

AFACT

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SPRING 2011

Mountain View's Glenn Square Mall

Broken Promises. . .Future Dreams



Mountain View resident Elma Marrone testifies that the current Glenn Square is not what was portrayed in 2005. She holds an early Anchorage Daily News article that describes the original vision of the mall.

“We are here tonight to shine light on the future prosperity of Mountain View's Glenn Square Mall.” With those words of introduction, Deborah Sims, a member of Bethel Chapel, opened the January 24 meeting to address broken promises and future dreams in Mountain View.

More than 200 people filled New Hope Baptist Church, a testament to the community's concern about a mall built in 2006–07 and standing nearly empty today. Ms. Sims shared that, “most of us have driven by the Glenn Square Mall and we wonder, ‘where are the businesses and what is going on with this mall?’ The mall we see today is not the picture we envisioned six years ago. Where did that vision go?”

Bethel Chapel Pastor, Robert Evans, provided an overview of the

Glenn Square Mall history. In January 2005, the Municipality created the Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) to negotiate “like a private developer.” ACDA subsequently sold Municipal land in Mountain View to P. O'B Montgomery for the development of retail center.

In addressing neighborhood concerns in 2005, the developer shared with neighborhood residents a vision of chain stores, local businesses, housing and an arts and cultural center. Today 17 stores remain empty, there is no housing and there is no arts and cultural center. Graffiti has begun to sprout up on the property.

Pastor Evans told the meeting attendees that expectations were high in 2005, but those expectations have

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not been met. The mall was expected to produce 780 retail jobs—there are fewer than 100. The sale of the land was expected to raise \$5.4 million—the Municipality earned less than \$500,000 on the sale. In addition, \$650,000 in annual property taxes was expected—in 2010 the development paid \$400,000.

Bethel Chapel Organizing Ministry members were not content to merely lament the situation. They invited key community leaders and the mall owner to hear the residents' concerns and then invited those leaders to work together to reverse the downward spiral of the mall.

Residents shared their dashed hopes and their disappointment that

Continued inside

“Glenn Square Mall: Too many empty storefronts in Mountain View shopping center, but at least now it has the community’s attention—and a prayer.”

~Anchorage Daily News,
Opinion Page

the economy, the timing and the location all contributed to the mall’s dormancy. Residents were clear on another thing: they were no longer willing to shrug their shoulders and accept all of the excuses . . . it was time for everyone to work together and act.

According to Pastor Evans, the Municipality was exploring moving Health and Human Services into the mall— a one-stop shop of sorts that would make those services more accessible to Mountain View’s low-income community. The residents at the meeting had hoped for some confirmation of this information, but Mayor Dan Sullivan, although invited, did not attend the meeting.

Bill Popp, Executive Director of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, and Jewel Jones, Executive Director of the Anchorage Community Land Trust, were present. Both committed to work in partnership with one another and Kimco, the current mall owners, to turn the mall around.


Paul Roggenkamp of Kimco attended the meeting to represent Glenn Square Mall owners. Bethel Chapel member, Patrina Davis, asked him for a commitment from Kimco to



Paul Roggenkamp of Kimco, Bill Popp of AEDC and Jewel Jones of ACLT respond to questions from Bethel Chapel members Colette Victor, Patrina Davis and Robert Lincoln.

aggressively explore new options. He agreed to “think outside of the box” and work with the residents and Mr. Popp and Ms. Jones.

Bethel Chapel Organizing Ministry leaders will meet with Mr. Roggenkamp, Mr. Popp and Ms. Jones in late March to assess progress and next steps. The leaders hope “to see a vibrant, successful mall that will continue the revitalization of Mountain View and make the neighborhood and city better.”

Thanks to the determination of Bethel Chapel Organizing Ministry, the Glenn Square Mall is no longer the “elephant in the room” in Anchorage. As stated on the January 30 Anchorage Daily News opinion page, “Glenn Square mall: Too many empty storefronts in Mountain View shopping center, but at least now it has the community’s attention—and a prayer.” 

Shedding light on the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act

In January, AFACT hosted a Health Care Forum at First CME Church, moderated by Pastor Jerry Webb. Linda Hall, director of the Alaska Division of Insurance, provided an overview of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, with particular emphasis on the provisions of the Act that went into effect in 2010.

Health care accessibility has been a recurring concern shared by AFACT member congregations. First CME Church filled with more than 100 people who came to learn about the 2010 national health care reform. Ms Hall’s presentation covered the high risk pool, market reforms, medical loss ratios and rebates, and premium increase reviews. Her presentation concluded with




Residents gather at First CME Church to learn more from Linda Hall, the Director of the Alaska Division of Insurance, on the 2010 federal health care reform.

questions from the audience.

Larry Graham, from Central Lutheran Church, voiced a concern that resonated with many in the audience. Mr. Graham asked why the premiums for small group plans increase so dramatically each year. According to Mr. Graham, since 2008 the health care premiums for pastors and full-time parish staff have increased nearly 115 percent at Central Lutheran Church. Ms. Hall responded that the

Division approves the increase of insurance rates, and those increases have recently been in the double digits each year. However, it remained unclear why the increases were so dramatic and steep.

The lack of providers for Medicare recipients was also an overwhelming concern of participants. Since the forum was directed solely

at discussing the 2010 provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, there was limited time for a discussion of the Medicare issue. However, AFACT members agreed that further discussions and forums will be necessary so that ordinary citizens have a full grasp of health care accessibility issues that affect their families. 

St. Anthony Parish Mardi Gras



AFACT FUNDRAISER 2011

Jewel Lake Neighborhood Welcomes Community Action Policing Team



Residents talked with Anchorage Police Department spokesperson Dave Parker at a January 2009 Gloria Dei Lutheran meeting.

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church members and neighbors are celebrating the announcement that the Anchorage Police Department's Community Action Policing (CAP) Team is now concentrating its efforts in their neighborhood. In February, Lt. Garry Gilliam contacted Gloria Dei member Sandy Fazio with the news—two years of congregation and neighborhood

“Our hope is to see the dream of community-oriented policing become a reality in every Anchorage neighborhood.”

~ Pastor Scott Fuller,
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

efforts were not in vain and the CAP Team was moving into the neighborhood.

Gloria Dei Lutheran raised the issue of increasing crime and the need for a community policing model at a 2009 meeting with then Chief of Police Rob Heun. More than 150 congregation members and neighborhood residents attended the meeting to share stories of cars being

set on fire, bombs in mailboxes, and decreased safety on the recreational trails.


The CAP Team was in the Spenard neighborhood at that time, but immediately after the meeting at Gloria Dei, the neighborhood began to sense an increased police presence.

Sandy Fazio helped to mobilize her neighborhood to bring the increasing crime to the attention of the Anchorage Police Department. According to Ms. Fazio, “Prior to the Gloria Dei meeting, people felt that response time was too long when crimes were called into APD. But since that 2009 meeting, when we call APD, they are on it. We have all been more informed on how to report things and communicate with APD because relationships have been established that never would have been established without that meeting.”

“I never gave up,” said Ms. Fazio. She credits Lt. Garry Gilliam, who, she says “was instrumental in letting us know that the CAP Team cared about our issues, even though they couldn't move in immediately. “Crime is still a problem in the

neighborhood,” added Ms. Fazio, “and the CAP team says that there has also been an increase in gang activity. But, it’s so exciting to have the CAP team here and have that relationship established with the officers.”

Pastor Scott Fuller, who serves Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, said, “Our hope is to see the dream of community-oriented policing become a reality in every Anchorage neighborhood. Certainly we’re thankful for the increased police presence and we promise to continue working to help that dream take shape throughout the city.”

Gloria Dei Lutheran Local Organizing Ministry will be hosting a meeting where neighborhood residents can share their concerns with CAP Team officers. For further information, contact AFACT. 

UPDATES

- Alaska Native Lutheran Church and Catholic Native Ministry are working together on a one-to-one listening campaign in the Alaska Native community. One-to-one visits began in February.
- AFACT welcomes two new member congregations: Lutheran Church of Hope and St. Mary’s Episcopal Church.
- AFACT will hold a Statewide Leadership Training April 6, 6:00 pm through April 9, 9:00 pm at Holy Spirit Center. The training is open to all AFACT members. Others who are interested may apply to attend. For more information contact AFACT.

AFACT Member

Alaska Native Lutheran Church
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church
Bethel Chapel
Catholic Native Ministry
Central Lutheran Church
First CME Church
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church of Hope
New Hope Baptist Church
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church
St. Anthony Catholic Church
St. Mark Lutheran Church
St. Mary’s Episcopal Church

*For more information contact:
AFACT*

**(Anchorage Faith and Action –
Congregations Together)**

P. O. Box 143294

Anchorage, AK 99514

907-297-7731

www.anchoragefact.org

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Address Services Requested

Anchorage, AK 99514-3294
P. O. Box 143294

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