine tasting, First Ladies Alaska tea, and cruise ship luncheon. The city partnered with the Fourth of July Committee, Eaglecrest, Perseverance Theatre, and a local women's golfing group. The Capital City Celebrations held a 50th

Anniversary Ball on January 3, 2009, that was attended by over 500 people and the next day sponsored, along with BP, a fireworks show in the Valley. The Fourth of July Capital City Celebrations will partner with several groups to have its final celebration weekend, which will include the Juneau-Douglas City Museum's reenactment of the 1959 flag raising ceremony and a dance featuring the 1950s rock and roll band "The Diamonds." During the Fourth of July weekend the original queen and her court of 50 years ago will be in the parade and some floats will be reenacted as well. There will also be a community picnic that weekend. Ms. Hildre opined that Capital City Celebrations has worked hard to fund the aforementioned events and now is looking forward to planning a legacy project to remind the community that the state has achieved 50 years of statehood of which the Capital City of Juneau has been an integral part. Ms. Hildre thanked the legislature for its support, but noted that Capital City Celebrations has done most of its own fundraising.

[8:22:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MUNOZ thanked Ms. Hildre for leading the effort.

[8:23:32 AM](#)

LEO RASMUSSEN provided the committee with items that were used to celebrate 50 years of statehood in Nome, such as the trail mail that traveled across the Iditarod and the celebration pin. He also provided the committee with a copy of the program of celebration activities in Nome. Mr. Rasmussen then told the committee that on January 3rd, with bonfires on the ice off of Nome, residents of Nome recreated eight stars of gold. The Big Dipper was over 2 miles long and a mile wide. Copies are being created of the photograph of the bonfire Big Dipper, which will be available to legislators. Nome wanted to hold activities that would supplement those activities going on in the rest of the state. Mr. Rasmussen related that he is proud of Nome as it was a hotbed upon statehood and provided the first elected U.S. representative to Congress. Nome also had a torch-light parade of glow sticks, which was beautiful, he opined. In the process of celebrating the 50th year of statehood, Nome wanted to create something that would set a record. To that end, Nome made the largest Baked Alaska, which weighed 1,100 pounds, measured 80 square feet, and took 3 days to dispose of it all. Nome held a 49-50 celebration with sparklers and it will be reenacted this fall. The city also held a birthday celebration at Old St. Joe's and invited those with January 3rd birthdays to join the celebration at which Senator Donny Olson gifted the City of Nome

with a framed 49th star flag. Mr. Rasmussen concluded by presenting the legislature with a first-day cancellation of the celebration logo as a thank you.

[8:32:20 AM](#)

MICHELLE ROBERTS, Executive Director, Festival Fairbanks, informed the committee that Festival Fairbanks was tasked by the Commission to hold the May 28th event, which celebrated the date the U.S. House of Representatives passed the initial Alaska Statehood bill. A 1950s style bonfire barbecue event with pyrotechnics was held. She then related that Festival Fairbanks gave all Fairbanks schools packets that contained the 49th star publication. The teacher's edition was provided to all the history teachers in grades 6-12 and packets to all the elementary schools. During the week of May 28th there was a week-long series of events that included major performers and a kite day. Fireworks were held January 17th due to high winds on January 3rd. She noted that 4x10 banners will grace airport road for the remainder of this year and the Chena River Walk will be completed. The capital project for Fairbanks' lasting legacy is to [construct] a bike path on the north side of the Chena River. At this point, all of the land holders, except the railroad, are on board with this bike path. The Chena River Walk represents \$250,000 worth of private investment in the Fairbanks community. In fact, it has become one of the major entry ways into downtown Fairbanks. She related that the torch was brought from Anchorage to Fairbanks, which made nationwide news. The Fairbanks opera and many of the civic groups are taking hold of the 50th statehood anniversary. Ms. Roberts then announced that Fairbanks is working with a vineyard in Napa Valley to produce a 50th anniversary wine. The city and borough beautification efforts in Fairbanks this year are themed in Alaska's state colors, blue and gold. Ms. Roberts related that Fairbanks is excited about what has and what will occur in celebration of the 50 years of statehood.

[8:39:59 AM](#)

DARYL SHAW (PH), Planner/Coordinator, Anchorage Statehood Celebrations, related that Anchorage Statehood Celebrations was tasked to host the January 3rd party. The year was organized such that the celebrations in Anchorage would basically end January 3rd while serving as a kick off of sorts for the rest of the state. About 18 events were held in Anchorage over the course of 6 months. The state funded some of the projects, specifically the state underwrote the projects in the amount of

\$1 million, and the city raised a matching \$1.2 million. Of the \$1.2 million, almost \$1 million was earned and the remainder was contributed. Twice during the year all of the living governors of Alaska were brought together. Originally, the living governors were brought together to create a fundraising opportunity. The sale of a Sydney Lawrence print with all of the living governors' signatures raised approximately \$400,000. On June 28th the "We're In" weekend was recreated in many ways, including a festival, an air show in conjunction with Elmendorf Air Force Base, and recreation of the pinning of the star on the flag. Historic Fourth Avenue was returned to a replica of its 1950s look. He noted that the city was covered in banners, one of which is a replica of the 40x40 "We're In" headline.

MR. SHAW related that Anchorage Statehood Celebrations was charged with getting the word out around the world about the 50th anniversary of statehood celebration. The Anchorage Statehood Celebrations worked closely with the U.S. Air Force to bring in a concert. Winona Judd was brought in and was an enormous success. The concert was televised live across the entire state as well as worldwide. The Anchorage Statehood Celebrations worked with the military and created a special of this concert that was shown on July 4th on the Armed Services network. The organization tried very hard to bring as many people as possible to Anchorage and Alaska. He noted that the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) was very helpful in disseminating the word about the 50th statehood celebration. The legacy project that was decided upon was a bronze plaque history walk of 16 moments in history. The Anchorage Statehood Celebrations also [organized] a statewide quilt project, which resulted in nine large quilts and a book. A showing of all the quilts is touring the state. In response to Representative Gardner, Mr. Shaw explained that copies of the book are sent with the quilt project for free and the communities can sell the books to underwrite costs of statehood celebrations.

MR. SHAW then noted that the Anchorage Statehood Celebrations governor's legacy dinner brought together the eight living governors of the state and representatives of the two families of the deceased governors. He characterized the dinner as an amazing evening that is documented in a book. The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce was given some funds to underwrite the purchase of energy efficient LED lights for use in the City of Lights project. The Anchorage Statehood Celebrations also helped fund the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) parade float that was in the Rose Bowl parade. Between New Years Eve and January 3rd three projects occurred. The Anchorage

Statehood Celebrations worked with Alaska Airlines to achieve a special deal for those in Alaska to receive 50 percent off the ticket price to fly to Anchorage between New Years Eve and January 3rd. The economic impact of the aforementioned was remarkable as over those five days over 1,000 Alaskans were working on this project, over 500 room nights were booked in Anchorage hotels, and 47 representatives from foreign countries attended. The Gala held was remarkable, he said. Approximately 1,500 people attended the Gala and during the evening 300 people were on the stage at any given time. The Gala was televised. He noted that he is particularly proud of the Light of the North, which was a 9 foot structure sitting on a platform; each of the panels has backlighting and was designed so that each panel can be removed and placed in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and hopefully the Alaska exhibit at the Smithsonian. Mr. Shaw opined that the Anchorage Statehood Celebrations took the mandate to bring people from the state to Anchorage very seriously. To that end, representatives from 27 communities agreed to come to Anchorage. Furthermore, a pledge of unity for the next 50 years was created. He related that there was a march down the middle of town with lights to light a main light that began the day of statehood. That day involved seven venues with approximately 500 artists performing for free and the day ended with what he characterized as the largest display of fireworks in Alaska. He noted that the Conference on Young Alaskans worked with the 27 delegates to do the torch march. For 2009, the quilt tour will finish, the four panels will be placed, the "We're In" weekend will be reenacted, the Anchorage Museum will be endowed with funds to digitize 140,000 historic photographs, and a fund has been established to hold all funds raised this year for the 75th anniversary of statehood celebration. Mr. Shaw concluded by thanking Colleen Sullivan Leonard and the legislature for their contributions.

[8:55:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER inquired as to where the quilt will ultimately be housed.

MR. SHAW said that's currently being debated, and one possibility is to distribute it throughout the state. The quilt won't be sold, but rather will be placed and maintained.

[8:55:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MUNOZ interjected that she attended the governor's event, which she characterized as amazing and well done.

[8:56:21 AM](#)

MR. CONSTANT, in response to an earlier question, informed the committee that the remaining living delegates of the Constitutional Convention are Vic Fischer, Jack Coghill, Seaborn Buckalew Jr., and Katie Hurley. In conclusion, Mr. Constant thanked everyone who helped make these celebrations a success.

HB 173-TRANSFER RAILROAD LAND TO DOTPF: FAIRBANKS

[8:57:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HERRON announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 173, "An Act authorizing the conveyance of certain land of the Alaska Railroad Corporation to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and providing for an effective date."

[8:57:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KAWASAKI, Alaska State Legislature, speaking as the sponsor of HB 173, said the story of HB 173 began over 100 years ago when Captain E. T. Barnette attempted to establish a trading post at the junction of the Tanana River and the Valdez Eagle trail. Along the way, Captain Barnette beached his boat and had to find other passage. He found passage on a vessel that was travelling on the Tanana River from which he then travelled up the Chena River upon which he ultimately beached on a high spot on the river bank. Captain Barnette set up canvas tents, offloaded supplies, and began to build the trading post which ultimately became Fairbanks. The first road was likely around the existing Cushman Street and likely connected Captain Barnette and his men to the outpost. The second road connected one side of the Chena River with the other side that is now a steel bridge. Although many bridges have been constructed in various areas of Fairbanks, the Cushman Street Bridge remains an important part of commerce and serves as an arterial passageway in Fairbanks. He related that traffic jams are common and conditions in the area are difficult. The Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the City of Fairbanks have been working on plans to expand and open the city to commerce. Representative Kawasaki opined that Fairbanks is finally at the point at which it can proceed on a project to construct a new Barnette Street Bridge. In fact, funds have been appropriated. However, the Alaska Railroad Act requires legislative approval of all land transfers, which is

why the legislation is before the committee today. This legislation is supported by the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC), DOT&PF, the City of Fairbanks, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Downtown Association, and the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, thousands of residents on both sides of the river approve this plan for safety, beautification, and commerce.

[9:01:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER inquired as to whether there has been opposition to HB 173.

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI related that there have been concerns from residents when the plan scoping originally discussed a bridge across Barnette Street. However, he pointed out that currently the Illinois side of the project contains no sidewalks, no pedestrian travel lanes. The point is that the downtown traffic flow would be problematic. He stated that no organized group is opposed to the proposal.

[9:02:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS inquired as to why HB 173 is necessary.

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI answered that the Alaska Railroad Act requires that any land transfers between the state and the ARRC be approved by the legislature. He characterized HB 173 as cleanup legislation.

[9:03:45 AM](#)

DAVID VAN DEN BERG, Executive Director, Downtown Fairbanks Association, related support for HB 173 to facilitate the Illinois Street project. He noted that DOT&PF and ARRC are willing parties in this project. The right-of-way process for the Illinois Street project is the only piece that could cause a delay in the project. The Downtown Association is very reliant on that project going forward in order to begin to implement changes to circulation patterns downtown that will revitalize downtown and bring more retail, commerce, and economic development. In closing, Mr. Van den Berg explained that once the Illinois Street project is going, the way will be clear for the revitalization program.

[9:05:40 AM](#)

DONNA GARDINO, Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator, Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS), informed the committee that FMATS is funding the Illinois Street reconstruction project out of its transportation improvement program. This project has been in the program since 1985 and is in the right-of-way acquisition phase. This legislation will enable DOT&PF to acquire land from ARRC that's necessary to reconstruct Illinois Street. Ms. Gardino relayed that this project is a top priority of FMATS' policy committee. The initial phase of this project, the Barnette Street Bridge, is scheduled to be built this winter and the hope is that the remainder of the project will begin construction in late 2010 or 2011. The critical portion of the schedule is the successful acquisition of right-of-way to construct the project as planned. Given that it's necessary for the legislature to approve the conveyance of lands from the ARRC and ARRC has approved this land transfer, FMATS encourages the legislature to support HB 173.

[9:06:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS asked if money was placed in the bond issue that passed for the Illinois Street project last year.

MS. GARDINO specified that the bond was for University Avenue.

[9:07:31 AM](#)

DEBBIE HICKOK, President/CEO, Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau, related support for HB 173. She related that Illinois Street is a major used thoroughfare, although it looks and functions like a tertiary road. Illinois Street is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists, she further related. She opined that the only bone of contention from Fairbanksans is that the project hasn't yet been done.

[9:08:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS inquired as to how much the roads in Fairbanks would be impacted if the cruise ship industry has problems in Southeast Alaska.

MS. HICKOK related that 50 percent of the [tourists] in Fairbanks are cruise ship passengers that are on land tours, which is significant. Furthermore, many of the cruise ship passengers who take land tours come before and after the cruise

and act as independent tourists during those times. The coaches that shuttle tourists use the Illinois Street corridor.

[9:10:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI related that HB 173 has been wildly supported by each of the large stakeholders in the area. The residents on both sides of the Chena River can look forward to a safer drive with less traffic, which HB 173 would achieve. In response to Representative Harris, Representative Kawasaki specified that the next committee of referral is the House Transportation Standing Committee.

[9:11:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS moved to report HB 173 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

[9:11:48 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:11 a.m. to 9:12 a.m.

HB 171-AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF RAILROAD LAND

[9:12:36 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HERRON announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 171, "An Act authorizing the transfer of two parcels of land from the Alaska Railroad Corporation to the Municipality of Anchorage; and providing for an effective date."

[9:12:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NANCY DAHLSTROM, Alaska State Legislature, speaking as sponsor of HB 171, characterized HB 171 as a simple bill. The proposed land swap would benefit the quality of life for residents of the Government Hill neighborhood as well as the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC).

[9:13:22 AM](#)

LAURA PIERRE, Staff, Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Alaska State Legislature, speaking on behalf of the sponsor of HB 171, informed the committee that AS 42.42.085 sets out the guidelines regarding the ARRC swapping any land and specifies that the legislature must approve a land swap by ARRC. The proposed land

swap is between the Municipality of Anchorage and ARRC. She noted that the committee packet should include a map illustrating the parcels to be swapped. She highlighted that the entrance into Government Hill Elementary School is curvy and unsafe for children, and thus would be redeveloped and redesigned such that there's a safer entrance into the school. The land ARRC will receive from the municipality is land that flanks the land already owned by ARRC. Section 1 of HB 171 sets out the two parcels of land ARRC will transfer to the municipality. Ms. Pierre related that the Municipality of Anchorage, Government Hill Community Council, and members of the community are in support of HB 171.

[9:15:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER, referring to the map, inquired as to the significance of the orange lines.

[9:15:38 AM](#)

WENDY LINDSKOOG, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Alaska Railroad Corporation, Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development (DCCED), specified that the orange lines delineate ARRC property lines. In further response to Representative Gardner, Ms. Lindskoog pointed out that the school is located with several little roads coming into it as well as the entrance to Elmendorf Air Force Base. The access in the area is difficult, she said.

[9:17:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS inquired as to ARRC use of the property designated in red.

MR. LINDSKOOG stated that it's used for parking and she predicted that ARRC would continue to use it for parking in the near future. By ARRC owning the entire parcel, it would be easier for those interested in leasing the property. She added that once these properties are in the hands of a third party, the property goes on the tax rolls for the municipality. In further response to Representative Harris, Ms. Lindskoog noted her agreement that the parking provides leasing income for the property.

[9:18:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS, returning to the orange lines on the map, inquired as to whether the residential area is ARRC property.

MR. LINDSKOOG specified that the larger blue block within the orange line is the residential development. Therefore, the city owns the land within the orange lines and the municipality [owns the land outside the orange lines]. She then acknowledged that the land on the port with the tanks is ARRC property.

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS then asked if the port is ARRC property.

MS. LINDSKOOG clarified that there is a certain area [by the port] where the port owns part of the land and ARRC owns other parts of the land.

[9:20:28 AM](#)

BOB FRENCH, Co-Vice President, Government Hill Community Council, informed the committee that community councils in Anchorage serve as the most basic form of local government. There are 39 community councils in Anchorage, ranging from Eklutna to Girdwood. While the community councils have few powers, the municipality does seek advice and guidance from the community councils on many local issues. Government Hill, he related, is proud to be Anchorage's first and oldest neighborhood. He pointed out that Government Hill is surrounded by land that's owned by various entities, including ARRC, Elmendorf Air Force Base, and the Port of Anchorage. Mr. French expressed support for HB 171 as it will have a very positive impact on the neighborhood. As noted earlier, Government Hill is probably one of the only areas in the state where so much ARRC land is mixed in with privately and municipally owned land. The proposal by HB 171 tries to simplify the convoluted property ownership issues. Mr. French highlighted that the Government Hill Elementary School hosts a Spanish immersion program that attracts folks from all over the Anchorage Bowl. Furthermore, since it's a magnet school, it brings in lots of traffic every morning and afternoon. He then proceeded to review the lack of safety at the Government Hill Elementary School area, and pointed out that ARRC's parcel has proven to block a safe and accessible entrance into the Government Hill Elementary School. In conclusion, Mr. French related his support for HB 171.

[9:24:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM reiterated that this issue impacts many people as the Government Hill Elementary School is attended and

accessed by folks from all over the Anchorage area. She noted that even for those who know where they're going, the area is confusing to travel. Representative Dahlstrom requested the committee's support for HB 171.

9:24:55 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS moved to report HB 171 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

9:25:07 AM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.