

**Birchwood Community Council**  
19213 Sprucecrest Drive  
Chugiak, Alaska 99567



August, 2003

**Birchwood boundaries have now officially changed, diminished by having 1200 acres of our former area annexed to the Eagle River Council, everything between Clunie Lake and Fire Creek. An amendment proposed by Assemblyman Dan Kendall to preserve our existing boundaries resulted in a sharp retort from Anna Fairclough. Anna stood behind the rationale that the municipality voiced, that all of Eklutna's land from Clunie Lake to Beach Lake Regional Park will be developed to resemble Eagle River proper. Kendall has another proposal for further boundary changes but it should only affect Chugiak and Eagle River Council areas. Chugiak Council will meet and probably offer us some insight into their stance before we are asked for comment.**

**If you live near Lot 62B, located at 17660 Pioneer Drive, there is an application for a zoning variance to allow their stable to be located within their 50 foot setback. We won't meet in time to get comments in as a Council so those of you interested will have to attend the hearing before the Zoning Board on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The Pennington's contacted us and we promised we would have a discussion at our September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting and fax any motion or resolution to the Board and the Administration immediately, but there is no guarantee that the Board will receive it in time to influence their decision.**

**There is also a site plan review for a Type I ACS tower to be located northeast of the highway at North Birchwood Loop. The Council will be taking comment at our September meeting.**

**The Birchwood Airport Master Plan is moving forward with 3 alternatives being reviewed. All alternatives attempt to solve the conflict between the Ultralights and regular airplane traffic. Two of the alternatives will require that our shooting range be relocated or reduced. All options propose changes to the road and the track alignment. No grade separated crossing is planned at this time. If you missed the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and wish to comment, please call Mr John McPherson at 274-2000, the project manager for the study now underway. We need to hear from the membership in that vicinity, plus others that will be impacted by these changes, so be sure and attend our next meeting.**

**If you are a regular reader of the Alaska Star, you know that our newly elected Mayor had his transition team review a number of issues. From that has come the recommendation that the Chugiak Volunteer Fire Service District, the South Fork Auxiliary, and the Girdwood Fire Service District be merged into the Anchorage Fire Service District. At the August Eagle River Chamber meeting, Begich said there are issues that need to be resolved and his City Manager, Denis LeBlanc will be making the decision shortly. The Chugiak Fire Department has asked us for a resolution regarding this “take-over”. I have heard from others that even though we are the ones that will be affected we won’t be allowed a vote on whether we want this and the ensuing burden that will fall on our pocketbooks. The minor burden will be that we will have to pay for ambulance service (\$500). The biggest burden will be the loss of our excellent service, and the increase in property tax as the mil rate increases to pay the cost of all the bonding initiated by the Anchorage Fire Department as well as the cost of having 24/7 coverage by full time paid firefighters. One of the surprising facts I discovered while researching the “issues” is that in the entire United States, 73% of all fire stations are**

**owned and manned by volunteer firefighters. Neither Girdwood nor Chugiak were represented on the transition team that put the report together for our Mayor.**

**Have you heard about Vision Anchorage and their “call to action”? It’s a plan to make Anchorage grow and create new jobs. Quoting from the May 19<sup>th</sup> Anchorage Times editorial published in the Daily News:**

**“Stepping up to the plate is...Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce which will work with Eklutna, Inc on development of land suitable for business parks and new industry. Among the chamber’s focus will be development of land at Birchwood Airport...”**

**If you live along North Birchwood Loop, you might want to follow this up as access to the airport and all this development progresses. And for all of you living west of the railroad tracks the Eklutna plan for the Chief Alex Parkway, connecting Eklutna’s holdings at the airport with their land at the Powder Reserve has resurfaced. Have you wondered how they intend to cross through Beach Lake Park? I’m sure the municipality will tell us eventually.**

**Nancy Dahlstrom has decided to step down as our Chair and we are going to have to address this vacancy at the September meeting. Our annual elections will be held at our October meeting and we certainly hope that some of you care enough about our area to volunteer your time as an Officer or Committee head for Birchwood. The character and lifestyle of Birchwood residents can quickly be eroded by the changes proposed, both within and surrounding our area. We are 753 families strong and we speak with a single voice for all of Birchwood. You have the opportunity to come and shape your community into what you want or you can choose to remain silent while others make the decision for you.**

