

## NEWTOK PLANNING GROUP MEETING

December 2, 2020

### Meeting Notes

#### ATTENDEES

##### **Newtok Village Council (NVC)**

Simeon Fairbanks, President,  
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Phillip Carl, Vice President and Acting Tribal  
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Bernice John, Elder Advisor (and Meeting  
Translator)

##### **Newtok Native Corporation**

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##### **Newtok Village Tribal Members**

John Andy  
Andrew John  
Stanley Tom

##### **Newtok Village Legal Council**

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##### **Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development – Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA)**

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##### **Andrew Burton Photo**

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##### **CRW Engineering Group**

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**Lower Kuskokwim School District**

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Dr. Elizabeth Ruff, Site Administrator, Mertarvik  
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**UPDATE FROM THE NEWTOK VILLAGE COUNCIL (NVC):**

Phillip Carl, NVC Vice President and Acting Tribal Administrator provided an update on newly elected NVC members, the current relocation team, and the status of endangered buildings at Newtok.

**New NVC Officers**

A Tribal election was held in early October 2020 and the current NVC elected officers are as follows:

- President: Simeon Fairbanks, Jr.
- Vice President: Phillip Carl
- Secretary: Lucinta Carl
- Treasurer: Sandra Ayuluk

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- Elder Advisor: Bernice John
- Elder Members: George Carl, Paul Charles

**Current Relocation Team**

Currently, the relocation team consists of the following people:

- NVC members
- Project Manager: Patrick LeMay, PE, LeMay Engineering
- Adison Spafford, CRW Engineering Group
- Michael Walleri, NVC attorney
- Barrett Ristroph, NVC attorney
- Stefani Dalrymple, CPA, CITP, Yukon Accounting & Consulting, Inc.

**Status of endangered buildings/infrastructure in Newtok**

Erosion of the bank of the Ninglick River continues to encroach on Newtok village infrastructure. The residential homes and teacher housing closest to the river bank have been demolished as part of buyout efforts.

**ACTIVITY OVER THE SUMMER (*Patrick Lemay, PE, LeMay Engineering*)**

Patrick LeMay reported that in 2020, the following construction activity had taken place at Mertarvik:

- 3,500-feet (0.7-Mile) of pioneer roads
- 24 gravel house pads
- 7 two-bedroom homes at a cost of \$150,000 each (90% complete)
- 2 four-bedroom homes at a cost of \$160,000 each (75% complete)

In addition, high-quality drinking water wells were drilled, and gravel was purchased and stockpiled for road construction (4,325-feet/0.82-mile) in 2021. The NVC operated the man camp and opened the Mertarvik store. Mertarvik now has an operational landfill, sewage treatment plant, and fuel handling services. The total cost of these activities is \$7,480,430.

Planned activities for the 2021 construction season includes completing:

- The interiors of the nine homes
- 4,325-feet (0.82-Mile) of Pioneer Roads
- 13 house pads
- A duplex funded by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- The remaining community power distribution system

- The water line from the wellfield to the water treatment plant
- Construct a 210,000-gallon water storage tank
- Construct the washeteria

### **MASTER IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (*Adison Spafford, CRW*)**

Adison Spafford discussed the 2020-2022 update she is working on to the 2018 Newtok to Mertarvik Master Implementation Plan, which sets the vision for the Newtok-Mertarvik Relocation Project for the next two years. The NVC plans to update the master implementation plan at the end of each construction season so the goals of the next construction season will be realistic and achievable.

#### **Funded Relocation Activities for 2021**

Total funding for 2021 projects is \$11,291,906, which covers pioneer roads, up to 18 homes, 13 hosing pads, completion of the power distribution system, and the washeteria.

#### **Unfunded Relocation Activities for 2021-2022**

Funding needed for 2021-2022 activities is \$15,850,000 which includes construction of 25 homes, community streets, water and sewer systems, equipment shop construction and the landfill.

### **AGENCY/ORGANIZATION UPDATES**

#### **DOT/PF and FAA – Airport Construction (*Aaron Hughes, DOT/PF*)**

Aaron Hughes provided an update on the new airport at Mertarvik. Project will be advertised in November 2020 with construction planned for 2021-2022. Funding is secured for this effort. It's anticipated the airport will be opened in the fall of 2022. There are three different notices-to-proceed for the contractors, based on when DOT&PF receives the funding from the federal government. Aaron is hopeful that the FAA will provide all the funding this year for the project, so the work can proceed smoothly. There is some uncertainty about how the bid process will go and what the federal funding amount will be available this federal fiscal year. Either way, DOT&PF will be able to push forward with the project. Once a contractor is selected, there are two required meetings planned in Mertarvik and Newtok. This will provide an opportunity for the contractor to go through the construction schedule and for local hire. DOT&PF's website for the airport construction project is <http://newtokairportrelocation.com/>. Aaron answered questions about the type of local job opportunities would be available and what type of training.

#### **Lower Kuskokwim School District – school and teacher housing (*LKSD invited*)**

Doug Boyer, Director of Operations with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD), reported that teacher housing near the Ninglick River was demolished by Ahtna. Based on current

erosion rates, the Newtok school is expected to be encroached by erosion by 2022. The Mertarvik School is currently ranked 9<sup>th</sup> on the LKSD's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) list, however the LKSD Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) has not secured funding for a new school at Mertarvik, or to demolish the school at Newtok. Currently the Mertarvik Evacuation Center is housing a temporary school, however this will be inadequate for the planned 47 homes and corresponding population is relocated to Mertarvik.

**Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation – Clinic (*Asela Cahoun, YKHC*)**

Asela Calhoun with the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation reported that Annie John is the Community Health Practitioner (CHP) permanently located at Mertarvik. Annie is operating a temporary clinic from 9 am to 12 noon and from 1 to 4 pm. She is also on-call for emergencies. Currently the old man camp is housing a temporary health clinic. There have been a few challenges with getting supplies from Newtok to Mertarvik without having regular air service available. The Mertarvik has relied upon getting supplies either by snow machine or by boat. COVID testing has also been challenging because COVID test send-out has to be by plane. Asela just received approval to do rapid testing. Annie has been trained perform the rapid test and has the supplies now, which does not have to be sent out and the results are available within 15 minutes. Asela has also received permission to use the rapid test on anyone, whether they have COVID symptoms or not. Asela has also arranged to have a telemed card to be available for Mertarvik as well. YKHC is making plans to have vaccinations available at Mertarvik. The temporary clinic will be inadequate for the planned residents moving to Mertarvik in over the next few years, however funding has not been secured for a permanent clinic yet.

**NEW NPG MEETING**

The next NPG meeting will tentatively be scheduled between January and March 2021, based on the NVC's preference.