

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting
Wednesday, September 9, 2020 6:30pm
REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Virtual Meeting
MEETING MINUTES – Approved October 14, 2020

Call to order at 6:38pm by David W. Schade.
Quorum was not established.

Introductions and Announcements:

Ms. Deena Mitchell, Anchorage School Board, introduced herself. See School Board below for her update.

Meeting Minutes Approval: No action taken due to lack of quorum.

Treasurers Report: Joy Webb (for Ruth Armstrong) – \$446.50. Checking account will be depleted after paying outstanding post office box and bank fees.

New Business:

Chugiak/Eagle River Library

Nancy Clark, Manager

Ms. Clark provided the following update:

- The library hours have returned to pre-COVID hours.
- Ways the library is providing service under new health guidelines:
 - Hold/Pickup: Curbside pickup is available via appointment or call when you arrive. Items will be brought to you.
 - Walkup service: Press doorbell on sign. There is no public access to the building due to landlord-imposed restrictions.
 - Virtual Programs – Story time is held 3 times weekly, either live or recorded.
 - Microsoft Teams.
 - Four book clubs are available.
- We have a very wide variety of materials available.
- If you have any issue with your library card, call us and we'll work it out.
- We don't know when we'll be able to reopen to the public. We align with the school district opening.
- Hourly cleaning takes place now (with staff only).
- When we reopen, limited computer access will be allowed.
- We offer a personal librarian service in which you submit a request for a particular topic, and we will search for books for you.
- Earthquake repairs: FEMA visited and took pictures of damage.

Questions from meeting participants included:

- An opportunity to browse the books is highly desirable. Why is the library in Wasilla still open but our library is closed?
Response: The library is part of the municipality so we must follow COVID rules from the municipality.

Eagle River Chamber of Commerce:

- The Chamber currently has five vacant seats including 3 incumbents. Terms are for two years.
- Cost to join is \$125.
- Deadline to apply is September 11.

Old Business:

Jamie Allard - Anchorage Assembly

907-854-5349 or Jamie.allard@anchorageak.gov

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Ms. Allard provided the following update:

- Title 17 - There is a proposal to require sprinkler systems in new build homes. Ms. Allard is opposed to this and fighting it in the Assembly. She is working with other councils on the topic to introduce amendments to 'soften the blow.' If it comes to a vote, she will still oppose it.
 - There is also an effort to change coding we have in Eagle River.
 - You may receive a copy of the draft ordinance by requesting it from Ms. Allard.
- In August, the chamber was 'locked down.' Ms. Allard was organizing an effort to be sued to prevent such lockdowns to ensure opportunities for public testimony.
- There is an ethics violation recall effort underway for Felix Rivera (Assembly member) due to his actions regarding six full time aide job opportunities. In July \$175,000 was approved for aides to assist the Assembly attorney. Mr. Rivera posted these positions only to Young Democrats organization. Existing aide contracts would be allowed to lapse under this action.
- AO 2020-80 – This would 'hand-tie' the Anchorage police department. It will be re-introduced in the Safety Committee. Ms. Allard feels this will be detrimental to police and needs to be stopped. Felix Rivera feels accountability insurance should be required by each officer in case they are sued.
- On Tuesday, an ordinance was introduced to force Anchorage hotels to have unionized employees.
- Conversion therapy and police changes should be at the state level rather than at the municipality level.
- Ms. Allard is working with APD. We don't have as much crime as Anchorage and our lower police coverage, in part, reflects this.
- Ms. Allard urged participants to contact her to provide input on all topics.

Questions from meeting participants included:

- Regarding the proposed home sprinkler system ordinance, should this topic go to the Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board for review? It would also apply to additions on existing home.
Response: This topic is going before the CER Advisory Board.
- Why are things done so differently in Palmer and Wasilla?
Response: Palmer and Wasilla have own government along with Matsu Borough.
- Eagle Exit was mentioned by various participants. We can hold a future meeting on this topic.
- Peters Creek – Has a new, high-density housing development been approved?
Response: Yes, development with 137 condo/garden homes is approved near the Mac Center. The community council impacted supports this development.

**Kelly Merrick, Representative
Alaska State Legislature**

Representative Merrick provided the following update:

- Ms. Merrick has been meeting with Alaska Republicans. More unity it needed within party to tackle current issues.
- Division of Elections is looking for poll workers. See their website to apply. Pay is minimal but this is a great public service opportunity.
- AK CARES Act – businesses have applied for the grant money that was approved.
- Another representative is trying to end the governor's emergency declaration on September 15. A special session would be needed to approve this.

Questions from meeting participants included:

- Is the Legislature reconvening to address the budget issues?
Response: Possibly in October but this would be just before elections so that is unlikely; perhaps before the end of the year.

School Board Report – Deena Mitchell, Anchorage School Board

Ms. Mitchell introduced herself as our council’s school board representative. She provided the following update on ASD.

- School board representatives are elected ‘municipal-wide.’ Each year the representatives are assigned to community councils and are to provide updates to those councils. Ms. Mitchell has been assigned to Eagle River Valley and Birchwood this year.
- ASD hopes to start in-school classes on half-week basis for elementary school students first; to be following by middle and high school students. Middle and high school students have changed to operating in pods, by quarter. Students take 3 classes at a time.
- There are increased, COVID-related costs to the district.
- Feedback received thus far is that suppliers have had some issues with virtual schooling but things are improving.
- The situation is very hard for teachers.
- At last night’s board meeting, the superintendent indicated grades K-3 should start in-school first but there are currently too many COVID cases to do so.

Questions from meeting participants included:

- The Valley currently is holding in-school sessions with use of masks. They are not having rising cases and not experiencing problems. Why isn’t ASD doing so?
Response: Each district makes own decisions. ASD meets daily with Dr. Zink, the governor and has sessions w/Dr. Fauci. The metric agreed upon by ASD is the 14 day average of new cases. This is explained on ASD’s website.
- Why are schools and businesses operating normally in Wasilla and so different in Anchorage?
Response: Each school district makes its own decisions. Matsu Borough has made different decisions than Anchorage.
- There are trade-offs with closing schools. Have highest per capita suicide rate. Did you vote to support closing down schools? Did you vote in favor of ASD’s metrics?
Response: Yes.
- Once ASD’s agreed-upon metrics are met, how soon will school resume?
Response: Not sure, Ms. Mitchell will follow up on this question.
- Wearing masks 4-6 hours/day can cause issues (e.g. vertigo, dizziness, skin issues). Will children have to wear masks?
Response: Ms. Mitchel will share this information with ASD board members.

Eagle River Community Patrol – Cliff Cook

Mr. Cook provided the following update:

- Patrols were conducted for total of 105 hours covering 1201 miles.
- Crime is slowing down in Eagle River area. We still have some transients and petty crime.
- There have been multiple robberies in the Valley and Eagle River. Some teens have been charged.
- Be sure to lock your vehicles and your garage doors.

Committee Reports:

CBERRRSA (Road Board): James McCurtain – No report.

Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Steve Skipper – No report.

Education: Michael Tavoliero – No report.

Federation of Community Councils – Tom Freeman – No report.

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Parks and Rec: Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- An \$85,000 loan from the CARES Act has been approved for the Mac Center.
- Cemetery site selection committee has been placed under Parks & Rec committee oversight. One of the sites under consideration is across from ER High School. Other sites are also under consideration but are not in our council.
- Baldy Trailhead has been very crowded lately. It may switch to diagonal parking.
- Eagle River Nature Center has been very busy this summer, particularly by families.
 - There are 32 new paid parking spots.
 - A \$200,000 grant application is under development for repairs to the salmon viewing deck and building roof.

Platting and Zoning: Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- A rebuild request for a carport was received.
- Owls Nest Subdivision (Ptarmigan & Eagle River Lane), Spinnell Homes, Case S12575– There is a public hearing on October 7 to remove the Creek Protection Easement and replace with three additional homesites.
- In Uplands Subdivision – A water easement has been vacated.
- Overlook Subdivision - two new roads have been added and access Eagle River Rd. Mr. Panarese will look into this further.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is on October 14, 6:30pm, Virtual using Zoom.

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: David Schade (2021); Vice President: Julie Jessen(2022); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2021); Education: Michael Tavoliero(2021); Parks & Rec: Pete Panarese (2021); C/ER Consortium: Steve Skipper (2020); Platting & Zoning: Pete Panarese (2021); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2020); Road Board: James McCurtain(2022)/Arlene Rasic – Alt (2022); Secretary: Joy Webb (2021)