

BIRCHWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday, November 12, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Bobbi Wells. The minutes from September's meeting were read and approved. (There are no minutes from October due to lack of quorum).

Our agenda for this meeting is being rearranged due to snowfall and other meeting commitments.

Lexi Hill/Parks & Rec. – Progress is being made on the Ski Chalet, the electrical connection is stalled at this point due to problems with guy-wire attachment and anchor easements. The anchor easement would be on Eklutna, Inc. Property on the east side of Birchwood Loop across from the Chalet. This portion of land easement has been offered to MEA for \$5,000.00. Details are being worked out. The gravel extraction in Loretta French Park will be changed to adjust the slope of the hill that the gravel is being taken from – will only change the original footprint on the hill slightly. The new proposed Parks & Rec fees will be voted on by the Assembly along with the budget – the Mayor hopes to bring them all in line. Examples of proposed fees include a yearly \$5.00 trail user fee for anyone who walks, bikes, runs, walks dogs or otherwise uses the muni trail system and \$50.00 adult/\$25.00 child ski trail fee. Increased fees include ballfields, rec center fees, picnic shelter reservations, tennis lessons etc. A list of all proposed fees is in our file at the library. Budget cuts will effect our area, the pool at Chugiak High School will take the biggest cut, but it won't be as drastic as initially presented.

Senator Fred Dyson- Presentation on the Great Divorce.....Power Point Stats-Historically, in the 1970's, the Legislature acted to make Eagle River a separate community and it was challenged in court (Lee Jordan was elected to be the Mayor). The court ruled against us based on single purpose legislation which is precluded in our constitution. Area's to be included (which would form the 2nd largest city in the state), assembly representation, fiscal structure and economics were lined out with the information currently available. Economically our community is quite viable and we are a picture of doing things efficiently, no one in the state provides road maintenance and snow clearing as cheap as we do and as quickly. Our university branch provides credit hours of class cheaper than any other branch in the state (more people drive out here for classes than people driving in for classes). Things that are not a clear picture of separation are the schools and the school levy/outstanding bonds. ASD was asked several months ago for this information and hasn't been forth coming with it at this time. Fred says he will get the information about the schools and the subsidization of the Senior Center. Issues of water, garbage, and imprisonment of sex offenders can be worked out. Debt service reimbursement on bond issues is going to be real close. Capital Improvements can be established when we become a separate community. Health Department, Public Transportation and Animal Control can be developed or run through state offices. Base closings can play a huge part in our city development.

Boundary Commission deals with communities that want to be self determined. Legislation, Senate Concurrent Resolution 17, needs to be passed so the Boundary Commission can look at our case for independence and make a recommendation either for or against it to the Legislature. There are still many questions to be answered and a definite decision that the majority of people in the community want a change needs to be reached. Fred will have a lot of this information on the website - frein2003.org. Check it out and keep yourself and your neighbors informed.

Jeff Friedman - our designated School Board Rep. attended the meeting and introduced himself. Jeff answered a variety of questions about CHS construction, access between the high school and Birchwood Elementary and public water and sewer lines being run to both schools. The council relayed their appreciation of the attention given to the parking problem at CHS which has not surfaced in any part of the neighborhood this year. We do thank Jeff for sharing his time and knowledge with us. Any questions regarding education and school issues can be sent to Jeff at friedman_jeff@asdk12.org or call him at 742-6699.

Motion for election of a slate Officers and Parks & Rec. Representative was made, seconded (Jim Welch/Eldon King) and unanimously passed.

Elected Officers are:

- Bobbi Wells - Chairman**
- Kevin Finnigan - Vice Chairman**
- Nanette Belk - Secretary and FCC Rep.**
- Lexi Hill - Parks & Rec. Board Rep.**
- Ann Newbury - Parks & Rec. Board Rep. Alternate**

All those elected will serve until the fall of 2005.

In addressing the boundary inquiry concerning the formation of a new council in the Fire Lake area, this council by motion made, seconded (Jim Welsh/Jill Crosby) and passed unanimously, vehemently opposes including any portion of the current Birchwood area into the proposed Fire Lake Community Council. This council supports the efforts of the Fire Lake resident to form their own council but feels there are few common issues that would be shared with residents of South Birchwood. The second organizational meeting for the Fire Lake Council is November 17th, 7:00 p.m. at the Harry J. McDonald Rec. Center.

Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission regular meeting is on Wednesday November 19th at 11:30 a.m. - Mayor's Conference Room (830).

Meeting adjourned 9:10 p.m.

Nanette Belk/Sec.