

**Minutes**  
**BIRCHWOOD Community Council**  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 7-9 PM

**1. Call to Order 7:05**

**2. Approval of previous Minutes APPROVED**

**3. Announcements**

- a) Chugiak-Eagle River cemetery meeting (originally a CERAB meeting) The Boutet Company (TBC, muni project management contractor) has sent notices so this CERAB meeting will be a community meeting for the cemetery presentation: 7 PM May 19<sup>th</sup>. Once cemetery presentation is over CERAB has draft bylaws to consider.
- b) upcoming MOA Planning Department issues – Eklutna is asking for a CUP to do reclamation on the tract north of Powder Ridge where they were extracting gravel. They also want to modify existing CUP to allow more stump and other debris storage in the same area.; The Crossing wants an extension on their subdivision agreement to work on merging two lots.
- c) JBER – reminder Post Rd gate closed May 3 – July 2; Boniface Gate closed July 3 – mid-August. Next Arctic Thunder Air Show is summer 2022 (none this year). Also there is prescribed burning along the Glenn, in the range area.
- d) Municipality’s Memorial Day Ceremony, May 31, 9:30-10:30, Park Strip between I and L streets.

**4. Reports**

- a) FCC Report: Matt Cruickshank – Turnagain CC is concerned that the MOA is changing the west Anchorage snow disposal site. The current site (rented from airport) is problematic, so they want to build a new one; however there are comp plan problems. MOA wants to use part of Connors Bog. Turnagain CC would like our support, but there is no motion for us to consider. We will try to find out more. Matt is now Vice Chair of FCC.
- b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report The people doing the CHS area traffic problem study will get started right away; they contracted the principal, who says there is no traffic problem. Gretchen will call the principal and talk about it. This is a community problem even if not a school problem.
- c) Parks and Recreation Report: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/ERparks/> Meeting postponed until the dog park meeting. Debbie and Patty have been seeing comments on NextDoor about the proposed dog park in Peters Creek. Some neighbors have been very critical; Parks and Rec plans to consider there issues and propose changes to the plan.
- d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board (see above)
- e) Treasurer’s report \$277
- f) Tim Benningfield – CVFD no report
- g) Birchwood Patrol Report - Val got a Nixle reporting a burglary in the 2700 block of Starner St. The person was caught by the homeowners and arrested. Please don’t leave valuables in cars and lock cars when parked in driveways.

## **5. Appearances:**

a) Patrick Higgins, Anchorage School Board

4 New members sworn in a week ago Monday. The Board direction may change. They have been discussing different view of how boards should operate – the Council of Great City Schools thinks boards just approve what the superintendent says; and the Alaska Association of School Boards says their job is to support the superintendent. In contrast, the National School Board Assoc says the Board’s job is to be the voice of the public – he likes that approach. Graduations are going on – outside (no rain)- seems to be going well. Financially, they have funds to bridge the current deficit, and more coming in; they need to consider (and get input on) how the funds should be used. They had a presentation on student performance, and the news was not good. School board focused on reading / phonics. Results using phonics are good compared to without phonics. Summer school will be available – many students could use this. They are not sure what will happen in the fall, Pat wants to be sure they have contingency plans for a good education, not just a stop gap education. His cell is listed on ASDs website; he tries to be responsive. He will do a blog on Facebook about the school board meetings. Also the meeting recording is available. Gretchen comments: with a couple of decades of teaching, she could tell you the value of phonics. She had a question about the low scores – prior to covid, or during covid – she has heard testing at home was problematic. Pat looked at several years of results. He thinks curriculum is critical. As is differentiation (up and down). Gretchen brings up class size – Pat references research by Larry Picus and Allan Odden that indicates up to 15 students in grades K-3 and up to 25 for higher grades. Another concern is that ASD is getting fewer \$/child than Mat-Su, Kenai. He feels the geographic differential needs to be adjusted. Lexi asks about time to eat and move. He knows Kelly Lessens is on top of that issue, and he things she will make sure the board considers it.

## **6. Old Business**

- a) Update on Birchwood Airport Master Plan – will move to regular report. No update now, anticipates to have one later this summer.
- b) Revision to municipal taxes approved by Assembly  
Debbie explains how some changes to taxes would have had Eagle River and Girdwood taxes increase where downtown taxes would increase much less. The mayor vetoed the approved budget, they fixed the problem, and now it’s all OK.
- c) Liquor license approvals – any complaints about Birchwood Saloon – nothing stands out.
- d) Update on Peters Creek Dog Park see P&R, above.
- e) CBERRRSA appointments – still not complete.

## **7. New Business**

**8. Open Forum**-floor opened to public, any issue

**9. Adjournment-8:03pm**