

Birchwood Community Council

Regular Monthly Meeting - 7-9 PM February 26, 2014

Ski Chalet at 17300 South Birchwood Loop

Minutes

Co-Chair Jill Crosby called the meeting to order at 7:03.
17 BCC members signed in.

The January 2014 Minutes were approved.

1. Announcements

- a. Crime Alert from Jeff Hartley (Captain of the Birchwood Community Patrol): in the past few weeks there have been 9 to 10 late night thefts. Only half have been reported to police (you can do this online or over the phone). There is a 30 man gang from the valley, trying to steal vehicles, changing plates and using them to commit residential burglaries. The Community Patrol has stepped up patrols, as have the police, and Bobbi alerted everyone. Lock homes and vehicles, and call in suspicious activity to the police. Also there have been problems at Beach Lake with partying. This has not just been people stopping by, but people renting the facility and partying. Jeff has also met with Chugiak CC on these issues. Jill asks if there is additional support that the Community Patrol needs. Jeff believes that the Council already passed a resolution in support of community patrol, but perhaps we should do another.
- b. Alaska RR Right of Way Use Policy and permit fees. The Alaska Railroad has a new policy requiring a permit and fees for improvement of land in their right of way. Bobbi speaks to the fees; we will try to get more information from them. They did hold the proper meetings and notifications. On a related topic, we need to research what happened to the land transfer between the railroad and Parks and Recreation that the RR would need for straightening the tracks. Since that project is not happening at the moment, we should find out what happened with the ROW exchange. Lexi will do this.
- c. FCC training March 1 - Jill will be going, and will report back to us.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

- a. Alaska Motor Musers Club is here to present their request for our support. They would like to hold a snow machine race in the Birchwood Industrial Park. Vince French tells us about this request. He is an Eagle River resident, and active in the Alaska Motor Musers. The Motor Musers lost their place to hold snow cross races (they had used a site at 3rd and Ingra), and would like to try Birchwood Industrial Park and see if it works out well. They anticipate 40 little kids and 20 medium kids (10-12 or 13) and some young adults. They will need to scrape up snow to build a track. No alcohol, no partying, just a well-organized race. They think the Birchwood site would work for keeping noise down, and work well logistically. If it does work out well, they might want to do more, but for now they are just asking permission for this one time.

Bobbi says that she doesn't see where we would have objections, but she would like 2 conditions. 1) Access should be just from North Birchwood. 2) Participants should NOT be allowed to ride up or jump off of the boundary berms. They assure us those conditions would be the met. Bob Reiner thinks they might want to put flyers in the mailboxes of neighbors. They do plan to do a door to door notification. Alan asks what their future goal would be. Vince answers 3 to 4 events per year. Ed Beaman asks when would this happen? It would happen on a Saturday or Sunday, 10 AM to 4:30 PM. Barb suggests putting a notice in the Star; and someone also suggests a notice at the post office. Jill asks about parking. They are expecting 15 to 20 vehicles now; would they expect more in the future if racers came out from Anchorage? The 3rd and Ingra track only saw that much activity over its three years. Vince thinks that 20 trucks would be low; he thinks it might be 40 trucks, but there is plenty of room. Jill

wonders about the impact on the road, and improvements to North Birchwood are controversial. Tony asks what kind of infrastructure would this take? Piling up snow for the track, another pile of snow for the spectators. They use ISLC safety standards for their racing.

Kevin moves that we support their initial race, based on what we've heard, and that they come back to us after that race, to resolve any conflicts before requesting support for any further races. Janet Seconds. Alan makes a friendly amendment to include conditions of access from North Birchwood only, no riding on the berms.to be included, and with notification of neighbors. The amendment is accepted. Vote passes, one opposed, many in favor.

5. Old Business

- a. Three Bears – response to BCC concerns about traffic
Three Bears passed planning and zoning; and they did not feel traffic would be an issue. Jill informed DoT of our concerns, and DoT replied that there was no need for mitigation for at least 10 years. The only road improvement is to widen the N. Birchwood off ramp to two lanes at the end. They will fold any improvements needed after 10 years into their AMATS planning. Bobbi asks about the level of service – it's expected to be no worse than level C. There will be a liquor license transfer to 3 Bears before the ABC board. We're not sure from whom. Kevin notes that Chugiak CC members had a lot of concern about their selling liquor at all.
- b. MEA substation expansion Kevin – the second round of the CUP was denied at P&Z; MEA filed an appeal to the Board of Adjustment within the required time frame. Then they had 30 days to finish writing up their appeal; we have filed a notice to see their appeal and we will be able to file a rebuttal. The only thing the board of adjustment can consider is what was presented at P&Z. The board will consider written arguments only, no presentations. Their points of appeal were to assert that the drainage was fine, despite neighbors' issues with pooling water. They didn't feel the neighbors' concerns about scale/size had any merit; on both of these issues P&Z asked questions for which they had no answers at the meeting. Maria asks who is the 'we' that will file a rebuttal to their appeal; it will be Kevin. There are other local residents as well.
- c. Parks & Rec Capital Projects Beach Lake Park and NW1/4 Section 25
John Rodda is here to discuss this with the council. For work on NW quarter, Parks and Rec wants to look at the area and consider what (if any) development should take place. He notes that the NW quarter is intended to be relatively undeveloped to allow for the sorts of recreation that take place with minimal development. For example, although all the current ski trails at Beach Lake are lit, as well as ongoing projects to like those at Mirror Lake, we expect that the NW quarter trails will not be lit. We have money for planning, but we don't want to move forward with specifics until the community has weighed in. Barb notes that we want to develop within the guidance of the master plan, which is, as John as noted, minimal development. The Hill Loop is in the NW quarter, and it is already lit.

Additional development would include a multi-use trail around the perimeter of the park, and some trail access parking. We need to consider what could be done with minimum impact to the neighbors. Jill notes the Council's first idea is to map the informal trails, as well as soils and wetlands, and drainage, to gain a better understanding of what is there. Then we could figure out what's next.

Jeff Brand notes that people using the power line go away from the main part of the park, and describes several social trails that wind through the area. There are few snow machines, some bikers, walkers and horseback riders. Debbie asks where we are in this process. We have a committee, and this (mapping and inventory) is their recommendation. Barb adds that there are barriers by the Pioneer access; a neighbor explains that trucks were accessing the trails there. But most trucks and problem access is from the other end. Jill notes the master plan calls for parking in several places. A neighbor talks about the bad condition of Pioneer past Cline. John adds that park project might cooperate with CBERRRSA to improve that piece of Pioneer along with work in the park.

What John would like is a prioritized list of what we think should be done. Janet thinks mapping would be an excellent first step. Barb notes that the master plan for the NW quarter hinges on the 8 acres. We need to think about what we want to do if we never get that parcel. Chris thinks we need to separate GPS work from soil samples in our list. Bobbi reiterates that we should not deviate from the master plan.

Tony asks if P&R has a repository for the information. We would contract the work out and produce GIS layers, connected with other city data (like roads). Barb notes that the multiple uses of this area are very valuable. ***Janet moves that we recommend moving forward with GPS of the existing trails, a soils study, and an ecological site survey, as a first step in determining how we want to develop the park. Kevin seconds.*** Tony asks how much of the \$300,000 will be used up with this planning. There is no set amount. We will keep communicating. ***The motion passes, unanimously.***

- d. Glenn Highway Capacity Improvement project – Artillery Road off-ramp concerns Jill notes that the ER CC council explained to us their concerns about the exit off the highway being too sharp a curve. They did not send us their resolution so we will deal this at a later meeting.
- e. Review of Design Criteria Manual (DCM) -streets and drainage: Debbie says that we have a part of Chapter 10 that deals with all the smaller roads in our area. They are supposed to re-write the DCM and include roads.
- f. Eklutna Monofill – Assembly has chosen to review rather than accept P&Z recommendation to deny approval to Master Plan. Dick Traini moved this issue from the consent agenda (if it had stayed there, the P&Z determination would have been accepted), Elvi Gray-Jackson seconded. It now has a scheduled hearing for May. Debbie suggests that the reason they did this is not important; we need to start lobbying assembly members. Maria notes that Chugiak CC continues to seek our support. Jill and Maria explain that we have invited Eklutna to present at our next meeting; there is time since the public hearing is scheduled for May 21st. Barb asks if Chugiak CC has had Lori Aldrich (Alaska DEC) out to explain why the state is not doing permitting on this? The Corps also sent Eklutna a letter with more detail on surface water flows. (For information on community concerns about this proposal, see <https://www.facebook.com/pages/STOP-the-DUMP/273836102753208>)
- g. Community Council Ordinance was passed by the Assembly. We need to review our by-laws, revise them to bring them into compliance and submit them for approval. Susan Fischetti explains this, speaking for Amy Demboski. The Ordinance passed with 2 amendments. CC's MAY (not MUST) allow 16 and 17 year old members. Councils MAY (not MUST) impose a prior attendance requirement for voting. All CC's must submit their bylaws for review.
- h. Amy's notes also talk about Amy's proposed ethics change and a number of budget issues. Fixing the Anchorage Fire Department budget's 2 million dollar run, may put the muni close to the tax cap. Note that if the State raises the Base Student Allocation for funding the school district, our local contribution also increases and could cause us problems staying under the tax cap. Bill Stoltze's lifetime registration bill would also cost the city money. And there is the ongoing issue of who should pay for the School Resource Officers. ASD wants the city to pay for half. Also, she is still working on mailboxes for the Community Councils' use.

6. New Business

- a. First meeting of the new C/ER Advisory Board (Title 21) Debbie Ossiander explains the Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board. It is to provide advice on regional land use and planning issues. Debbie is chair. The first issue was the proposed Eklutna overlay district, which would impose different standards on the affected area. Downtown Eagle River is currently the only such area. CER AB asked why they hadn't heard from the Village of Eklutna on this. The Municipal attorney had some concerns with this district because parts of the proposal would give the village veto power over infrastructure development across the area. It's an issue because of history. The old trails plan had a trail that would have gone right through the village, and they weren't given any choice. Also, multiple homes could be allowed on single lot, no setbacks. They are more permissive about allowed activities than the underlying zoning.

Because of the need to get feedback from the Village, the CER AB have delayed providing their conclusions to P&Z. Bobbi asks if there is not a CERAB seat for Eklutna. There is, and she was there, and supported the delay because she did not know how the council felt about the district. Randy, Steve Skipper, Mike Foster, Angelina from Eklutna, and Debbie are the board. No one from Eklutna valley yet or South Fork. The Board will meet as needed, rather than regularly. There is some question about exactly what issues will come before the board. Is it just region-wide issues, or can Community Councils request a CER AB review?

7. Reports

- a. CBERRRSA Road Board Report

The major road efforts currently are the Glenn Hwy improvement, Artillery road exit redesign, and the downtown area. The board heard a presentation on the business district. They want to make sure the three efforts communicate. Tony has had no feedback on the proposed capital improvement projects. He will send the list to board and we will send it around and encourage feedback. Debbie asks about Aurora Borealis – it needs improvement. Bobbi warns that the Muni (as represented by Vivian Underwood) wants it upgraded to a class 1 collector. But Debbie only wants chip seal. Barb notes that the same issue (fix vs upgrade) is a factor with North Birchwood.

The Road Board voted to take \$350,000 from reserve to provide some tax offset. Janet wonders where she could find the plans for Artillery road – there are online

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/works/operations/streets/Service/Pages/CBERRRSARoadBoard.aspx>

- b. Parks and Recreation Report (covered earlier, in discussion of NW Quarter)

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/ERparks/>

- c. Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board (covered earlier)

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM.