

# **Birchwood Community Council**

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## **Minutes**

Wednesday, November 11, 2020, 7-9 PM

Via Zoom: link to be sent day of meeting

(remember, you can use your phone to call into a zoom meeting, as well as your computer to join on-line)

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

### **1. Call to Order 7:05**

### **2. Approval of Minutes tabled to next month**

### **3. Announcements**

- a) Zoom meeting procedures.
- b). The Draft 2021 Heritage Land Bank Annual Work Program and 2022-2026 5-Year Management Plan is open for the 45-day public review period. The HLBAC public hearing is tentatively scheduled for December 10, 2020  
<https://www.muni.org/departments/hlb/2014%20docs/2021%20draft%20plan+appendices.pdf>
- c). 100% Online Anchorage Transportation Fair; DOT&PF and the Muni bring you the latest updates on roads and trails. Date: **Wednesday, November 18, 2020** Time: Anytime **between 4 and 7 pm** Link: <https://publicinput.com/AnchorageTransportationFair>

### **4. Reports**

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank We could use another FCC rep – Matt is FCC treasurer
- b) CBERRSA Road Board Report: We are overspent on drainage mitigation; Mark Littlefield has an idea to upgrade Terrace Lane (the muni part) - widen and add a bike lane.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report Beach Lake Dock is complete, and the driveway area to the Beach Lake Lodge has new pavement (which was needed soon but done this year because an error in the dock design meant that it didn't meet the driveway at grade – it was a few inches off. They have been removing beetle killed trees in areas near facilities or roads. We will be receiving some FEMA money for Town Square and Beach Lake Dock earthquake repairs.
- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board: we need a rep; Patty Friend is interested; Lexi nominates her, Val seconds, she is approved unanimously.
- e) Treasurer's report \$277
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD - no report
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report Jeff has sold his house – Matt has asked whoever is taking over to come to meetings and provide a report. The APD officer has also said he will come, but wants to meet in person. Jeff let us know that he's received a notice from the CBA folks who run the dog fenced area there, that someone said it was free, and community councils were asked to disseminate that it is not free. Val recalls hearing that it's \$15/month.
- h) Legislative / Assembly reports Deena Mitchell: There is uncertainty about school openings; hospitalizations and deaths are increasing; the Superintendent made the call because of hospital capacity and also COVID spread among the staff. The good news is that teachers are working very hard; Zoom is starting to click for many students. She's been in almost all

2020-2021 board: Debbie Ossiander, Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Vice Chair, FCC and Road Board rep; Gretchen Wehmhoff: Secretary for Publicity; Lexi Hill, Secretary & Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large, CERAB; Val Jokela, Treasurer

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Eagle River elementary schools this week; the amount of planning and mitigation is enormous; they have done a lot to prepare but having additional time will still help. She was talking to a Title 1 school where families did not want to return to in-person (multi-generational families, etc.). The school reached out to families and half the K's, two thirds of the 1's and one third of the 2's did not want to return. Teachers are seeing Zoom working better and better. The community metrics (on coronavirus spread) are making it very difficult to get kids back into the classroom; the board is working on a resolution to ask the community to pull together to reduce transmission. We are unlikely to be in-person before the New Year. Also, she wants us to know that they are working on the mental health issues; money from the CARES Act to provide counseling, and other efforts. The other big issue is performance; she can bring us next month, what the board is thinking about their goals, having done community meetings before COVID. A Council member has a question about what testing is happening– while standardized tests aren't going on, formative tests are, for some classes. Jamie Allard asks why it's safe for private schools but not public. Deena comments that private school households are typically smaller, with more ability to control their environment – for example, many of those parents can work remotely. In title 1 schools, parents are often going to work at jobs that can't be done remotely. She also notes that one of the private schools did close down briefly for COVID. Jamie Allard: Happy Veteran's Day. The Assembly will vote on an emergency mandate on Monday; it will likely pass to extend to 31 December, although she is against it. She disagrees with Deena about school closures. She's had many emails from parents and teachers who want to go back into school. She's heard of a huge uptick in suicide attempts as well. On the Municipal Budget – they will be voting on 17 Nov – they are looking to have a town hall with the community this Sat. at 11 (location TBD) to see where the community would like budget cuts or re-distributions. Jamie is in favor of a 2% across the board budget cuts. Sprinklers (which we discussed and passed a resolution on last month) did not pass.

## 5. Appearances: - none

a)

## 6. Old Business

a) Update - Title 23 (sprinkler requirement) – Patty

Val and Patty worked on this project, and we passed a resolution opposing the proposed changes. Crystal and others wrote an amendment that exempted 1- and 2- unit dwellings and townhouses, which passed. That was everything we hoped to accomplish.

b) Birchwood Airport Master Plan

There is a consulting group that is working for DoT updating the Birchwood Airport Master Plan. They presented to us 2 months ago, and we learned that there's a Stakeholder Action Group, on which this Council was not included. We asked if we could be included, and they said yes. Matt nominates Val Jokela to be on the group. Patty seconds. Val is confirmed Unanimously.

## 7. New Business

a) 20830 Alluvial Street (Chugiak) Zoning Questions – special zoning limitations (Gregg Frost)

Gregg Frost is the owner of Kenai Breakers and Supplies. His company wants to put a

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building on a lot on Alluvial St. He shows a picture of the lot. It's zoned light industrial with special limitations. Those limitations include having to put up a fence, which would entail cutting down many trees. There is also a 75' buffer requirement that he feels is too wide – it reduces the usable land from 2.5 acres to just over an acre. He's contacted Crystal, who is also opposed, and suggested he come to the council. His time frame is to hope to build in the spring; re-zoning typically takes longer. There's a discussion about the various issues; the best possibility seems to be asking for an exception, which requires all the neighbors within 500 feet to weigh in. Although that's a tedious process, it's likely do-able. Matt notes that there've been many issues where the restrictions were important to protect the residential lots adjacent. Ben suggests that perhaps the fence could be at the inside of the 75' buffer, and suggests that Gregg look up the regulations himself and see why planning is telling him it needs to be on the property line. Gregg will speak to the neighbors, and continue working with planning to see if he needs an exception (time consuming) or just a new interpretation.

b) **CBERRRSA CIP project (Matt; Mark Littlefield)**

Birchwood has not had a CIP project in quite some time; Mark L has the idea that we should re-do Terrace Lane and add a bike path. This is one possibility, which Matt thinks might not be really popular; Matt wonders if we might have other ideas. No ideas immediately, Lexi asks that we keep it on next month's agenda so that we could think about ideas.

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

Questions in the chat about whether there's a problem staffing schools. Some discussion of the reasons for staffing contributing to school closures – it's Covid-related quarantines of staff.

### **9. Adjournment-8:46pm**