

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 7-9:00 PM

Hybrid meeting: Beach Lake Ski Chalet

And via Zoom

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

1. Call to Order: 7:01 PM

2. Approval of November Minutes: Debbie moved to approve/seconded by Alan Kurczynski

3. Announcements: *(reminder please limit presentations to 5 minutes)*

4. Reports:

a) **FCC Report:** Carol Perkins-no report

b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Matt Cruickshank – plan was to approve CIP projects, CCC suspending—put off an additional month. Funding for guardrail suggested by Carol Perkins will be added to CIP projects. \$1.2M Starner Bridge-no access to west side of bridge. Taking every action and support of administration. Open Aurora Borealis and replace bridge with whatever means necessary. Possible legal route for opening up AB. Has to be done through Department of Natural Resources and has been pursued since June 2023. DNR short staffed. Communicating with AB Individual re: RS24. Debbie has a friend in land acquisition who has given her the name of an attorney with a good record for situations like this. What is timeline from city? Need to know when city is going to move. Until further staffing at DNR, there will be no further movement forward. If legal action is taken by the administration, attorney fees will be paid for both sides. There has been 2 medical emergency incidents: There were vehicles lined up on both sides of the bridge. Ray had to drive Patty over bridge to the ambulance and then he needed to be driven to the ambulance. Need to track dates, times and describe what happened. Randy thinks the city will give it to him right of way after certain time period passes and it has to be a recognized trail that is used certain period of time. Frustrated with DNR and have been waiting for response by September. Add DNR commissioner-need official update from Admin on timelines. Had closed sessions. Will start discussions with private attys. Matt and Debbie discussed what CBERRRSA was established to keep issues as much as possible at the local govt level. Collect property tax for roads. Representatives from each CC's have input to capital improvement projects and can decide which projects move forward. We have state and private roads. Aurora Borealis is in a flood plain-DNR inquiry used over 60 years and it is a maintained and established recognized trail. If can open AB-drainage is an issue. Want to work on it. Need it opened and maintained. Potential window for Starner Bridge rebuild? Did reach out to legal-Eklutna CC status on CBERRRSA-have 46 homes which are inside CBERRRSA maintained area. Eklutna CC might have a seat on CBERRRSA.

2022-2023 board: Debbie Ossiander, CERAB and Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Ben Westveer: Secretary for Publicity, Carol Perkins FCC Rep; Barbara Trost, Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large, and CERAB alternate; Val Jokela, Secretary-Treasurer, alternate Road Board

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c) **Parks and Recreation Report:** Barbara Trost- No BOS Nov meeting and the BOS Dec meeting was canceled. Session on budget. Some requests—just voted on CIP projects: Beach Lake Lodge Repairs \$75K, Main Street/Low Road Trail Improvements \$150K, Mt Baldy Parking lot and Road Safety Improvements: \$400K, Mushing Staging Area Improvements: \$40K, Schroeder Park Pickleball Courts \$30K, Loretta French Batting Cage \$30K, Beach Lake Trails Drainage Improvements \$60K, Playground Inventory/Assessment/Strategic Plan \$100K. Still hung up on the Chugiak High School Pool: Parks and Rec dollars are set aside and there is approval from assembly-fund balance-estimating up to \$4M-assessment by a reputable company. Will wait until after January. There are higher priority projects. Email from Wil Tagan stating the Beach Lake trail is at urban design commission so there will be a public meeting. There is a 90- day public comment period—did we get the grant? CDMA had agreed to trail crossing and thought they were going to get additional trails and they got \$80K, but they need significantly more. Hearing for multi-use trail plus the non-funded section from CHS is before the Urban design commission. Funding source/design to build multi-use trail crossing the mushing trails and accessing the trails. The funding Will got through American rescue plan was not enough. P&R match should be enough? Don't want multi-use trails crossing ski trails. Lodge-rental usage? During COVID hiccup, issues lack of caretakers—Barbara thinks there is quite a bit of use. Little vandalism to repair and lift-station not working well. Rent too expensive—impact other uses? Reliable care-taker is a big issue. Told it is profitable. Looking for caretakers who could work on media, too. Next Wednesday Loussac urban meeting-P&R sponsor competitive events. It was suggested to go to Parks and Rec with ideas. P&R works with user groups...mushers, skiers, equestrians etc and each group posts activities.

d) **Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board:** Debbie Ossiander-did have conversation with Richard Whitney-should revise by-laws. CERAB covers zoning and land use in our area.

e) **Treasurer's report:** \$204.00.

f) **CVFD:** Chief Scott Fisher- no report

g) **Birchwood Patrol Report:** -mailbox theft just picked up again

h) **Homeless Task Force report:** Ken McCarty- none

h) **Legislative / Assembly / School board reports:**

Rep Dan Saddler-not much to report, Going to JNU 16th of Jan and will focus on education funding, PFD, Starner Bridge, finish bike path from CHS to Old Glenn, money design Chugiak Sr Center, paved covered walking path, bill DNR strategy rare earth elements, Powder Ridge uncovered gravel trucks, modify landlord tenant laws for bad tenants. Laws for mobile homes slanted to renter. Cook Inlet energy, utilities, Hillcorps agreements—education funding—continuing glitch—demands school reform, work force development—skills, argument to state employee pensions. So much oil and gas—Ukraine war—surplus. Starner Bridge top priority. Debbie-snow removal—SOA DOT how arrange trucks—see what can do to help State roads get plowed better. Not enough folks to do jobs. A lot of needs, not enough money.

Scott Meyers-Nov 21/Dec 5 mtg-assembly passed adding \$2M. Reviewed budget. Dec 5 Mayor vetoed assembly amendments, and they vetoed his. Dec 19 housing action plan. More restoration Eklutna River restoration projects. Jan 9 continued hearing on marijuana stores, Chugiak Access Improvement Park. Concerns Old Station 11—losing pieces of equipment-ANC Fire Dept...not being replaced, status quo—replaced with FEMA dollars, no loss of equipment. Will follow up on Bridge and CHS pool.

Andy Holleman-career pathway plan-every 9th grader will start planning. Kids focus on being career ready. Budget work-get to assembly late Jan. Work off of \$90M shortfall. Year to year

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funding is flat. In range \$45-50M to put to this years deficit. Unable to fill all teaching positions and this falls back into the fund balance. Choose to cut some programs. Fund balance, raise pupil-teacher ratio. School start times change in the fall. ASD has shifted some things-also national problem. Don't produce enough educators from AK. Rents are high up here and in the lower 48, a teacher could have a home, and ASD has the worst public employee retirement plan in the USA!! Once worked 5 years in AK, can take money and leave-financially there is not a reason to stay...teachers would like autonomy in class. Not clear solutions, hard to find applicants. Teacher hiring fairs only have ½ dozen. In the past, ASD had the highest salary in USA. 15 states no SS. Is there plan for defined benefits? Concern tracking system for kids who opt for college track? Strict requirements for teaching calculus at UAA vs ASD requirements. Carol has brought up truancy status? Wide spread? Distinction between truancy vs absences, and ASD is too short staffed to track. COVID changed attendance and it has not rebound. More likely to stay home if ill. Increase fine on truant students? Court collecting? ASD does not fine?

5. Appearances

6. Old Business

7. New Business

a) Powder Reserve West Project Tract 40A-Eklutna-3 different -Eklutna INC-large development broken down into multiple phases. We value our rural nature and this project allows for larger lots-city water, sewer—subdivide lots. Land trade-parcel by RR exchange for water source-development school site, reached out to Eklutna Inc Across from Terrace Lane—part of Birchwood Loop—Matt will invite them for Jan. They have a Master Plan that has been updated multiple times and they have to go to platting for changes. School site, substation—have not had success in getting developer-new deal with MOA support with low-income housing—Terrace Lane not made to handle more traffic. Focusing on a separate development based upon the housing market and vacancies—as prices go up for housing will develop resource—have town zoned area commuter rail, park and ride-still an area. Dan S.-not low-income housing-envision 2000 more homes. Kyle or Mike Curry will be invited.

b) Aquifer Study in CBERRRSA area-Matt Cruickshank-separate funding-SOA grant for areawide study-calendar year 2024—big thing establish baseline—with development higher nitrates to lots. NW corner Section 25—MOA wanted to open gravel extraction-did not know water levels-questions on aquifers—been part of request-Eklutna big property owner. Happy to see have SOA grant to support healthy overview of water.

8. Action Items-none

9. Adjournment: Metropolitan transportation plan redid the long-term document. Added a lane reduction for the Old Glenn. Comments were made on the proposed projects—45% of public comments on 2 projects supported adding Artillery Road funding and did not support reducing lanes in downtown Eagle River. These are great examples of the power of public input!!! Have decision makers basing it off of public comment. Title 6 Federal requirement: there is movement across the nation for non-motorized vehicles to reduce vehicle emissions, so to get funding we'll be playing by title 6.

Debbie-moved to adjourn at 8:26PM, seconded by Barbara Trost