



CITY OF WASILLA

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COUNCIL MEMORANDUM NO. 95-55

From: Mayor Stein
Date: August 9, 1995
Subject: Senior Advisory Commission Change to Civic Commission

The Senior Citizen Advisory Commission asked again on June 19 that the City Council consider expanding the commission's responsibilities to include civic amenities and to broaden its membership base by eliminating the minimum age 55 requirement.

Ordinance No. 95-39 proposed here would repeal the Senior Citizen Advisory Commission and establish the Wasilla Civic Commission (suggested by Marj Harris), eliminate the age 55 requirement and revise the powers and duties to include advising the Mayor and Council on needed and desirable civic amenities and programs.

Your introduction of Ordinance 95-39 and setting it for public hearing on August 28 is respectfully requested.

John C. Stein, Mayor

cc: Senior Advisory Commission


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City of Wasilla, Alaska

13 July 1995

To: Mayor John Stein and the
Wasilla City Council

From: Hugh A. Johnson 
Member, Senior Advisory Commission

Subject: Needed Realignment of Senior Advisory Commission.

Experience indicates that stated goals and purposes for the Senior Advisor Commission are inadequate to fit needs. A request has been made that this commission be reorganized.

I will not be available during August to testify concerning reasons for change. Therefore I submit this statement.

I strongly urge that the Senior Advisory Commission be reconstituted to what might be titled the Wasilla Civic Commission, with broadened membership base to include all age groups and with broadened objectives to include amenities of all kinds.

Ordinance Serial No. 93-02 was enacted by City Council in early 1993 "to advise the City on matters pertaining to the health, welfare and general well being of senior citizens..." The timing was prior to installation of the police department at a time when many seniors were uneasy about personal and property safety, and at a time when concerns about health, housing and a variety of laws beneficial to seniors was high. A common voice for senior citizens within the framework of city government appeared to be appropriate.

The crime climate changed dramatically when the police department became operational. An additional housing project was developed. Issues which were of top priority in senior citizen minds were quieted or faded away. The Senior Advisory Commission learned through its experience that about the only subject area of major interest involved amenities, i.e: ways to improve living conditions and appearances within the community. This subject applies to all age groups. It can range from beautification of public and private areas to youth activities and comfort for the elderly. It would involve encouragement of involvement and would not invade the resource management objectives of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The core concept of the newly constituted commission should be for community action in areas which would involve residents and city government in joint and mutually beneficial programs.

The 1994 tree planting project along Swanson street was well accepted and is a first class example of desired amenities. Individuals, organizations and businesses are taking positive pride in plantings and cleanup of surroundings which was

less evident even a couple years ago. This interest should be encouraged by the city and the community. A reconstituted commission would be in position to help meld these interests for greater total benefits.

Benefits from many individual ideas and actions can be fostered and enhanced through community awareness, including active support by city government. Examples which on the surface at least are worthy of support include the intensive community-wide playground construction project to be developed next summer, the Teens Helping Teens program being organized by Wendy Jones (as I understand it), a more coordinated public and private planting and culture program for beautifying city areas, still-needed assisted living housing for seniors and public housing for other needy persons, improved communications between the public and governing agencies over resource use, are other issues where a bridge for community involvement might help create a more satisfying environment for all of us.

I urge that you support the changes outlined in the proposed new Ordinance.