

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 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: 6:58 PM

2. Approval of December Minutes: Patty Friend made a motion to accept, seconded from Tom Prunty

(adding ballot prop on cemetery, public hearing opening up by Eklutna for fish)

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

a) Resignation of Kevin Cross District 2 Assembly representative-assembly person for Eagle River-Chugiak

b)

4. Reports:

a) **FCC Report:** Carol Perkins- on-site septic and wells representative-going through the rewrite on wells. State of Alaska dropped c-class wells--does MOA want to cover wells? SOA covers through waste-water, no meeting in December. 2024 budget approved for hiring full-time manager. Increased services to CC's and assembly. Asking for \$9K. FCC budget total-\$203,396 K. FCC meeting will be next Wednesday.

b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Matt Cruickshank -approved CIP list, added the proposed guardrail on Aurora Borealis and it was accepted. In December moved \$200K from the fund balance, which was not enough so, an additional \$200K was moved and can be returned to the fund balance. Eklutna: waiting for legal opinion to have them join the road board. There was a Starner/AB-special executive session to meet with MEA concerning moving the light pole by Starner bridge. At this point the details of the meeting could not be shared. BCC members don't like secrets--so public does not know what is going on--public info, can't share? Debbie stated that you have to have a reason to call ex sessions and there needs to be a qualifying event to call a session: influence a legal matter or slander of an individual. The powerline parallels the bridge. Speculation by BCC members: potentially reposition Starner bridge? Great snow plowing compared to Anchorage.

2023-2024 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- Carol Perkins-attended the Jan 8 meeting -\$9M area wide bond proposal: Kevin Cross was concerned that our area would pay for a bond for toilets with no benefits, as the proposed toilets need access to water and electricity to function so despite the fact that the Mirror Lake facilities are not functional, these could not be used to replace them. Potentially one could be installed at town center park. Election to replace retiring board. Stephen Romanelli the new chair of the parks board attended BCC. Pauline Tise is the new Vice-Chair. The new Deputy Director is Kellie Jorgenson who comes with lots of experience from State Parks and Military. Tree lighting was successful. MAC center is putting in new windows to get ready for Arctic Winter Games. Plowing roads to Boy Scout and Girl Scout camp. More repairs are needed for pool, and it has been closed for several months. Lifeguards are being used in other jobs to keep them. Budget passed. Road going in to camp Gorsuch-park road. Plan of attack on road is getting it upgraded to have it maintained by MOA.

d) **Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board:** Debbie Ossiander- no report-meet only when there is a topic to address, or 2 CC's ask for meeting then the board will meet and it is announced through FCC and MOA. Each CC has a representative and alternate.

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

f) **CVFD:** Chief Scott Fisher- no report. Note: The ballot proposition for equipment was incorrectly printed last year, so it will be on this year's ballot and the resolution will be made January 11.

g) **Birchwood Patrol Report:** no report

h) **Homeless Task Force report:** Ken McCarty- no meetings have been held to move forward.

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

Andy Holleman- Jim Anderson is the Chief Operating Officer for ASD and we can contact him for a presentation over the budget: January 9 a document prepared by the administration was presented to choose items to provide balanced budget did not see a cut: no reductions of nursing staff and librarians, did not want to eliminate summer school, but would not continue to rent the dome for soccer practice at a cost of \$1/4M for 4 weeks. Use fund balance-critical after 2018 quake-draw down to state required minimum. If BCC or members have strong feelings on a program—let Andy know. Can email Andy or send messages to the school board and superintendent. Fund balance-/deficient-structural-fall short by \$90M can make up \$70M out of the fund balance. If we try to do all of the same programs-will be short by \$90M. Total fund balance-bring down 5%-for fund balance. Starting this month used to be able to use Chugiak Elementary School for community boy's basketball games and practices. Now parents have to drive into Anchorage and use Willow Elementary? Why can't they use Chugiak? Andy brought up that 25 years ago we had a community school program-Where practicing does not have rental? Before Christmas could use Chugiak Elementary. ASD doesn't have the janitorial staff used to have. Is there a policy on CC's using schools?

Scott Meyers-assembly meeting January 9 was not finished so meeting to finish Tuesday January 16. Don Young port name was passed, area wide \$5M-toilets-downtown and midtown benefit, only location work out here-Eagle River Parks and Rec. \$4M-Chugach State parks access, ordinance to allow internet /phone access to pot shops, AO-9-3 change way chief medical officer is confirmed by the assembly. Holton Hills back on agenda, need individuals to volunteer and participate on boards and commission seats-lots of openings and MOA job openings. Ballot-open assembly seat-April 2024-25, Mark Littlefield, Cody Anderson-2 in race so far. MAC center-Arctic Winter Games there will be figure skating. Commitment fire chief-correct wording for equipment. Scragge supports and insists it will be on the ballot. Only waiting for the resolution. Cemetery-ballot-form our own cemetery board-\$3.2M-for our district. We will have to form a board—each council will nominate a

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person to serve on cemetery board. Michael Savage is the MOA medical officer. Which boards need members?

Kelly Merrick-Senate District L-session starts Tuesday January 16. Committees are all formed and done-energy, Cook Inlet, import energy, bills double, get energy pkg put together, sits on senate finance committee, Governor submitted budget-status quo, Artillery Rd high priority. Reach out to Kelly if you have concerns. Debbie's concern is snowplowing-Representative Saddler-comparatively fewer SOA plow operators, DOT ok on snow. Guardianship issue-having hard time-department been negative with an individual. Carol-try to overturn Governor's veto-for education-5 days override veto-3/4 to override veto-move forward with BSA increase-coordination needed with Governor. Teachers are leaving the state. School district big issue. Jim Anderson-CFO—have him talk to the CC.

5. Appearances

a) **MEA**: Eklutna Dam and MEA Coop general update-Jennifer Castro-she attends community council meetings once a year at least to provide coop updates: 2024 capital projects-parks substation landscape done and that project is complete-tours welcome and for classroom, too.- Eklutna Generation Station. Scholarship applications are open:requirements to apply: financial plan, GPA, short essay on a community issue. Due mid-March. MEA.coop-coop benefits. 2024-Briggs substation upgrade, underground cable replacement, overhead to underground Aurora Borealis, EV's-level 2 charging program. Need to know what that looks like-grant funded program-provide charging data and will give individual level 2 charger. Annual meeting April 30-attend via zoom, too. District only election-Wasilla, Knik area-Mark Hamm reps our district. Next year-at-large-every year at large seat up for election. Ask members to go paperless which saves coop money and each member will be awarded a one-time \$10.00 credit. Debbie brought up the weird power outages we have been experiencing. It is a combination of snow, and bad equipment-N. Peters Creek, had large feeder outages and on January 7 there was a downed wire. If MEA needs to replace the wire power will be out for 7-8 hours. The majority of outages are caused by trees, and it is free of charge to remove dangerous tree on your property. There is not a lot of redundancy in the electrical grid. AB will convert overhead to underground. Pay 3%. MEA will send out postcard mailer notice, and will autocall-if working in an area and inform of outages. Anything potential to impact lines. Community projects-operation roundup to nearest dollar-goes out in form of \$10K grants-CC's can apply for projects, but the grants cannot be used to cover operating costs and they are awarded quarterly. Debbie's credit card on file to autopay was hacked and she tried to call in-did not work-computer would not take it. So, she went in person to MEA Dam-fish and wildlife project over the dam.—created draft fish and wildlife program..out for comments-8-9 criteria to assess and eval by Gov-need community input-next week series of public mtgs-overview of program—mitigate impacts to fish and wildlife-different proposals to bring back different species of salmon-Eklutna Lake 90% ANC domestic water supply. More impacts beyond electricity-it is our water supply. Cultural resources important to Eklutna. Tuesday-2-4, 6-8PM-Jan 16 Palmer Community Center, Thursday ER meeting by AIH Jan 18-presentation over draft plan. Reps for fish, water, comment tables. Submit comments on line to Eklutna Hydro website. Mid-Feb cutoff. Make changes and submit. Join support Eklutna to open up river. Draft version-what is feasible-Take copy of resolution passed by BCC and submit to Eklutna Hydro website.

b) Mark Littlefield presented for assembly seat.

6. Old Business

a) **Cemetery bond**-Debbie Ossiander-bond for \$3.5 for Chugiak.

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7. New Business

a) Eklutna: Powder Reserve West Project Tract 40A-Matt: Kyle Smith-not applied for zoning application-settlement with dump-requirements for development, cost put onto Eklutna, another route, land swap with land by airport. In April will submit application to rezone-will visit and show plan. 1100 acres-escrow account-on hold until litigation settled. Very preliminary development phase at this point.

b) Input from membership for potential different meeting location for BCC-different meeting-location-only hard to get into school maybe once a year. Will look into setting aside parking spots. Talk with Karen or Jeff. What about high school? Debbie will talk to Parks and Rec, rentals at ASD, report back at next meeting. Churches? South ER CC using a school. Birchwood Elementary has been frustrating. Was suggested to reach out to activity director.

8. Action Items

Input to Alaska trail and routing Shawn Sexton guest attendee-Alaska Long trail-issue trail heads in residential areas. Issue is routing and parking with the goal to convince decision makers should be modified-looking for feedback. Long trail-trying to assess to reroute proposed trail-plan section trail from Girdwood to Palmer-no way to resupply, and does not promote commerce. Ram Valley-come out Peters Creek trail to Eklutna Lake-no trail to bring hikers to Chugiak or Eagle River. Debbie suggested and asked Shawn to write up resolution for agenda next time Trail may take 20-25 years to build. Something needs to be done soon-parking proposed up at Peters Creek trail.

9. Adjournment: 8:36PM motion made by Tom Prunty and seconded by Patty Friend