

Inside Today

Tri-Valley School Class of 2024 pulls off a final prank • Page A6



ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF COREY DIRUTIGLIANO

A concept art rendering depicts potential summertime, left, and wintertime, right, activity in community hub located on the Polaris Building site. The community hub was pitched as one possible use of the downtown property if development doesn't occur in the next few years.

Urban community concept proposed for Polaris site

By Jack Barnwell

As Fairbanks city officials and staff plan the future development of the site of the now-toppled Polaris Building and developers begin expressing interest in the location, a long-time urban planner has an ambitious proposal for long-term use of the space.

Corey DiRutigliano, a transportation planner with Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, pitched an idea in a brief but thorough presentation at Tuesday's Fairbanks City Council work session.

His vision: a central gathering space meant to draw summer and winter activities,



A concept art rendering depicts potential layout of a community hub located on the Polaris Building site.

retail chalets, temporary play structures and pop-up events such as food trucks, art fairs and markets.

"Vacant land in the city center signals decline, reduces foot traffic and undermines nearby businesses," DiRutigliano said.

"Without proactive use, such sites too often become fenced-off voids or parking lots."

DiRutigliano stressed that the first year after demolition will be critical to shaping the narrative of a vacant urban lot's future. It aligns with a long-term option for the site in case development can't be accomplished.

Last year, Mayor David Pruhs laid out two options for the site. The preferred option is to have something developed on it within two years. The second option would utilize the premium piece of real estate for a public purpose if a developer isn't selected in the near-term.

"This will not be a parking lot," Pruhs said emphatically

on Tuesday.

DiRutigliano said his concepts are designed to be temporary but adaptable during any interim period in which the Polaris site is vacant.


"I have full faith that a building will end up on this site," DiRutigliano said. "But building momentum and signaling investment will make the site appealing for more substantial development."

However, he stressed that one massive development that some city officials and local leaders hope will materialize won't foster urban renewal.

"While a high-profile development of the Polaris site

CONCEPT » A5

GOOD MORNING



The weather

A thick cloud cover

High today66

Low tonight50

Sunrise: 5:56 a.m.

Sunset: 9:48 p.m.

WEATHER » A3

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Aurora forecast


Low aurora activity forecasted. If skies are clear, low-level displays may be visible overhead from Utqiagvik to Fairbanks, and may be visible low on the northern horizon from as far south as Anchorage and Juneau.

This information is provided by aurora forecasters at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For more information about the aurora, visit <http://www.gi.alaska.edu/AuroraForecast>

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SOURDOUGH JACK:

"Maybe the borough will come help me clean-up my dog yard!"



CLEAN-UP TIME



Borough tackles property clean-up on Badger Road

By Jack Barnwell

After 46 visits and eight years of citations and requests, the Fairbanks North Star Borough is close to successfully cleaning up a "junkyard" property off Badger Road.

Efforts started last week when a local contractor began clearing out more than 100 tons of trash, waste and refuse, not including derelict vehicles on the 2-acre residential lot.

Borough Mayor Grier Hopkins said Wednesday that the borough has been engaged in protracted efforts since September 2017 trying to have the



An aerial drone view shows the cleanup efforts by Fairbanks North Star Borough contractors to clean up a "junkyard" property on Badger Road on Aug. 13. FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH IMAGE



(Above) Piles of debris, junk and trash surround trailers and junk vehicles on a Badger Road property before the Fairbanks North Star Borough contractors begin clearing it out on Aug. 12. (Left) Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Planning Director Kellen Spillman examines the large accumulation of trash and waste on a property. BOTH PHOTOS KAITLIN WILSON/FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

School district completes \$5.7 million in facilities project

By Haley Lehman

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District completed six projects at school district facilities this summer, totaling approximately \$5.7 million funded by the borough, school district and Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Jahanara Carreon, school district facilities director, gave an update to the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Board of Education Tuesday night.

Funding from the Fairbanks North Star Borough Capital Improvement Program upgraded the Lathrop High School kitchen, replaced all equipment and made it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act for \$2.2 million. The borough finance committee approved \$867,000 in February to replace the boilers and add a natural gas line at North Pole High School. University Park Elementary School got a new playground surface and updated parking lot and sidewalks to meet ADA requirements for \$2 million.

However, Carreon said that mechanical upgrades are still needed at North Pole High School to replace pipes and moderating heat throughout.

"There's still some mechanical challenges that we'll be facing," she said.

Carreon said that the school district plans to ask the borough assembly for funding to upgrade the special education and kindergarten playgrounds at University Park Elementary School.

The school district paid \$109,908 to recoat the interior of the Weller Elementary School fire sprinkler system holding tank

COMPLETE » A2