

Birchwood Community Council

P.O. Box 670984 • Chugiak, AK 99567-0984
birchwoodcouncil@gmail.com

Minutes

Wednesday, December 11, 2019, 7-9 PM
Beach Lake Chalet, 17611 S Birchwood Loop Rd

Agenda subject to modification to allow input/action on issues that did not make this notice

1. Call to Order 7 PM

2. Approval of Minutes (November) approved

3. Announcements

- a) Several title 21 land use issues are under consideration by P&Z and the Assembly; they don't affect us out here much so CERAB has not taken them on; Debbie has copies if anyone is interested.
- b). Crystal and Fred had a town hall meeting to consider whether we fix Gruening Middle School, or not fix it, move those students to Eagle River HS and combine the two High Schools onto the Chugiak HS campus. About 450 people attended. There were presentations by advocates of both of those options; by ASD; and Anna McKinnon gave a historical overview of Gruening and Eagle River High School. Then discussion, Q&As.

4. Reports

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank: There is a new budget with an increase; the Assembly re-appropriated event insurance, so councils have liability insurance for their meetings. We need to send the meeting schedule to Mark at FCC.
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report: The Board submitted a resolution for Starner Bridge replacement. Mark Littlefield was concerned if the bridge wouldn't support all fire equipment, and suggested using capital funds to bring it up to strength. Tim Benningfield (CVFD) notes that in further conversation with Mark, it's clear that the bridge will be adequate to support fire equipment. For the 2020 CIP, the board believes we should submit to CBERRRSA, and not to Anchorage. There was some question if we should submit to Anchorage, too, especially because there are state issues. The new contractor bid is up. He reminds us that we plow berms (across driveways; if we wanted to plow no berms, either the price goes up, or plow out takes longer (72 rather than 24 hours).
- c) Parks and Recreation Report: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/ERparks/> We need feedback on the Compatible Lands Foundation proposed easement. – will send out a summary and get feedback next meeting.
- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board Debbie will serve another term. Lexi will ask Barbara to help with by laws, and Gretchen also volunteers to help . On a side note, AMATS accepted the committee recommendation to prioritize merge lane upgrades on the Glenn Highway.
- e) Treasurer's report \$245
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD: They have had 1024 runs so far this year – over 1,000 runs in a year for the first time. The Station 31 training facility is almost done – you can see it as you drive by. It was purchased with CVFD fund balance; they used operating funds to put it up. Funding has been approved for a new Fire Truck (funded from fund balance, no interest

2019-2020 board: Debbie Ossiander, Chair & CERAB rep; Gretchen Wehmhoff, Vice Chair and Secretary for Publicity; Lexi Hill, Secretary & Parks and Rec rep; Matt Cruickshank, FCC and Road Board rep; Patty Friend, Member at large; Val Jokela, Treasurer

Birchwood Community Council

costs and no bonds). This large truck will be a hybrid, working as a water tender but can also carry personnel, and replace more than one older vehicle. It will save money on maintenance, insurance, etc, with no loss of service. Two of the apparatus being replaced are from the 90s; the third is a rarely used water tender. Finally, with all the winds, watch the power lines and report if they're down. Monitor them, because CVFD can't. Bobbi asks what to do if the line is down, across her driveway so she can't get out; also if it's sparking, and dangerous – in that case, call 911. Debbie asks about the Junior program. CVFD has an active junior program for ages 14 to 18; some of those have transitioned into adult volunteers, or gone on to careers with Anchorage FD, (or other fire departments). There is information and application form on the website.

- g) Birchwood Patrol Report: APD visited Eagle River CC, and noted that the Department is currently understaffed at Chugiak due to vacations, etc. We request a visit from APD to our council.
- h) Legislative / Assembly reports (none)

5. Appearances:

a) Craig Bennett on the Railroad's platting action near Powder Reserve/NW quarter section 25. Craig is with S4, a survey company, doing this work for the Alaska RR. The existing track in the project area (near the curve adjacent to the NW quarter, section 25 portion of Beach Lake Park) is not running in a separately platted corridor tract that would include the 100' easement on both sides of the tracks (it is all on RR land). They are re-platting the existing tracts to define a corridor tract. This will involve re-platting 5 tracts (shown in blue on the attached mailer) into 4, in such a way that the railroad tracks are properly platted. One of the tracts is large and extends well to the south of the actual area in question, and they have to include that entire tract in the 'project area'. No development is planned, it's just a tract plat. They will re-plat so there will be a new corridor tract along the tracks, and 3 (maybe 4) other tracts that take up the same footprint as the current 5 tracts. The only reason there's a public process, is that it's on state land, and so that's required. The plat will probably be submitted in mid January, and go to a platting board hearing in perhaps April or May. If anyone has questions, you can contact S4 (craigb@s4ak.com); for an Alaska RR contact, Andy Donovan 265-2617, or anyone in the land office should be able to help..

6. Old Business

- a) Andrew Brewer, South Fork CC is here asking if there's interest in participation in EaglExit. They are forming a consortium of people interested in participating. They started down this road after Eklutna CC passed a resolution against the effort; they want to actively solicit participation. Andrewbrewer54@gmail.com
- b) AWWU update – should we ask assembly to repeal the ordinances directing AWWU to proceed with the (currently dead) transmission line between N Eagle River and CHS? Patty asks for a recap. We hadn't been hearing anything on the water line for a long time, while the Muni and Eklutna discussed who would pay how much, to get the water line there. Eklutna has gone back to the drawing board as the Eklutna's share of the project cost was higher than they wanted to take on. So, AWWU is no longer working on this issue; they may work with Eklutna for a distribution district for the more immediately planned development. Patty makes a request to bring the correct assembly actions to the January meeting for discussion.

Birchwood Community Council

- c) Casino – does the Council want to consider taking action; if so, we need to determine next steps. Debby called the governor’s office, and eventually got to Lael Harrison, who is researching the issue to make a recommendation to the Attorney General. Lael.harrison@alaska.gov would like the minutes. Matt makes a motion to ask the attorney general to argue Birchwood’s case on the matter of non-compatibility of casino development with Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive plan. Seconded. John asks if we’ve taken a position at this point. We have not. Ken and Bobbi clarify that the piece of land is by the RR crossing of North Birchwood, just beyond the industrial development. John asks if we’ve heard from Eklutna. Gretchen is uncomfortable with taking a position like this, against the development, without hearing from Eklutna, She is not sure Eklutna will talk to us while the matter is under litigation. Matt notes that the comp plan calls this area industrial, and wouldn’t allow this development. Debbie would like to follow our comp plan. Gretchen would like the legal description, a map, more information on the actual development. Ken McCarty notes that ANCSA lands are not Indian land, and this court case could potentially set a precedent. Debbie notes that there’s a zoning area for Eklutna village, established by the muni. We vote 10 in favor 3 opposed; the motion passes. We will send the motion to Ms. Harrison at the state.

7. New Business (none)

a)

8. Open Forum-floor opened to public, any issue (none)

9. Adjournment-8:22pm