

# **Birchwood Community Council**

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## **Minutes**

Wednesday, June 12, 2019, 7-9 PM

Beach Lake Chalet, 17611 S Birchwood Loop Rd

### **1. Call to Order 7:04**

### **2. Approval of Minutes (May) Approved**

### **3. Announcements**

- a) The draft MOA Housing and Community Development 2019 Action Plan has been posted for comments. Comments must be received by 4 PM June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- b) There is municipal polling going on now about transit alternatives: it's at [transitplanning@muni.org](mailto:transitplanning@muni.org). Proposal R helps us a lot. This leads to some discussion about transit. Gretchen notes that there have been suggestions to swing by Highland and into ER (instead of getting off at Artillery Road); and the route around Birchwood Loop. Voting is open for another week on this.
- c) DoT is starting construction to add a lane, realign, and (eventually) construct a new bridge on the southbound Glenn Highway between Artillery Road and Hiland Drive. Starting June 10<sup>th</sup>, drivers should expect intermittent shoulder closures.
- d) The Eagle River Library has re-opened
- e) There is a proposal to sell the land behind the Mac and build 115 housing units.
- f) The Chugiak Area Benefit Association and the Chamber are working to raise money towards a new sound center in the Mac center.
- g) This year's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade will start at 1 PM at Latimer Fire and end at Chugiak Elem.

### **4. Reports**

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank: The expansion of insurance coverage to community councils is done, so now we have insurance for our meetings, etc. Also, the FCC finally did pass the resolution requesting the muni provide better notice to community councils of municipal actions with comment deadlines.
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report: The leftover money from Eklutna Bridge will go back to the state. The Starner Bridge replacement is our next big need. ER Street Maintenance asked the Fire Department about using Fire Station 13 (South Fork) as it has not been much used by AFD. Street Maintenance would like to use it for sand storage and other miscellaneous things; the Fire Dept responded that they would provide it for \$300,000; now there's action before the assembly on this issue. (see below, Assembly report) The Road Board will not meet until September. Jill asks where we find out about ER Street maintenance plans. Gretchen will get the info and we'll send it out.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/ERparks/> Lexi explains about how the additional residential exemption that reduced our property taxes, also really cut into the Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Recreation budget. We can tax up to 1 mill, and the revenue is split between capital and operating budgets. We're asking the assembly (and likely to get) flexibility to determine the operating / capital split each year as it best meets our needs, as long as we don't exceed our authorized 1 mill. With a reduced budget, this means we will prioritize our operating budget, and take care of the facilities we have. The result will be a very small capital budget— we will be re-adjusting our previous capital project priorities to better reflect what we can do with fewer capital dollars. Also,

2018-2019 board: Debbie Ossiander, Chair & CERAB rep; Gretchen Wehmhoff, Vice Chair; Tony Vita, Road Board; Lexi Hill, Secretary & Parks and Rec rep; Matt Cruickshank, Secretary for Publicity; Patty Friend, Member at large; Val Jokela, Treasurer

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following up on last month's discussion of the discussions between Parks and Rec and the Compatible Lands Foundation, the proposal is for a conservation easement, and not a land swap or change of ownership.

- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board: (Debbie Ossiander) There has been one proposal to consider, for a zoning change from residential to light industrial between Eagle River Elementary and the VFW. Eagle River Community Council did not object, so it did not go to CERAB.
- e) Treasurer's report: \$220
- f) Tim Benningfield - CVFD
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report – recent crime activity – Jeff Hartley  
Sgt Mitchell is here to reach out to the community council. He was going to come with an officer assigned out here, but scheduling didn't work. Patrol boundaries have now been aligned with community council boundaries, to help police who patrol communicate with us and understand our concerns better. The recent (last week) statistics on our area: the 'hot' location was 16535 S Birchwood loop (Chugiak High), which received 9 calls last week – mostly security checks. 1800 Beach Lake Road had 7– also security checks. 22211 Birchwood Loop had 5; 2214 Birchwood Spur Rd had 4. There were 3 welfare checks, a few community policing calls, 2 suspicious persons and 1 burglary. He wants to make the point that social media is making everyone much more aware of what crime exists. Crime is actually low compared to the past. We'll see increased presence on the highway for the summer, as the Traffic division has grants for traffic control on the Glenn. They are also doing Click-it-or-Ticket details to spot people driving without seat belts. He asks about concerns? One person mentions drivers going 50 MPH on the Old Glenn in Eagle River. Currently there are traffic patrols on Old Glenn looking for that. Bobbi asks if they can continue a pursuit across the Anchorage border with Mat Su. They cannot. They have a very strict pursuit policy – only for the most serious crimes can they pursue. For more minor crimes (car theft, traffic violations) they do not pursue, they have one try to stop, and if the suspect flees they don't pursue. This is a measure to keep the public safe from the dangers of a fleeing suspect.
- h) Legislative / Assembly reports. Crystal Kennedy: Bear Proof Cans – the municipality wants to require bear proof cans in high bear areas. The proposal is not final yet. Jill notes that bears will still come when they smell garbage, even with bear proof cans. Lexi asks for enforcement of no garbage out overnight.  
Assembly districts: several ordinances have been floated to change our Assembly districting; one is being considered to be put before the voters. She thinks what may be driving this issue is that downtown just has one Assembly member instead of two. The suggestion is that each 2-representative district would be split into 2, 1-representative districts. Another suggestion is that the districts would take turns having just 1 representative (which seems unworkable). The most recent suggestion is to add a second representative to downtown. Crystal hopes they vote down the old suggestions and just move forward with putting the 2-downtown representative proposal forward to the voters. (It takes a charter change to change the Assembly makeup).  
Fire Station 13 (South Fork). The municipality wants permission to put the property out to bid for sale to the private sector. It was originally bought with grant money to benefit the South Fork Auxiliary Fire Dept (which was volunteer at the time). There was a long understanding that the facility would be used to keep water – a tender and perhaps other

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vehicles to respond to fires up Hiland road. The Fire chief wants to sell off the property (worth about \$500,000) to refurbish facilities in Anchorage. As Crystal understands, they were required to let other entities in the muni know that they were trying to declare it disposable property, but they don't seem to have fully done that. There is a work session Friday where she hopes to learn more. It bothers her that they would vacate the facility when the community thought there were assets there available for use if needed. Crystal thinks that one good solution for response times (which are much slower than in town) would be to staff that facility. There will be an opportunity for public testimony. It could come up next Tuesday, but may well be deferred.

Cemetery: The committee met with Robin Ward and John Rodda. We need \$60,000 to do a land use study in Chugiak/Eagle River, if we want to use municipal property. We should look for about 20 acres – other landowners with potential property would include JBER and Eklutna. This administration is generally supportive of the idea.

Comprehensive Plan: A number of current and former assembly members talked to the chair about what Chugiak and Eagle River are like, and how we are different from downtown; and how much of what we deal with now, has not changed in 20 years. Debbie brought up that the Comp Plan needs an update. Chris Schutte said that he thought our comp plan was really clear and did not need revision. Debbie, Crystal, and others disagree. While the whole assembly would need to support a comp plan revision, in general assembly members defer to the preferences of the members who support the area affected, on any issue. John C. notes that a comp plan should have some enforcement power. Gretchen feels we need to back up our assembly members and speak directly to other members in support of issues important to us.

There is a question about the development across from Loretta French Park. It was built as an industrial park, but apparently is charging too much and so it isn't filling with businesses.

## 5. Appearances:

- b) none

## 6. Old Business

- a) Road Board representative: we need to replace Tony Vita, who has resigned, and will vote on a replacement

**Nominations: John nominates Matt Cruickshank. Jill nominates Gretchen Wehmhoff. Gretchen declines Jill's nomination with appreciation to Jill. Matt is elected by unanimous acclamation.**

Lexi will send Matt the minutes and instructions on how to apply.

## 7. New Business

- a) July, August meetings? We decide to skip July and August meetings; our next meeting will be September 11. Lexi will let Parks and Rec know.
- b) Bear proof garbage cans (covered in Assembly report)
- c) Redrawing of assembly districts (covered in Assembly report)

## 8. Open Forum-floor opened to public, any issue

## 9. Adjournment-9pm