

**Eklutna Valley Community Council**  
**August 18, 2021**  
**Meeting minutes**

The meeting was chaired by council president Rick Sinnott and began at 6:40 p.m. The council met at the Chugach State Park pavilion. The meeting was convened outside so that we could maintain social distances. Twenty-four council members were present: Skip and Tena Cheely, Dan Thompson, Buff and Deb Rix, Randy and Charity Bangerter, Glen and Mary Keller, Lisa and Rick Sinnott, Erlinda Downing, Mike and Gwyn Wiedmer, Dave Fox, Linda Hilton, Josiah Trout, Teal Heller and Russ Carpenter, Bob and Cindy McElroy, and Brian and Debbie Slater. Connor Ehmann, Tom Collins, and new member Kirk Alkire also attended.

The meeting agenda was approved unanimously with one change. Erlinda asked to add the issue of funding for Eklutna Lake Road improvements. The minutes of the May 7 and June 18 meetings were approved unanimously with no changes.

Dan Thompson reported on the garage sale. The sale was hosted by Glen and Mary Keller and several households donated stuff. Over \$100 was made, so the council fund now has \$578.38.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Local crime report.** Nothing significant to report.

**Warning sign.** Natalie Rancourt had contacted the Alaska Department of Transportation recently to ask about progress towards getting a sign at the bottom of Eklutna Lake Road that warns visitors about road conditions and lack of cell phone service. DOT is working on other priorities but continues to promise they will look into it.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Blue Water Basecamp.** Teal Heller and Russ Carpenter are planning to build Blue Water Basecamp, an Alaskan resort geared to accommodate older and physically challenged visitors. They plan to have four microcabins (for 1-2 people), two family cabins (for 4-6 people), and a hospitality house with four suites. Other facilities will include a gathering house, maintenance shop and well/laundry house. The cabins will be heated with Toyo stoves, not wood stoves. The camp is intended for rest, relaxation and adventure. Russ plans to lead adventure trips outside of Eklutna Valley. However, visitors also will be given an orientation and information on local trails and Eklutna Lake. Teal and Russ don't intend to duplicate the kayak and bike rentals already in place at the lake. Plans for Blue Water Basecamp are attached. Teal and Russ have applied for a conditional use permit for the facility and the public comment period will be open soon.

**Gold Star Peak, Inc.** Kirk Alkire is president of Gold Star Peak, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides guided hikes up Gold Star and POW/MIA peaks to veterans, their families and friends, and Gold Star families. Kirk and one of his team leaders, Tom Collins, attended the meeting to discuss their activities in Eklutna Valley.

Gold Star Peak, Inc., recently purchased the Hanson property at about Mile 6. They have cleared brush to provide parking for their visitors. Kirk said none of their visitors had parked on the shoulders of Eklutna Lake Road since May. They walk along the road in single file. Each group is accompanied by team leaders who wear blue or yellow knit shirts. The first and last

person in the group carries a radio to ensure the safety of the visitors as well as passing motor vehicles. Kirk said they don't cross the road anymore because they can walk to and from their property on the uphill side of the road. Other trail users continue to park along the road and walk a considerable distance on the shoulder to access the trail up the mountain.

Kirk said no one is allowed to live on site; however, he hopes to acquire enough donations to build a small day lodge on the property for visitors. He is also trying to figure out a way to get to the trail without walking along the road.

**Funding for road improvements.** Erlinda mentioned the chronic problem of people running off Eklutna Lake Road into the ditch by her driveway. Someone mentioned that the state was remiss in not providing a guardrail on that abrupt corner. Bob McElroy reminded everyone that the road was paved under a program that provided no amenities, even those that might improve safety.

Erlinda wondered why we couldn't get a share of the federal infrastructure funding recently authorized by Congress. She thought we should write to Sen. Murkowski and ask for a bit of that money for our road. Rick was skeptical but agreed to write the letter if members wanted. A motion was made and seconded to write a letter to Sen. Murkowski. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at about 7:45 p.m.