

**Eklutna Valley Community Council**  
**September 17, 2019**  
**Meeting minutes**

The meeting was chaired by council president Margan Grover and began at 6:33 p.m. The council met at the Eklutna Ranger Station. Twenty council members were present: Skip and Tena Cheely, Margan Grover, Dan Thompson, Rick and Lisa Sinnott, Debbie and Steve Thon, Buff Rix, Randy Bangerter, Tom Bohn, Erlinda Downing, James Riley, Steve and Cheryl Remme, DeAnne and Mike Sabol, Todd and Linda Hehl, and Kevin Menkens. Two others – Sandi and Roy Dobberke – attended the meeting because they would like to buy property in the valley.

The meeting agenda was approved with two additions. Rick had asked Bob Reagan, who could not attend the meeting, for a report on Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board activity. Bob had summarized the meeting and Rick wanted to read Bob's report. Margan had received an email on Eklutna River mitigation activity and wanted to share that information. A motion was made and seconded and the council voted unanimously in favor of adding the two agenda items.

The minutes of the October 18, 2018, meeting were approved with no changes. Rick reported that Bob Reagan had reported no council funds had been spent since the last meeting; therefore, the council still has \$466.64.

Before moving on to old and new business, Rick reminded the council, including four new members, that the only people who could vote at this meeting were those who attended the last meeting. For that reason, Rick moved that no more motions be made at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Randy. Then Rick realized that a motion would be needed to adjourn the meeting, so he amended his motion to allow a move to adjourn, but no other. Randy agreed with the change. Because our bylaws link voting eligibility to attendance, Eklutna Valley residents must have attended at least one prior meeting during the previous year in order to be eligible to vote. Rick argued that because we hadn't met for 11 months we should have another meeting before voting on any resolution that affected the community council. It was unfair to have only one meeting during the year determine eligibility because people may have legitimate reasons for missing a meeting. In the ensuing discussion, members came to the conclusion that the best way to address this problem was to meet again before October 18, the anniversary of our last meeting. Then our council would have held two meetings during the past year. The motion carried unanimously. Margan suggested that our next meeting be held on Tuesday, October 15, 2019. There were no objections.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Chugiak Senior Center garden volunteer report.** Lisa reported that she and Rick had worked in the garden twice last spring, primarily weeding and planting new perennials, when she talked to a new resident who said her daughter worked for a local nursery and wanted to help. The next time Lisa visited the garden, the daughter had planted annuals in all the open spaces. Lisa said she would attempt to coordinate with the woman next spring, or let her take over the community service project.

**Historic minute.** Rick passed around a couple of photos of homemade memorials found in Eklutna Valley. One was a metal plate attached to a cottonwood tree near the Eklutna bridge. The memorial was dedicated to David A. Mason, a young man who died in Thunderbird Creek in 1996. The other photo showed a blue metal cross that stands on the ridge north of Eklutna

Lake Road. Written on the cross is “Scotty Peak.” It wasn’t really located on a peak and nobody seems to know who Scotty is/was. Buff suggested it may have been a terrier. The only other memorial that comes to mind is the veteran’s memorial on Gold Star Peak, which is one of two peaks on Mt. POW-MIA.

**Local crime report.** The main discussion centered on the break-in at Skip and Tena’s house earlier this year. Everyone agreed that neighbors were watching out for neighbors and to keep sharing reports of incidents, including suspicious vehicles or other activity, on the community Facebook page.

**Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board report.** Rick read Bob Reagan’s report on the April 2019 meeting of the advisory board. The municipality had proposed new standards for private roads. Four or more lots sharing a single access must put in a private road that conforms with municipal standards. Bob didn’t think anyone in our council would be affected. However, he cautioned us to look up the private road standards if anyone is contemplating building such a road. The standards cover things like construction, road width, pedestrian access, parking, etc.

The advisory board also discussed the possibility of a Chugiak-Eagle River cemetery. As best as Bob could recall, Chugiak Community Council had initially asked for a cemetery, thinking primarily of a municipal facility, but was willing to consider a co-op or other variation. No recommendation was made and Bob thinks it’ll be a long time before there will be any kind of concrete proposal.

**Eklutna River mitigation website.** Margan passed out copies of an email from Brad Meiklejohn, Alaska director of The Conservation Fund, to Steve Padula, a consultant with Hydro Regulatory Services LLC in Vancouver, Washington, regarding a public website recently announced by the owners of the Eklutna hydro project (Chugach Electric, MEA, and ML&P). Padula and other consultants developed the website. Brad observed that at least three critical issues – salmon, the historical use of the river by local Dena’ina, and ownership of nearly all of the land along the river and around the lake by the Native Village of Eklutna – were not mentioned on the website. From his perspective, the website seems biased in favor of the three electrical producers, who have been reluctant to initiate studies or mitigation as promised since 1991, but are now claiming, for instance, that they are getting an “early” start on restoring Eklutna River. The website gives one the impression that it is the official forum for public involvement, but it is not. The website is [www.eklutnahydro.com](http://www.eklutnahydro.com). Hopefully, the electrical producers and their consultants will address Brad’s concerns.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**New municipal ordinances that affect our community council.** Rick read excerpts from three ordinances that have passed since our last meeting. Section 8.55.040 prohibits trapping in the municipality for noncommercial reasons. Humane traps (e.g., Hav-a-hart live traps) must be checked at least once every 12 hours. Any domestic animal captured must be cared for in a humane manner and returned to the animal’s owner, an animal control officer, or the animal care and control center. No person shall use a type of trap not approved by the chief animal control officer.

Section 14.70.200 prohibits trapping, even in areas open to trapping by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, within 50 yards of a developed trail and ¼ mile of trailheads, campgrounds and permanent dwellings. All traps and snares set within the municipality shall be marked with a trapper identification number issued by the State of Alaska or with contact information for the

owner of the trap or snare. Fish and Game regulations already prohibit trapping in Eklutna Valley, so traps and snares set for wild animals are in violation of both state and municipal laws.

Section 15.110 was revised primarily to avoid attracting bears to neighborhoods, single dwellings and businesses. The new law defines a “bear-resistant container” as one that is certified by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (a national organization), or the equivalent or greater as certified by the waste management provider. The IGBC standards can be found at [http://igbconline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/190503\\_Certified\\_Products\\_List.pdf](http://igbconline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/190503_Certified_Products_List.pdf). Scroll down to the section on garbage containers. Locked bear-resistant trash containers may be placed for curbside pickup no more than 12 hours prior to the day of collection and retrieved not later than 9 p.m. of the day of collection. All other trash containers must be placed for pickup the morning of collection and retrieved not later than 9 p.m. that day. When not set out for collection, trash containers must be stored inside a structure or within five feet of the principal (main) structure. Fines will be assessed as follows: the first offense in a calendar year will be \$100 per violation, the second offense will be \$250 per violation, the third and subsequent offenses in a calendar year will be \$500 per violation. Failure to comply will result in a separate penalty for each day the violation exists. Fines will not be assessed if the homeowner can show a good faith effort to obtain a bear-resistant container from their solid waste service hauler or provider and the service did not supply them with one. All of these laws took effect as of June 18, 2019.

One final provision of this ordinance allows the municipal manager or designee to recommend that the Assembly designate an area, neighborhood, or specific location to be a “secure trash regulation zone” if 1) the area has experienced wildlife in trash, the presence of wildlife has greatly increased the likelihood of wildlife in trash, or any other potential wildlife-in-trash hazard exists and 2) the designation is in the best interests of the municipality. In “secure trash regulation zones” all trash containers must be bear-resistant. Homeowners may store trash within a house, garage, shed or other structure at least as secure as a bear-resistant container at all times, except when being transported or placed for pickup. All bear-resistant containers must be kept securely closed. These provisions do not take effect until March 1, 2020. However, Girdwood has already asked to be a “secure trash regulation zone.”

The meeting adjourned at about 7:35 p.m.