



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

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**MIKE NAVARRE
BOROUGH MAYOR**

MEMORANDUM

To: Blaine Gilman, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

From: Mike Navarre, Borough Mayor *MN*

Date: February 23, 2016

Re: Veto of Resolution 2016-007, Establishing a Temporary Senior Citizen Advisory Task Force

For the reasons discussed below, I hereby veto resolution 2016-007, which provides for the establishment of a temporary senior citizen advisory task force.

After the assembly adopted this resolution, my office researched programs and services currently available for senior citizens and their families in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. In my opinion, this task force will unnecessarily duplicate efforts already undertaken by our local organizations and state agencies at the cost of the taxpayers.

On the Kenai Peninsula, there are ten senior centers located in Anchor Point, Cooper Landing, Homer, Kenai, Ninilchik, Seldovia, Seward, Soldotna, Sterling and Nikiski. Additionally, there are three adult daycare facilities in Kenai, Soldotna and Homer. These thirteen centers work together and with state agencies to keep current on local, state and federal programs available for seniors and to coordinate the provision of programs and services to seniors.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior Disabilities Services ("DSDS") oversees ten departmental units that provide services, programs or representation for seniors and adults with disabilities. Services include Medicare consulting, adult protective services, "Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities" waivers, "Nursing Facility Level of Care" waivers, grant services, personal care assistance, as well as areas of advocacy or client referrals to partnering nonprofits that provide specific areas of expertise not directly offered through state services.

One program listed by DSDS is the "Aging and Disability Resource Centers" (ADRCs). ADRCs are a network of government and non-government agencies tasked with "connect[ing] seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers with long-term services and supports of their choice." Three ADRCs are located on the Kenai Peninsula in Homer, Soldotna and Seward. The facilities receive federal pass-through funds administered by DSDS to ensure that clients are connected with service providers or programs on an individual basis. The local senior centers and adult daycare facilities regularly refer clients to ADRCs for initial assessments and connect them with essential services.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is a board of eleven members whose function is to approve a statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans. The board also makes recommendations on legislation, regulations and funding appropriations. Additionally, the board encourages the development of municipal commissions and community-oriented programs and services for the benefit of older Alaskans. The encouraged "community-oriented programs and services" are successfully provided by the senior and adult daycare centers for Kenai Peninsula Borough residents.

Collaboration among the local senior centers and adult daycare facilities, nonprofit organizations and state agencies starts with the centers as the initial point of contact. The centers provide primary assistance, offer social or educational venues and make referrals to ensure individual services are provided as appropriate. Each center's programs and services are designed to meet the diverse needs of their communities. Further, the center directors meet quarterly to discuss administrative concerns, best practices, shared services, jointly hosted events and mentoring opportunities for new directors.

Staff from my office interviewed the directors from the following centers: Anchor Point, Cooper Landing, Kenai, Nikiski, Ninilchik, Seldovia, Seward, Soldotna and Sterling. The following three questions were discussed:

What assistance do seniors ask for or expect from the center? The following is not an inclusive list of their responses:

- senior housing
- home delivered or congregate meals
- host public assistance counseling or clinics, i.e. Medicare enrollment, employee assistance, legal services, income tax services, Social Security enrollment, wellness clinics, etc.
- banking or general paperwork needs, i.e. completing the online AK Permanent Fund Dividend application
- assist families with aging parents, i.e. moving transitions or end-of-life topics

Do seniors know about the availability of services provided by the center? Yes, the consensus is that the center is a vital asset to the senior population as well as to the community. It is also evident that the reciprocal relationship between centers and agencies' services/programs is a successful key to connecting seniors to individual services.

What is the center's level of participation as a referral service? The senior and the adult daycare centers are usually the initial point of contact to services and programs as appropriate for individual client needs. The families of aging parents and older adults value the advocacy and referral services that centers regularly provide first-hand. The communication among center directors enhances the assistance of clients that may frequent more than one center. Directors share necessary information to ensure that the individual is receiving proper care or referral coordination.

Following are some statements offered by directors:

"The main success on the Peninsula is that the centers allow the ability for elders to stay connected to their community. This option helps their quality of life because they've been a part of the community for years."

"The socialization, advocacy, nutritious meals, support services and activities are well designed programs that support the wellbeing and independence of seniors, all within the community of their choice."

"Our center is the heartbeat of the community. It's where information is exchanged; when something is going on in the community, we know about it at the center."

"Our autonomy is important; it's the connection with the town."

It is clear to me that the senior citizen centers and existing agencies already provide significant services and programs for our senior population and their families, and are the recognized point of contact for people seeking the same. As such, we will utilize the existing senior centers as a point of contact for disseminating information and soliciting feedback from seniors on changes to the borough code that will affect them as residents of the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

In light of this information and the importance of efficiencies in government, especially during this time of fiscal constraint, I have decided the best interests of the borough are served if I veto this resolution.

AS 29.20.270 provides that a veto may be overridden within 21 days following the exercise of the veto or the next regular meeting, whichever is later. The next regular meeting is March 8, 2016, which is in less than 21 days. Respectfully, if the assembly wishes to address overriding this veto it could choose to do so at the March 8, 2016 meeting or call a special meeting on or before March 15, 2016 for that purpose.