

Mayor Hendrickson Disclaims All Responsibility For Report Made On School Site In Waynor Tract

In a letter addressed to the Board of Directors of the Juneau Independent School District, approved Friday night by the City Council for publication, Mayor Waldo E. Hendrickson denied any responsibility for a recently publicized report approving the Waynor Tract public school site. He emphasized that neither he nor City Engineer J. L. McNamara, who with Edwin L. Clark composed the site committee, knew anything of the public announcement until they read it in local newspapers.

The Mayor's letter said:
Board of Directors
Juneau Independent School Dis.
Juneau, Alaska

To the Members of the Board:

In the March 10 edition of the Alaska Daily Empire I noticed a news item under a heading that read as follows: "3 Inspect School Site; Men report No Slide Danger."

This article is rather misleading in that it states that a three-man delegation composed of Superintendent E. C. Clark, City Engineer J. L. McNamara and myself issued a report on our findings after an inspection of the site of the proposed Juneau school construction program in the Waynor Tract; and that it is our opinion that if this year's

heavy snowfall does not result in a slide within the next month, there is no evidence to support the contention that this is a hazardous area.

After receiving your letter of March 2 outlining the position of the Board in relation to the contemplated site in the Waynor Tract and detailing the efforts made by your Board to secure other sites, Mr. McNamara and I accepted the invitation of Mr. Clark to inspect the Waynor site area with him.

As stated in the new release, we inspected the proposed site and the hillside directly above it. We found that a large gully leads diagonally across the face of the mountain in a southerly direction for approximately a quarter of a mile. This gully appears to catch all slides that occur in that vicinity and funnel them on to the hillside directly above the proposed site; several slides have already occurred during the past month or so. At this time the distance from the bottom of the present slide to the upper edge of the proposed site is 470 feet—a distance of a little more than two of our city blocks. There is a wooded area approximately 250 feet deep be-

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HENDRICKSON SAYS

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tween the slide and the school site that will afford some protection if no further cutting is necessary in clearing the site.

Since most of our trees have shallow roots and some of the area brush-covered, it is unwise to place too much confidence in the holding power of this belt of timber.

Our conclusion was that we would be in a much better position to judge the degree or amount of danger from slides after another month or so when heavier and larger slides can usually be expected.

By crossing the Douglas Bridge and driving north a short distance on the Douglas Island road it is possible to have an advantageous view of the entire area.

Neither Mr. McNamara or myself had any part in preparing the news release for the paper nor do we know the contents of the report made to the Board. Inasmuch as we were named as members of the three-man committee whose findings were published in the paper and reported to the board, they must have been in writing and we feel that our concurrence and consent to this report should have been obtained before it was released to the press.

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I personally feel that the report is presented in its most favorable light and is too optimistic. I also think that it should still be considered as a possible slide area whether the slides this Spring reach it or not as that is no guaranty that it will be free of slides in the future.

The weather during the past few weeks has been most favorable to a gradual melting of snow on the hillsides, with few if any slides occurring; on the other hand, wet snow or heavy rains falling during this period followed by a warm spell would most certainly have caused tremendous snowslides.

It is very evident from your news release and your letter that your Board is investigating every possible location and I can appreciate the difficulties you are facing in finding a school site that will meet every requirement. The City Council is very much interested in this project and our school committee and other City officials will be pleased to cooperate with you in every way possible in making further efforts to find and secure the best obtainable school site.

Sincerely,

W. E. Hendrickson
Mayor.