

# **Birchwood Community Council**

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

## **MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 7-9 PM

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

### **2. Approval of Minutes (February)**

### **3. Announcements**

- a) Zoom meeting procedures.
- b). Items from ASD Community Update (Deena Mitchell can't be here this month):  
COVID-19: district guidance for those travelling during the pandemic available on [asdk12.org](http://asdk12.org); Eagle River Elem and Gruening Middle expected to reopen for occupancy next school year;
- c) Chugiak CC is discussing language in Ch 10, title 21 (our chapter). In our code, we prohibit gravel extraction on slopes >10%. Eklutna would like to change that because they want to do extraction along the Old Glenn Hwy. They are asking for a variance; Urban Design Commission is considering changing the language in Chapter 10 to say that gravel extraction can occur in slopes from 10-40%.
- d) Several mayoral forums coming up, 2 on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Anchorage Chamber of Commerce (\$10) and AFACT (free)
- e). Typically, liquor license renewal only worries about complaints. If we have concerns, we should bring it to the city's attention. Currently the liquor store in 3 bears is up for renewal. No complaints on this emerged from council members in attendance.
- f) Match 11, the Alaska Policy Forum is doing a webinar on the state budget, with emphasis on the Dunleavy constitutional amendment proposals.

### **4. Reports**

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank: There has been lots of discussion on candidate forums, which are done every year with FCC. They want to purchase a new online meeting program to allow up to 1,000 people in a 1-way meeting; this would cost about \$1800. There are two CC's that do candidate forums that could use this.
- b) CBERRSA Road Board Report: They met in late February. Currently, the board is engaged in CIP planning. They studied past project spending to see what community councils had received the most and least project dollars. Birchwood were the least. We recently passed a resolution asking for a study of the area around Chugiak HS; this was supported, and we can have a study for that project. A project to remediate the problems at that intersection could potentially be funded from other sources. ROW has been purchased in the past, so that will not be a problem. Also, on Starner Bridge: The Board still hopes the state will reallocate the extra funds from the Yosemite Drive project. Chugiak briefly opposed the idea because they only want to do it if it's re-appropriated funds. Matt has been asking about the Eagle River Traffic Mitigation study; we still have the funds; they have not been spent. Some of this money, along with other sources, may be used to design the fix for Artillery Rd interchange. Also, there is a desire to use the traffic mitigation funds to connect to Centerfield and Brooks, and there will be another study. Debbie points out that at least two studies have already been done.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report: After discussion, we need to ask Parks and Rec staff for a list of all our area parks and their dedicated/non-dedicated status. Planning has proposed following the (Bowl) comp plan and switch dedicated parks to a new zoning category. The board is moving forward with a public process on developing a dog park in our area, on 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

## Birchwood Community Council

creating bylaws for the Parks and Rec Board. Pete Panarese is the Board's new chair; Karen Richards notes that the Chalet has been rented for June and July and won't be available for our meetings.

- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board nothing to report
- e) Treasurer's report no change
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD Annual report is out.
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report: We are still waiting on an APD officer to attend; the officer in our area doesn't want to attend a zoom meeting. On crime, Debbie has heard about mail theft along Birchwood Loop.
- h) Legislative / Assembly reports

Crystal – Last night at the Assembly meeting, they postponed ASD budget – not because of a problem, but because no one showed up to comment, and the Assembly wanted to give more chance for public input. Also, they are still figuring out what needs to happen on state bond debt reimbursement. There is much concern about allowing homeless shelters in B-3 zoning, which does not affect us or Girdwood. There will be companion legislation, code revisions that will better regulate where homeless shelters can go, and licensing them in their operations. The ordinance will probably be ready in May or June. CED is looking at marijuana land use issues and invites comments on licensing and conditional use permitting. There will be Assembly offices in Chugiak-Eagle River sometime this summer. They are creating offices in town and will have two out here in our town center. Ballots will be out for the municipal elections soon. There are elections for 4 School board seats, mayor, and several bonds. There is good information on muni.org, look for the block on the main page that says “elections...ballot information... info on candidates and bonds”. For here, the bond of interest will be Senior Center /library bonds, and a potential tax levy increase for tech and body cameras for APD.

Tiffany Lund (Rep Ken McCarty). There was a meeting on the bill to extend the Covid-19 emergency, and a hearing tomorrow in house finance. There is a companion bill for the senate, moving into the Senate Finance. Ken is really interested in the Birchwood Airport master plan. He wants to keep prices down. Tiffany and Ken met with DoT and they don't have money for a study of the Chugiak High School intersections. She went on a tour of Gruening and Eagle River schools. Gruening has re-routed the traffic, and that approach may help at CHS as well. ASD noted that the insurance waiver came through for Gruening and ER Elem, so there will be FEMA money towards those repairs. Ken has a PFD survey on repkenmccarty.com. It will be up for another 10 days or so.

### 5. Appearances: -

- a) AkDHSS presentation on COVID-19 vaccine: Sar Medoff. Is an emergency medicine physician here and in Nome, and also works for DHSS DPH Epidemiology section. He's been working with skilled nursing, assisted living, and psychiatric facilities. on their Covid response. His presentation is on vaccines. Vaccine development went through all the safety tests/clinical trials of standard procedure. There are 5 key take-aways: vaccines prevent most illness; they prevent death; there are some side effects (commonly aches, pains, headache, fever, fatigue, with severe adverse reactions rare); vaccines provide individual and community protection. (protects you, protects me, protects everyone else in our lives). All Alaskans aged 16 and over are eligible. Anyone can call 1-907 646-3322 for an appointment or go to Covidvax.alaska.gov. Fully vaccinated people can be indoors,

# **Birchwood Community Council**

unmasked with each other fully vaccinated people. In public, masks, social distance, and handwashing are still important. The side effects are the immune system reacting to the vaccine, in the way it is supposed to.

Q&A: Pete comments that Joleigh Rainwater has helped many Chugiak Residents with appointments. Debbie asks what the forecast is on vaccinating kids? It's a high priority, but the initial trials only went to 16. The largest current trial includes kids 12 and up, and he thinks kids of that age will have vaccines available in another several months.

## **6. Old Business**

- a) Birchwood Airport Master Plan – update: March 4 was their first public meeting. They used the software that Matt mentioned earlier with unlimited attendance, but had to message questions in. The February stakeholders and March public meeting were recorded, and we will send out the links. The process is still open for comments. There will be another stakeholder meeting this summer, and two more public meetings, dates TBD. There was nothing new in the public meeting – it was to share concerns and information that had been gathered at the stakeholders meeting. Many stakeholders and the public wanted more transparency about where money is coming from.

## **7. New Business (none)**

- a)

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

Sean Murphy: Eagle Exit update: Recent milestones – they have raised \$100K (of \$300K goal) and have applied for 501 (c)(3) (nonprofit corporation) status. They are continuing to educate folks, drafting FAQs and a petition.

## **9. Adjournment-8:25pm**