

Birchwood Community Council

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Minutes

Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 7-9 PM

1. Call to Order 7:03

2. Approval of Minutes June 2020 and September 2020 minutes approved

3. Announcements

- a) Zoom meeting procedures.
- b) Virtual Forum on Prop 1,
- c). DOT&PF 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Amendment 1 is open for Public Comment; Comment period closes October 23, 2020 at 5:00pm AKST.
- d) Cemetery: The Boutet company under their contract with the Muni is working to review potential locations.

4. Reports

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank: Last meeting they requested full funding for FCC of \$90,000 – we don't know if it was approved.
 - b) CBERRSA Road Board Report Ak DOT had planned a PEL on Artillery /Hiland interchanges on the Glenn, but it was cancelled. The plan is to use the Eagle River traffic mitigation funds to redesign the Artillery road interchange, with construction funded in the 2023 STIP.
 - c) Parks and Recreation Report: Eklutna, Inc. has initiated conversations with Parks and Rec about a right-of-way across Mirror/Edmonds Lake (on the inlet side of the highway) to access their land west of the Park. They were promised this right-of-way as part of the land trade that brought the Baldy access into Eagle River park lands. Reid McDonald has resigned as manager of the McDonald Center; Fire Lake Arena Management, Inc (FLAMI, the Center's operator) is hiring a replacement. FLAMI has also initiated conversations with Parks and Rec about renewing their contract to manage the Center (up next year) as a sole source contract. Due to COVID, however, most of those contracts are being extended a year, so we don't have to decide now.
 - d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board Meeting was called for Sept 19th; Patty Friend went; the topic was the Title 23 Code revision, specifically the sprinkler requirement for some residences. CERAB passed a resolution asking Assembly to delay voting until Oct 27 to give Community Councils time to address the issue.
 - e) Treasurer's report \$277
 - f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD no report
 - g) Birchwood Patrol Report (Matt) Jeff has an offer on his house and may leave the community shortly. He has nothing to report this month.
 - h) Legislative / Assembly reports: Shelly Hughes: She attends to make herself available to constituents, here or offline. Monday Oct 19th early voting begins. Absentee ballots have to be requested by Oct 23rd and must be postmarked by Nov 3rd. You can work with those who may be unable to get to a voting place, to help them vote. The US Census is closing 2 AM Friday – please respond if you have not. Note that the President has signed the Alaska to Alberta rail line permit. She believes once that line is built (with no public money) it will
- 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

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increase our GDP by 10% and provide economies of scale to move commodities back and forth inexpensively. Her cell is 907-841-1634. Sen.shelley.hughes@akleg.gov
Jamie Allard: The Mayor has resigned, and the Assembly is considering reorganization. Jamie made a motion to reorganize in order to affect who would become the acting mayor. They are considering a special election, no earlier than 21 January. And there will be a regular election in April. She notes that the Mayor's emergency powers were extended to the end of November. 907-854-5349; Jamie.allard@anchorageak.gov; jamiellard@icloud.com

5. Appearances:

- a) Nancy Clark, Manager, Chugiak-Eagle River Library, update on services: primarily they are operating on hold-for-pickup – patrons can put materials on hold and come pick them up. To pick up, you can make a curbside appointment and they will bring the books to you, or you can walk to the door between the library and the Alaska Club and ring the bell or call the cell – they will check your materials out and bring them to you. They have been very busy – 10,000 appts + walkups last month. To return books, drop them in book drop – they will check it in 3 days later (but the check-in date will be when you dropped it off). Virtual programming: there is a story time 3x week – Friday 11:30 AM, with a recording available from then until the next scheduled story time. There are virtual book clubs on Microsoft Teams. There is a Personal Librarian service for reference/research requests and also for recreational reading. There's a form on the website. There are a lot of online and downloadable materials. (Audio books, e-books, comic books, videos). There are lots of materials for home schoolers, too. If you don't have a library card, there's a form online that will get you a temp card; then work with the branch for the verification. The building is open only for deliveries, with no public in building; to keep staff safe. They are cleaning high-tough areas hourly, and quarantining materials coming in. There is a ballot drop-off box in front of the Alaska Club, right at the curb. There is NOT early voting at the library. She's posted the locations for early voting on both doors.
- b) Julie Estey, MEA – will speak to Justine Parks in Old Business

6. Old Business

- a) Elections
Chair (Chair) Debbie (nominated by Patty, Karen), Gretchen (nominated by Lexi, Matt).
Debbie wins 22/5
Vice Chair Matt (nominated by Gretchen, Lexi) Matt wins, 28/0
Member at Large – Patty Friend (Nominated by Lexi, Matt) Patty wins, 26/0
- b) Sprinkler issue update – possible resolution moved and seconded
This is part of a larger overhaul of Title 23, building codes. We have been presented with a draft resolution intended to object to the water source requirement, also Chuck Homan is here to speak to the issues. There are options for new residences more than 600' from a fire hydrant: you can build a fire resistant building or install a sprinkler system. Any new structure or addition to an existing structure needs to meet the code. The cost is about \$25,000 for a house on a well. Fire resistant building techniques (roofing, siding, defensible space) are also expensive. Carol Perkins, a retired home inspector (new construction in the

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valley), notes that 1) Home sprinklers not the same as commercial sprinklers. 2) no separate water supply is required 3) they only run for 20 minutes. Sprinklers can be good – Alaska requires sprinkler installers be licensed through the state. Those people generally don't want to do small residential jobs and they price them like commercial jobs – very expensive. The state only requires sprinklers in very limited situations. She doesn't think this is a good code. Chuck Homan clarifies that what we really want is that one and two-family dwellings be exempt from the water supply requirements of the International Fire Code (IFC), or from the entire IFC. Just deleting the sprinklers doesn't solve the problem. Lexi introduces amendment to exempt 1 and 2 family residences from the IFC as the resolution language. The amendment was accepted, and the resolution passed as amended 26/0. The body gave the board permission to clean up the language; final resolution attached.

c) Justine Parks Substation – consideration of resolution presented last month.

Julie Estey presents their revised design, which is a redesign rather than an upgrade. The footprint is 70% smaller than original design. Van Le discusses the process from here. They will go back to P&Z in 2021 after they've had more chance to discuss the new plan with the residents. There will be a new public hearing, perhaps in January. Julie addresses the issues with the alternative site on Tarika Drive, and the impacts of the feeder lines that the Tarika location would create. Van Le notes that she's saved the chat, and MEA can respond to questions there by email., Some people ask a few questions. Rod Perry speaks to how a substation doesn't fit into the neighborhood. Laura Suarez says that impacts on the alternative site would be temporary, and the Parks Substation effects would be permanent. The motion is called:

Birchwood Community Council supports the resolution put forward by the neighbors of the Justine Parks Substation, requesting MEA move the location to an alternative site off of Tarika. The motion passes 20/4

7. New Business - none

8. Open Forum-floor opened to public, any issue – no time left

9. Adjournment-9:10pm

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To: Anchorage Assembly

Re: Birchwood Community Council Resolution regarding AO-2020-85

Date: October 14, 2020

The Birchwood Community Council (BCC) has serious concerns about the proposed revisions to Title 23 (under AO-2020-85) that would apply provisions of the International Fire Code to residential structures in the municipality.

- Whereas this proposal would significantly increase the cost to build a home;
- Whereas the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) has studied this issue and stated that the proposed code does not show a reasonable balance of safety, complexity and cost;
- Whereas NAHB and representative contractors in the MOA do not support the application requirements for new construction of one- and two-family homes;
- Whereas one reason the Chugiak Eagle River area agreed to unification with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) in 1975 was that the area would be excluded from the Building Safety Service Area;
- Whereas the purpose of Title 21, Chapter 10 is to provide standards and regulations to implement the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan, preserve and enhance the distinctive rural character, abundant natural environment, and unique lifestyle(s) of the community;
- Whereas the cost of these systems is high for the homeowner, but data on any benefits (such as reduced insurance cost or higher value) is lacking;
- Whereas home costs are already increasing given the tariffs on Canadian lumber.
- Whereas it is unclear whether this requirement will ultimately be applied by lenders as a prerequisite for issuing mortgages on purchases of existing homes;.
- Whereas there are potential hidden cost concerns for the homeowner, such as:
 1. On most properties with well water, these systems require a large indoor water reservoir and pump system
 2. These systems need to have backup power to function during a power outage
 3. These systems require costly regular maintenance and professional servicing, including a yearly inspection
 4. Water damage from accidental triggering could be costly
- Whereas the need for more housing in our area is well-recognized by the municipality, and this requirement would further discourage residential development;
- Whereas the majority of assembly members' constituents will not be affected by these provisions of the proposed ordinance; those members should defer to assembly members whose constituents are affected;

Therefore, Birchwood Community Council requests that revisions to Title 23 in AO-2020-85 continue to exempt one- and two-family dwellings from the requirements of the International Fire Code.

Matt Cruikshank
Vice Chair