

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 7-9 PM

Hybrid meeting: Eagle River Library Conference Room 170

And via Zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88131919316?pwd=RDA5ZGYrSlhORFhyOUtCM2dTRmJXdz09>

1. Call to Order: 7:00 PM

2. Approval of October Minutes: approved

3. Announcements:

- a) **Call to Action** to purchase OWL Camera/Speakers to hold hybrid meetings: We initiated a fundraiser at our May 12 meeting. Status of funds raised to date: \$800.00 and we need \$1,075.
- b) Hybrid meetings: December meeting location (CHS)-deferred for now so we'll meet again in room 170 but look to CHS-Karen on-board to get WiFi at ski chalet. When we do, we'll go back to the chalet.
- c) JBER announcements: not in attendance
- d) Nominations board positions 2022 and 2023: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary for Publicity-duties (keep up webpage, post resolutions)-Ben Westveer interested, CBERRRSA rep-Matt wants to continue, CERAB rep-takes care of input to assembly meet as needed-some issues addressed have been marijuana retail store, building safety service area-Ben Westverr and Debbie and Patty as alternate, FCC-Carol Perkins is interested. Nominations for Chair Matt nominated Debbie, and Debbie nominated Matt. We will vote next month.
- e) MOA: every 10 years needs to review community council boundaries-a questionnaire will be sent over the next few weeks.

4. Reports:

- a) FCC Report: no report
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report: Matt Cruickshank: 2 meeting were held this month: a special meeting on Starner Bridge provided notice to CERAB--#1 CIP project is Starner Bridge. In the last 15-20 years- Birchwood CC has used a very small *amount* of CIP funds. Birchwood CC likes rural community and we have not asked for a lot. Chugiak CC-passed \$1.3M for a bike course. Let it be known the professional assessment is \$1.3M, not \$4M. At the next road board meeting there will be discussion on CIP funds for the Starner Bridge project. At the Special Meeting the design for Starner Bridge passed. It will be the same single lane characteristics, as currently exists. Next road board meeting on Dec 19 is very important. Mark Littlefield is proposing to fully fund the bridge so bring your opinions and support for full funding. Time line on bridge: There are 2 separate issues: the bridge and reopening Aurora Borealis. Would not have to do Request for Proposal (RFP). Folks on Valley Ave-might have an easement?

2021-2022 board: Debbie Ossiander, Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Gretchen Wehmhoff: Secretary for Publicity, FCC Rep; Barbara Trost, Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large; Val Jokela, Secretary-Treasurer

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c)Parks and Recreation Report: Barbara Trost: Lexi attended last parks and rec meeting-had long presentation from Arctic Heat On baseball—lots of work at Loretta French—there are differences between softball and baseball fields. Softball player appreciative of the work. There are various CIP projects. Issue with pool is it was not done right. Able to recover some money from contractor—get them to come back and fix it was signed off when it was not correct. Asked contractor to find everything and spend a little more and be done with it. Discussion: dog mushers put in RTP grant app for trail improvements. Add 1-2 miles of trail. Mushers were not there and as a board, no action taken. Going nowhere this year. Karen-Boo at the Beach successful. Brought up pool expert from the lower 48 to assess. Everything was good except the deck which was not correctly installed. Suggested by Ben Westveer to have only 1 signer per contract to have better oversight.

d)Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board: Outcome from October 15 meeting-Debbie Ossiander Asked by 2 assembly members to hold this meeting. Lively meeting. Passed resolution. Jamie Allard was afraid the assembly could arbitrarily create a Building Safety Service Area. Chugiak CC voted no, and suggested inspections in one particular part of construction. When get a response back from MOA attorney will trigger a reminder to assembly members. Below is the resolution from CERAB:

WHEREAS, the Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board (the Board) is established in Title 21 by Section 21.10.030.B and is constituted in order to review and make recommendations on actions regarding potential changes in land use issues that impact multiple Community Council areas in the Chugiak Eagle River area; and

WHEREAS, the Board, with local representation present from South Fork, Eagle River Valley, Chugiak, Eklutna Valley, Eagle River and Birchwood Community Councils, met on October 15, 2022 to hear local testimony and to discuss the above issue; and

WHEREAS, The Board heard testimony and discussed the cost impact of using municipal building inspectors on local projects. We were told by builders that even allowing for costs of voluntary plan review and construction inspections in the CER, costs for home construction could increase by at least \$5,000 because of permit costs, and

WHEREAS, the Board heard testimony from individuals who had personal experience with local poor quality home construction and who desired more stringent buyer protections, and many other individuals who had highly positive comments about local building construction, and

WHEREAS, the Board heard testimony and discussed a possible correlation between stronger inspection services and increased community safety in events like the 2018 earthquake, and

WHEREAS, the Board believes that if the citizens of Chugiak and Eagle River wish to strengthen requirements for plan review or construction inspection,

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there may be more cost-effective ways of achieving that than inclusion in the Building Safety Service Area, and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Charter provides that a Service Area may not be created nor abolished, nor its boundaries modified without the affirmative votes of a majority of the voters directly affected by such change,

Now, therefore, the CHUGIAK EAGLE RIVER ADVISORY BOARD RESOLVES that Chugiak-Eagle River does not support inclusion into the Anchorage Building Service Area and requests that the municipal attorney clarify that such inclusion cannot occur without authorization by a majority of Chugiak and Eagle River citizens casting an affirmative vote as required by the Anchorage Municipal Charter.

e) Treasurer's report: Val Jokela \$152.00

f) CVFD: Acting Fire Chief John Della Crose: membership up 109, formal volunteer hours are over 5000, \$156,000 of volunteer labor. 79 responses Oct, over 1000 calls. Request to replace aging fire engine over 20 years old. Have enough money saved. Busy October: Fire prevention month to 4 local schools-over 100 kids were reached. Looking for full-time chief. Debbie witnessed a medical emergency and called it in and was impressed with the fast response...nice work!

g) Birchwood Patrol Report: none

h) Legislative / Assembly reports:

Representative Dan Saddler-election held yesterday, no runoff, Kelly Merrick will be our senator.

Carl Jacobs-ASD-updates: last time we met, district admin provided 6 candidate schools for closure-FY24 budget solution-declining enrollment and fiscal cliff. Enroll up. List the schools up for closure. Birchwood ABC students would move to Homestead Elementary, Eagle River Charter academy would take over the school building. Reduce sports, orchestra, band, 6 grade to middle school-Dec 10 will be a work session. No decisions made yet. Attended both listening sessions- Birchwood ABC lasted 2-3 hours, well attended. Follow up: student transportation-do have 200/228 routes covered, audit Dr Bryan efficiencies and costs to retain drivers, other initiative-did sponsor board policy amendment to strengthen safeguards for bullying. Roll out of "Stop It" solutions: alert administrators, 24/7 tip line. Carl is continuing to work with Lessens to overhaul student meals and lunch period. Budget taking up majority of discussion. Proposal made by district administration that 6th grade to move to middle school. Administration is clear that there will be a second round of identified schools for closure. Base student allocation same as 2016 school year. Enrollment continues to decline, and we may not need elementary schools. Elementary schools proposed are all title 1 except Birchwood. Northwood suggested community funding or corporate funding to solve problems. CFO talking with person suggesting this. Unstable funding static BSA. Lean on those type of funds, although not necessarily stable. Debbie said there is history of school business partnerships. No direct funding. Still in existence. Abbott Loop would remain open. Question asked: How many classrooms in the schools proposed to close? Funding for district not at building level, but for student population, how district uses will change. Elementary title 1 gets only 1 additional staff. 2 schools are walking schools going to have to bus. Going to cost more. ABC school

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alternative, school with in a school model not necessarily successful. Academics at both campuses thought very successful. Matt-because of reduction of BSA-1/2M savings closing Birchwood ABC? Estimate provided-number has increased \$800,000. Savings from the number of bus routes not needed. \$68M deficit. Comments: 1/2M per school only save ¼ towards the deficit. Funding from optional programs savings by increasing class sizes. Have not heard yet of administrative position cuts. No big chunk other than building maintenance. Do not have exact dollar amount. Dec 10 work session should show firmer numbers and showing savings. Board is trying to be inclusive and transparent. Anchorage school district working through deficit. Lots of districts are having this conversation. FY24 covid \$\$ do not play a significant role in budget. Legislature knew this. Never intended to remain static. No regular increases same funding from SOA. Costs rising with inflation. Base student allocation has not changed since 2016: There's been 6 years of growth with inflation. Hope legislature addresses the BSA. What has school board done-legislature ISER issued study...less than national average spent on education. Previous boards closed 2 schools in last 5 years and other efficiencies. Can't keep up with funding.

5. Appearances: none

6. Old Business

a) Update Starner Bridge/Aurora Borealis: Debbie Ossiander/Matt Cruickshank-covered under CBERRRSA report

b) Chugiak CC CER Cemetery Resolution: (see PDF file included with BCC Minutes and Agenda): selected location, CCC passed resolution, joint bond with Girdwood on cemetery. Better buy in from voters over a broad geographic area. Funds raised in Chugiak Eagle River -\$3M dollars, and area wide bond-up to \$3M. Cannot bury a human on private land. Girdwood has interesting approach-Tommy O'Malley. Area wide bond. We would rather have MIL rate levy. HLB is asking us to pay for it. They do not provide land for housing, but do for schools. HLB asking us to buy the land from Anchorage. In the past HLB would transfer land. Debbie will write a resolution that HLB give us land but opposes buying. Money saved-spend \$1M for maintenance facility. Timeline bond? Preference for levy?

c) Birchwood Airport Master Plan Public Workshop: November 12 10:00-2PM at the Birchwood Civil Air Patrol Hangar: project website:

<http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/birchwoodamp/>

b)Beach Lake Trail Inventory Map: Will Taygan On line-meant to engage stakeholders. Building out trails in Beach Lake park, come up with plan- to show to CC. Chugach MT bike riders...how to get multi-use trail and not impact mushers. BMP-cmbralaska.org Mushers very protective of trails-can't have off leash dogs on trails. Did trail inventory as to what is out there. More hikers, than mushers. Black mushing trail—green official mushing trail, people using social trails out to beach. Once this fall saw musher. Beach Lake trail alternative 1—leave as is. How can we get a multi-use trail-B-multi-use only...no mushing on that side of lake. Alt C-2011 grade separated crossing-motorized crossings grade separated at Tozier. Even though in both plans has not happened. Alt C-protects all existing mushing trails, boat dock over bridge up to 50- foot bluff. Concern does not match red lines on inventory..cut from boat dock and continue around lake, Would not provide separation of uses. Level of use is low use on mushing trail. Alt D-fencing 100Ft spacing between mushing trails and other trails..separate mushers from walkers. Gap in fence—small area for dogs to cross into. Relocate ½ mile mushing trail does not show new mushing trail. Do not

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want to propose where mushing trails...3 projects—mushing, skiers, multiuse trail.

Mitigation for wildlife: no. Alan-where money from Fed grant-use minimal city funds.

\$300K grant signed by everyone. \$300K spent on this section of trail, relocate mushing trails. Study on-going. Barbara was very frustrated with the process and feels like Will is not listening. Val Jokela was irritated by the process and expressed that all the mushers have left of what used to be 40 or more miles of trail is now down to 14 and that it was built in the Master Plan for grade separation for mushers and multi-users.

c)Summary of Eagle Exit analysis-Debbie Ossiander: Cost of schools would be prohibitive and we would continue increase in levy of \$3-7 MIL.

d)Marc Lamoreaux- Eklutna Village Land and Environment Co-Director-lower dam remove and a push to open up passage for full fish passage to Eklutna Lake. Matt will prepare a resolution to support Eklutna in support of the mitigation of the dam so salmon can get to the lake. Marc has been working with the Anchorage Historical society, and hopes to work together more in future.

7. New Business:

a) Birchwood Elementary School Proposed Closure: Debbie Ossiander: Birchwood PTA worried about the potential for Birchwood ABC to close. Kids living in Birchwood neighborhood would be bussed to Homestead. They would like our support to keep Birchwood open. Eagle Charter School has lots of unknowns. They asked if kids could opt into charter school and stay at ABC and the response was no.

8. Open Forum-

9. Adjournment-8:58PM