

# **Birchwood Community Council**

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## **Minutes**

Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 7-9 PM

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

### **2. Approval of Minutes (December) approved**

### **3. Announcements**

- a) Zoom meeting procedures.
- b). The AMATS Non-motorized Plan (NMP) is out for public review, Jan 4th – March 5th. This 60-day review and comment period will include a virtual open house in February. The NMP provides the vision for a non-motorized network within the AMATS Metropolitan Planning Area that when implemented, will help residents travel more safely and efficiently throughout the AMATS Planning area without the need of a motor vehicle in all seasons. The NMP merges bicycle, pedestrian, and shared use pathways planning efforts simultaneously.
- c) Assembly 101 videos. The muni has created and posted on YouTube, a series of videos about how our assembly works. The first two posted are how to participate and Assembly Functions. Link to series is:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLylc7U989Xcav5eQC9FmjAEofZD576ecb>

### **4. Reports**

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank FCC sent out info on Assembly videos; there's an outreach study they will hear about to determine how their outreach funds will be spent. There was discussion about how to handle disruptive meetings.
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report Discussion of CIP projects, Starnier bridge (we are still trying for re-appropriation of Yosemite funds). Chugiak CC is not supportive of the bridge at this time. Mark reached out to DoT to see if they would consider giving up Birchwood Loop maintenance and CBERRRSA would take it over. State would pay us, the money would go into fund balance (although it comes out of operating funds). It takes some assembly action to get the money out of fund balance. Mark comments that he talked to DoT about Birchwood Loop and part of the Old Glenn. He thinks state response times could improve in future years. Mark hasn't heard back from DoT yet.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report Mac Ctr; CARES funds funded dead spruce removal, and will fund a bicycle obstacle area at Mirror Lake Park; the Parks and Rec board continues to work towards establishing a dog park, probably in an unused part of Peters Creek park.
- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board nothing; Debbie asks Crystal about progress for the assembly interaction with CERAB. Crystal notes that the most recent land use issue was increasing allowable fence height, which didn't go through CERAB. Debbie notes that we really need a new person for CERAB, as that request came to her and she didn't think it was an issue out here. Matt reminds us that Patty was elected to be CERAB rep – we need to send the appointment through the assembly appointment process.
- e) Treasurer's report \$277
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD They are giving COVID shots – there will be another session on the 18-19<sup>th</sup> – check their facebook page.
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report nothing

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; Val Jokela, Treasurer

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- h) Legislative / Assembly reports: The emergency declaration was extended to April 16<sup>th</sup>; they tried to make it shorter, but the majority wanted to leave the order in place. Crystal would have liked a shorter period partially to keep the assembly and administration actively talking about these issues. The Assembly meeting went long, and is continued tomorrow night. Big items – Eklutna Government to Government agreement. There are a lot of good conversations, and she thinks it a good move forward to have regular meetings and procedures. She's not sure if anything on this might affect the lawsuit still underway between Eklutna and Dept of Interior. Mark Begich agreed we shouldn't do anything to influence that litigation while it's on-going. There has been some attention to an ordinance that revises elections. It's almost all small technical changes. Only a few of consequence – one would allow the clerk to call in legal authorities if she believes voter fraud is occurring. A few other things do need to be addressed, but we may not do that in this ordinance. She'd like a group to consider what needs tweaking to improve the safety and security of our elections. On Jan 26<sup>th</sup> they will be looking at proposed bonds – mostly typical (roads, etc.) but also a tax levy to increase the tax cap to fund APDs body cameras, and some other tech and communications equipment. They have been working with Celeste Hodge Growden (Alaska Black Caucus president) to find the funds elsewhere. Jamie A found \$900,000; they will work to present that in a clear form to see if the assembly will agree to use that rather than putting a tax on the ballot. They are considering how to deal with Austin Q-D's seat, which is empty while she's acting mayor. Crystal thinks that we need rather to clarify what it means to use a special election for when the Mayor's office is empty. There is a Public Access project: She and John Weddleton are chairs of a committee, one of the tasks of which it to try to identify where there are public access points to public lands, that people living near them may be blocking; and conversely, where are people thinking they have access, but actually trespassing. The State, JBER, and Eklutna are all engaged in a parallel process. Crystal notes that JBER ask asked if we know where people are wandering onto JBER land, so they can erect signs, and address what they see as a serious safety issue. JBER's training areas are used more and more, and often with live fire. Likewise, the state is very interested in trying to identify access points to Chugach State Park (Lexi needs to send Crystal P&R comments on access plan). Karen Perry asks why CARES act funding is being used to develop trails (Crystal doesn't know, and didn't think that was necessarily the best use); and when will the CARES audit be done – perhaps June. Ken McCarty – just arrived in Juneau yesterday for orientation. He has a temporary official email, the regular one will be in effect in a week. He is interested in working on issues around kids in concurrent enrollment (like middle college) for trade school. They could start at age 14 as apprentices, potentially be journeymen by age 18 or 19. There are many hurdles to be overcome, like OSHA regs. Tiffany Lund, a staffer for him, will be living here. He's no longer president of Birchwood Airport Assoc.

### **5. Appearances: - none**

- a) Mark Littlefield, CBERRRSA (see Old Business, 'b')
- b) Kelly Lessens is here to introduce herself; she is running for school board.

### **6. Old Business**

- a) MEA – public hearing was Jan 11 Matt attended; commissioners voted to approve the CUP. It has been submitted from staff with 6 restrictions, all approved plus one more. Do what they said; resolve the length of paving; monitor and mitigate noise, vibration, and

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lighting issues if impact exceeds what they committed to. MEA cannot use the additional property that they purchased for additional electric infrastructure. Anything they wanted to do beyond what was in the approved packet would need an additional CUP. Karen has question about getting information on the cost of the property that was purchased. Julie refers her to MEA's offices. Julie notes that this has been a long process; they do commit to doing what they said they would do, Debbie asks for reports on the monitoring of noise, vibration, light. Julie notes that construction unlikely before 2022.

- b) CBERRRSA CIP project (from last month – ideas?) The Road Boar is trying to be proactive about CBERRRSA roads. With the potential of several hundred homes in Powder View and adjacent developments, they looked at Terrace Lane (extending to James, Husky, Almdale, Shims, Hillcrest) which will see much more traffic. Those roads aren't prepared for a big increase in traffic. There's nowhere for people to walk, either. Over the next several years they could slowly increase the capacity, put in a walkway, improve drainage. He's not a proponent, just putting it out there. Would it be wider? There are some places with 20' asphalt, and they should be 22'. Improvements also would need curb, drainage, and the possibility of a sidewalk or separated pathway. Barbara T – those roads may not be in the middle of the R-O-W, so that is an issue – they could be taking out people's trees, screening, etc. The neighborhood has been happy with re-paving but not widening. Mark notes that could be an issue – the road does have to be built in the ROW, so before moving forward, they would survey and figure out the details and discuss it with the neighborhood. Barbara asks about the difference between sidewalk and bike path. Sidewalk could be attached to the road, and a smaller footprint. Terry Lane notes that people walking on the street in the dark can be dangerous. Alan Peck – asks Mark what he's seen from traffic count data. Mark hasn't seen those data – traffic management puts those counters out. Lexi brings up speeding up traffic as a problem, and traffic calming. Mark says yes, that is a problem – you can't put bumps in the traffic lane because it's potential collector. You can make traffic stop at turns, but traffic management doesn't like that. Ken asks why we can't slow traffic with bumps; Mark notes that the bumps that Ken cites in Eaglewood are in a private development, not CBERRRSA. Mark's not pushing this hard, but interested in learning what the community thinks. Barbara notes that one of the reason traffic goes that route is because traffic is blocked off on the highway. One reason for that is the mess of traffic going to the high school, and kids going back and forth. She thinks a better investment would be to get the kids off the road and make the flow better. Patty believes we received a letter from Ann Newbury, who stated that she doesn't believe a bike path is needed on Terrace – there are issues around taking land and lack of need. Debbie thinks it's good that we periodically think of ways to improve our roads, and she also knows there's a lot of apprehension around the impact of Eklutna development. Rod Perry notes that he thinks we need to preserve the character of our neighborhood. He thinks the plan should be for it to be easy for residents in the new development to get to the highway, and likes improving the HS traffic flow; but thinks many would find widening and improving the road would degrade the neighborhood.
- c) Birchwood Airport Master Plan – update Their first planned meeting, 3 hours on Feb 2, details at the next meeting.
- d)

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## **7. New Business**

- a) Proposed changes to Title 17 (Animals) We summarize 3 or 4 points of the change – almost no off-leash allowed is the main one. Lexi will send out more information generally, and send Val key points; Val will connect with mushing member of the Animal Control Advisory Board.

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

An MEA Board seat is up for election: the Eagle River District (includes Eagle River to Eklutna) Board seat is up for election this year. It is just a one year seat this year only due to a board transition. Applications are on MEA website and are due February 8 by 5pm.

Crystal notes that there is also a seat available on HLB Advisory commission. So much of that land is out here. And the timing is right with the push for a cemetery. Those interested can apply directly, and don't need a CC recommendation.

Debbie reminds us we need a new road board alternate – to be elected next month.

## **9. Adjournment- 8:56**