

Minutes
BIRCHWOOD Community Council
Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 7-9 PM

1. Call to Order 7:01

2. Approval of previous Minutes: approved

3. Announcements

- a) Boo at the Beach is this Saturday at the Beach Lake Ski Chalet
- b) New Community Clubhouse for Birchwood Shooting Park planned – Administrative site plan review has been requested; comments due by Oct 18th. More info from Tara brown, tara.brown@anchorageak.gov

4. Reports

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank – Should FCC administer community council email accounts? Our belief is that it should be a choice if CC’s want it but not if they don’t. Debbie checks on AMATS resolution – Lexi will send it in (late)
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report: There is still no funding for Starner bridge. CBERRSSA will use O&M funds to re-surface and reinforce the bank, so it likely won’t be de-commissioned. They will need a corps of engineers permit to do the bank work, so it likely won’t happen until next year. No report on status of Artillery Road work. They have requested head of Planning give a report (Michelle McNulty) on the Eagle River traffic plan and Artillery.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report: We need a new Representative (see elections). Eklutna, Inc is moving forward on an easement from the Glenn Highway northwest across Mirror/Edmonds Lake Park to access their land nearer the inlet. There is a proposed route which while not ideal may be the best available. Parks and Rec will continue to discuss.
- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board nothing new
- e) Treasurer’s report nothing to report
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD – no report
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report no report
- h) Birchwood Airport Master Plan – The second stakeholder meeting happened Oct 12. The process is still on schedule. There will be a public meeting Oct 27 from 6-8, virtual. Val will send out slides that go with that. There have been issues raised of paying taxes to multiple places, which are not all addressed yet. All airport profits go to a General Aviation fund. Alaska DoT has to provide air access to all communities, and they have prioritized use of those funds for maintenance. Birchwood Airport has had a profit over the last 6 years, mostly from lease/land use funds. Expenses were facilities and improvements. 80% of flights at Birchwood are for training.
There are three options currently being considered for the airport. 1) In order to get airport improvement funds from the federal gov’t, one proposal is to shorten the runway and narrow the taxiway – which no one likes. 2) The gravel strip is not well situated, and there is a proposal to change its alignment. Val notes that these changes would change the traffic patterns, that would a) increase possibility of mid-air collision, and b) move the gravel strip traffic closer to the mountains, which could have a real noise effect. 3) we could leave things as they are, but we would not be eligible for federal funding. Gretchen

asks about whether shortening, narrowing the runway would limit what aircraft would land? Are we an emergency landing place and would that affect it? Val wonders if we would be reducing safety for all that training by shortening/narrowing the runway. Matt asks if there's an absolute threshold on federal funding, and if anyone has tracked how much Birchwood has paid in to the 'profits' fund? Apparently about \$8 million – it's not clear how/if the airport can access those funds. On the potential federal funds, again, Val is not yet completely clear on what the limitations are.

Ken McCarty follows up. Birchwood got a big chunk of federal money to re-surface the runway and taxiways. He thinks the emergency use – e.g. after the earthquake - is worth keeping in mind. The master plan calls for the ability for larger planes to use the airport. The airport can, at present, access federal funds, if it's done right. Ken will find out more. But at present he concurs with plan 3 – leave as is. We just spent \$6 million to fix it up. He also notes that funds are swept at the end of each fiscal year, because of the state prohibition on dedicated funds. Val notes that all alternatives have improvements for the septic system in the pilots planning center. Crystal notes that she thinks the airport has the potential to have more businesses; she wouldn't want that limited

- i) Legislative / Assembly reports. – Ken McCarty – is on the hunt for dollars to work on CVFD station 33. On Chugiak HS traffic – DOT went to ASD to ask if there was a problem; the school said there was no problem. We discuss the traffic problems. Pat Higgins wonders about solutions. Matt notes that CBERRRSA has commissioned a traffic study – that should have some solutions. But we would like ASD to be a participant in the study- it should be done in 2-3 months. Ken notes that he needs to hear from the public, and also notes that he has heard some quick solutions. Ken has introduced HB 108 – trades training for High School kids – and today he presented HB4010 to set a dividend amount, splitting revenue from the permanent fund, and mandating that some would also have to go to capital spending. Crystal – the Assembly has been talking fund balance. An Emergency Order mask mandate passed last night. The Mayor vetoed it. Tomorrow assembly will determine whether they override the veto. But it's really budget season now. The mayor has eliminated a number of unfilled positions. (Also, and aside - we do have a 4th police officer out here, in the budget. At any given time, there should be 4 officers patrolling in our area.) She is very concerned that Anchorage is in a big hole in our fund balance. Revenue was short because of less car rental, bed tax, etc. (revenue is down by about 23.9 million). We had an ordinance to give more money to testing; however, an amendment changed the funding soured to intra-fund loan, which just shifts the cash flow. Crystal asked if that puts us in a deficit fund balance – we are looking at \$50 million or more in deficit. Which eventually taxpayers will pay. So she voted against that testing funding ordinance. In theory FEMA will re-imburse the cost; but they may or may not reimburse Sullivan homeless shelter costs. That is another problem potentially looming. Probably there will be no state bond debt reimbursement this year, so taxpayers will have to pay that as well. On a more positive note, there is a plan on homelessness, progress is happening. Look at the 'housing and homeless committee' page of assembly. A draft policy for body-cams draft policy on the APD web page. The Assembly had a conversation on public transit in Eagle River – no solutions for us yet but at least it's an open conversation. If anyone is interested in Boards and Commissions, our area is under-represented. Gruening MS has open house tomorrow night for everyone to see their

reconstruction after the earthquake. Debbie notes to Crystal that if the Assembly is looking at funding commissions, CERAB has no support. And finally, Debbie reminds Crystal that our comp plan is out of date.

Pat Higgins – The School Board is focused on student outcomes. They received Math scores - which are poor. They will discuss them at an upcoming meeting. One idea that more successful districts have tried is to have alternatives for kids out of school. Budget – they need to use the support we’ve gotten from state and feds to support outcomes. The Muni budget issues will also affect the school budget. Total bond debt has declined from about \$800 million to about \$500 million but it’s important to realize how much deferred maintenance there is. Roof replacement has declined in cost and we should address some of those before they create more expensive damage. We are half a billion plus in deferred maintenance.

5. Appearances)

- a) Nancy Clark, Eagle River Library They have added new materials – online downloadable material. If you use the overdrive app, it’s being phased out. They have added 3,000 magazine titles. You can have them immediately – no hold needed. For youth there are homeschool events, at least one per month, and scouting events to help scouts get their library patch. They have regular events and will do special ones as well. There are scavenger hunts for readers and pre-readers. (pre-readers look for letters; readers a bit more complex). There is also a ‘1,000 books before kindergarten’ program – have kids read with or without parents’ help. They will host a shot clinic – both covid and flu shots on November 4. They are looking for volunteers, 13 and older, especially since with the hiring freeze and 2 vacant positions, 23% of their staff hours are unfilled. There are new signs inside and outside library.
- b) JBER report – Joy Boston. Sent an email end of Sep with range times. Hopes we got it. On-base mask requirement will be extended – be aware.

6. Old Business

- a) Elections: Chair, Secretary, Secretary for Publicity, and Treasurer are open
Also Representative and Alternate for Chugiak Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors
Nominations so far:
Chair – none
Secretary – none
Secretary for Publicity – Gretchen Wehmhoff – **passed**
Treasurer – Val Jokela - **passed**
Matt can serve as chair as needed; it’s part of his Vice Chair responsibilities.
Lexi agrees to serve one more month as (unofficial) secretary)
- b) Parks Board Representative – Barbara Trost **passed**
Parks Board Alternate – Lexi Hill – **passed**
(let Crystal know when we send applications in).

- c) HALO motion – **see next page for resolution to be discussed at the November BCC meeting** – When she worked on Title 21, Debbie got to know many people on the hillside who have similar interests to us (large lots, animals, rural character). She received a plea from HALO (Home and Land Owners Association) to help push back on an assembly action that violated the Hillside District plan. They have asked us to support a resolution, and sent a draft that she has revised. She would like us to consider it next meeting. Gretchen thinks we may need to bring our assembly people up to speed on this issue.

7. New Business

- a) Live meetings: when should we return to live meetings? We discuss the pros and cons. Ken McCarty suggests meeting at the CAP hangar at Birchwood, as there is more space there. Gretchen moves that we meet on zoom in November, but report back on these options and defer decisions until we know more. Lexi Seconds. **Passes**

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

9. Adjournment-9pm

Suggested resolution:

A RESOLUTION TO RE-ASSERT LOCAL SELF-DETERMINATION AND REQUEST THE ASSEMBLY FOLLOW THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE 21 AND ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

WHEREAS, under Anchorage Municipal Code Section 8.01, the Assembly is to provide for Community Councils in order to afford citizens an opportunity for maximum community involvement and self-determination, and

WHEREAS, Title 21.01.080 codifies the MOA Comprehensive Plans. The purpose of the Comprehensive Planning is to set forth the goals, objectives, strategies, and policies governing land use development of the municipality, and local Community Councils have been heavily involved in creating and supporting our Comprehensive Plans, and

WHEREAS, Title 21.01.080.D states:

1. The elements of the comprehensive plan shall be implemented as provided in this title.
2. The specific requirements and regulations of this title govern in land use and building approvals and actions under this title, except as provided in subsections D.3. and D.4. below.
3. Amendments to this title, rezoning, conditional uses, subdivisions, and other related discretionary actions under this title shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan, including the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the elements identified in Table 21.01-1.
4. Rezonings, conditional uses, and subdivisions shall conform to the land use plan map and other applicable comprehensive plan maps of the elements identified in Table 21.01-1.
5. Where comprehensive plan elements conflict, the most recently adopted shall govern.

WHEREAS recently the Assembly has appeared several times to follow other guidelines and direction than those in adopted Comprehensive Plans, and

WHEREAS, two examples of this are

1. Recent Assembly approved AO 2021-25 to amend the Hillside District Plan without meeting the regulatory approval criteria explicitly laid out in Title 21.03.070.C.2 to amend Comprehensive Plans, but instead used the reasons of a housing shortage and homelessness, which are not germane under Title 21.
2. Following AWWU plans in a local subdivision approval process instead of the CER Comp. Plan), and

WHEREAS by ignoring the laws as laid out in Title 21 governing adopted plans, the Assembly has shown their willingness to ignore the self-determination rights of local communities , thus setting disturbing precedence for the future, and

NOW THEREFORE let it be resolved that the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Assembly must respect local self-determination and follow adopted Comprehensive Plans. This Community Council respectfully demands these plans be treated as paramount; that governing bodies including the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Anchorage Assembly follow the Code mandated by Title 21 in interpreting any Comprehensive Plan and its elements while making land use decisions.

Adopted this day
Birchwood Community Council