

BIRCHWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

7 TO 9 p.m., Wednesday, March 12, 2003

BIRCHWOOD ABC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Meeting Agenda

- 1) Approval of February Meeting Minutes
- 2) Correspondence Received and Noted
- 3) Committee Reports
- 4) Old Business--Mobile Home Park Permitting
- 5) New Business--Representatives from Neighborhood Watch and Chugiak Volunteer Fire Dept..

****Note:** Our agenda is subject to modification to allow input/action on issues that did not make this notice. Any problems or concerns you may have about your area, please contact us.

Bobbi Wells, Vice Chair 688-4321/Nanette Belk, Secretary 694-962

The Chugiak Volunteer Fire Dept. will have a representative at our council meeting and we encourage you to attend and ask questions if you have them.

The following is my own (as opposed to an official council position) editorial, based on personal observation, and is presented for your review and discussion. Bobbi Wells

The re-districting of community council boundaries still doesn't have a hearing date set before the Assembly but I want to show you how a seemingly innocent action that only looks moderately damaging to an area can actually be the groundwork for an even more sinister result. Birchwood did notify the P&Z Board that their desire was to allow the Powder Ridge Subdivision to de-annex from Birchwood and join the Eagle River Council PROVIDING that was their written stated desire. What got written in was the de-annexation of 2400 acres of Eklutna's land, supported by Eagle River and the Eagle River Valley Community Councils (Anna Fairclough told the Valley council that we desired that PLUS making Fire Creek our southern boundary, while Debra Luper (of Eklutna, Inc) chair of the ER Council supported removing all of Eklutna's acreage.) Eagle River also made a grab for Chugiak's boundary so that Fred Meyer, SBS, etc would be under their boundary. Council protests fell on deaf ears.

NOW, Anna Fairclough has proposed that those same boundary lines should be used to de-annex our Chugiak Volunteer Fire Dept service area, and the area given over to Anchorage Fire Dept, a 'professional and paid' organization. Since the law requires a vote by 'those affected', her ordinances propose placing this on the ballot and becoming effective in May, 2003. We haven't heard what our Chugiak neighbors think but our Fire Dept is extremely upset over this. Dan Kendall opposes this measure but Anna has co-sponsors for this measure: Tesche, Taylor, Von Gemmingen, Sullivan, Traini, and others. The Anchorage Fire Dept mill rate is 1.68 while the Chugiak VFD is at 0.99. The local paper will probably carry more articles on this but I suggest that all of you begin educating

yourselves on the issues and what the result will be...and think about where it will end. The Service Area concept, written into the MOA Charter, has been under attack for some time now, along with the issue of having a volunteer fire dept. Several years ago, they tried to force Chugiak to begin charging for ambulance response. However, that was defeated, and when you need them, you still aren't charged. The residents of Powder Ridge are due to receive a Chugiak VFD station right in their subdivision, and they have been led to believe that it will still happen even if they are instead served by the Anchorage Fire Dept . However, that is not true. The Anchorage Fire Dept is so short of money, 3 million or so, that they are having to cut back to be within their budget. And the Chugiak VFD cannot build or maintain a fire station that is outside of their Service Area.

Many at the Powder Ridge meeting were surprised to learn that our volunteers actually carry emergency medical supplies in their own vehicles so that when they are called, they can immediately render aid. Since our volunteers are dispersed throughout the area I find that to be a very comforting.

There are many necessary steps in containing a fire that need to be accomplished prior to pumping water. You will learn what those are at the meeting. And it is the training, the drill, that conditions the firefighter to automatically initiate all those tasks. Response time is **important** in firefighting, just like it is for the medical emergency. It was the Chugiak volunteers that called Station 11 for the ladder truck. Gee, it wasn't available. Under the mutual-aid agreement, Chugiak then said, "well, bring what you got!" Side by side, paid and volunteer, they fought to save Frank's house and the houses of Frank's neighbors. Cooperation.

Frank's neighbors believe they will get better service from the Anchorage Fire Dept. Eklutna, Inc believes they will get better service from the Anchorage Fire Dept. But it was Anna that approached Fred Meyer and Spenard Builders, and the businesses behind the duck pond, to see if they would like to consider joining the Anchorage Fire Dept service area. Because of the cost to protect the greater area if our volunteer fire dept is disbanded, don't expect to pay the same rate they do in the Anchorage Bowl today. The Anchorage Fire Dept will have to cover their increased cost and they will be getting that from the homeowners and businesses in the newly expanded area.