

# **Barrow Urges Coordination Of Agencies**

The city of Barrow and the Arctic Slope Native Association have not been satisfied with the lack of coordination and local input characterizing state and federal programs implemented in their area.

So, in a first-step effort to improve the situation, they called many of the agencies together for a meeting last week in Barrow.

Twenty three representatives from agencies showed up for the two-day meeting Thursday and

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# Barrow, Agencies...

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Friday and discussed with Barrow councilmen and other spokesmen of the region current and future needs of the area.

The villagers want to meet certain pressing needs as soon as possible. However, they also want to be prepared for the future because they feel that the oil industry will probably have a permanent effect upon their area.

The 800-mile pipeline proposed by TAPS is slated to run through their region where large oil deposits have already been discovered.

The area referred to covers the northern part of Alaska and includes, in addition to Barrow, Wainwright, Barter Island, Point Hope and Anaktuvuk Pass representing a total population of about 3,000. All are members of the Arctic Slope Native Association.

There have been plenty of plans in the past for the North Slope area but the residents charge that they have been consulted on few, if any, of the decisions although they were often significantly affected by them.

Furthermore, the spokesmen say that the various agencies have not coordinated their efforts in the area often resulting in duplication and conflicting plans.

For these reasons the city of Barrow held the Interagency Forum.

The people so vitally affected by the programs want the one hand to know what the other is doing and they insist that they be informed and consulted before any moves are made.

With these overriding purposes in mind, representatives of Barrow and the Arctic Slope Native Association discussed specific needs with the agency spokesmen.

Some of the agencies represented were the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Public Health Service, the Alaska State Housing Authority, the Federal Field Committee, the Office of the Governor, the State Division

of Welfare and the Arctic Research Laboratory.

They all endorsed several recommendations presented by the villages and Barrow.

According to Eben Hopson, executive director of the Slope Association, most of the participants felt the meeting was useful and especially those representing Barrow since its problems were discussed in detail.

Favorable reactions also came from Bureau of Indian Affairs' spokesmen.

Most left the meeting with some feeling of unity at least in approach, Peter Three Stars of the BIA commented.

The discussion was very free, he continued, and the representatives got a further realization of the need for maximum cooperation of all efforts there.

But will the endorsements be followed by concrete actions to improve the living conditions in the area?

Probably so, according to one representative at the meeting.

For one thing, the Federal Field Committee which was present supported the recommendations and volunteered to encourage state agencies to act. It is charged with the responsibility of coordinating all federal programs in Alaska.

Furthermore, this is an election year and the Arctic Slope Native Association has political power that it can use toward achieving certain goals.

Another interagency meeting is tentatively set for April to maintain and to add to the momentum gained at this first meeting.

Major recommendations endorsed were:

—housing for all four communities.

—electricity for both Barter Island and Anaktuvuk Pass.

—long range planning for the development of the coal mines at Wainwright.

—consideration of the improvement of the water supply for all communities.

—recommendations for ways to improve the fuel supply at Anaktuvuk Pass. The village has exhausted its timber resources and is currently using a supply of oil that will soon run out.

—post office buildings for both Barter Island and Wainwright, and perhaps Anaktuvuk Pass.

Most of these recommendations were included in a resolution presented by the Arctic Slope Native Association which was also endorsed by the interagency group.

Other parts of the resolution called for upgrading the Court System, development of a regional high school program, support of the AFN land claims position, and a supplement for satellite communications for rural areas.

The association's resolution had earlier been sent to the State legislature requesting that the lawmakers consider it and provide the necessary funding for implementation.

Also, at the meeting the following topics were discussed but no action taken on them: employment needs, the need for direct contact with TAPS by the local development corporation, air service for Barter Island on a more regular basis, recreational facilities, roads to the Point and to the Will Rogers-Wiley Post monument for the local people and tourist travel, graveling of the townsites of Barrow and Wainwright, recommendations for erosion problems, raising the lagoon dam and spillway in order raise the water for future use by the whole community, borough organization for the area and a water and sewage disposal system.