

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 7-9 PM

Hybrid meeting: Beach Lake Ski Chalet

And via Zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88131919316?pwd=RDA5ZGYrSlhORFhyOUtCM2dTRmJXdz09>

1. Call to Order: 7:05PM

2. Approval of February Minutes: Patty moved to accept, and Matt seconded. Minutes approved.

3. Announcements:

a) *Reminder: limit reports to 5 minutes or less per presenter*

b) Assembly representative Kevin Cross is looking for a part-time aide to assist with assembly duties: email Kevin@ kevin.cross@anchorageak.gov or call 907-343-4113

4. Reports:

a) **FCC Report:** Carol Perkins: Feb 15-mtg- Jon Cecil with planning department discussed a study of the roads in the U-Med district. Ryan Yelle discussed proposed changes Title 21 with the purpose to clarify some language and to update sections to meet current practices. Beth Wordland noted there were lots of park repairs and improvements in the April bond package. There is a proposition to create a Chugach State Park Service area so that access and parking can be improved. They are trying to find match for the Spenard RR Pathway. Suzanne LaFrance stated the MOA is buying the building at 716 West 4th Ave for police headquarters. They are selling the ground and then leasing it back. Working on an ordinance to put the MOA checkbook on line, so it would be public information. Margo Bellamy said the report for the school district is on line. Regarding FCC, Matt noted that Mark Butler has done so much work and been so supportive of community councils, and he is being tagged unfairly and incorrectly for the failure of the Holton Hills project. Birchwood CC fully supports him. BCC did not get involved with support or non-support of the Holton Hills project when approached. Mark gave advice and he is being blamed for stopping the development.

b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Matt Cruickshank: raised mil rate to cover snowplowing-large service contract makes up budget –capital and operations. Flat funded-\$400K short. Mark Littlefield retired. Tony Marks is the new manager.

c) **Parks and Recreation Report:** Barbara Trost -BOS met February 13 and the next meeting is March 13. Tanya Liberman from South Dakota is the new Deputy Director for P&R and Manager for Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Recreation. She also has a landscape architect background. Plan is to hire another land scape planner. New meeting time 6:30-8:30 and they are only in-person. Elections Monday: Pete Panarese is stepping down. He has been the chair for 8 years. BOS members are not finalized. Beach Lake Master Plan-assembly rejected the \$4.5M fund balance transfer because they did not like all the projects being lumped together. Park and Rec will do one project at time: the pool will cost \$1.5-2M. Lots of folks did not like way Park and Rec were doing

2022-2023 board: Debbie Ossiander, CERAB and Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Ben Westveer: Secretary for Publicity, Carol Perkins FCC Rep; Barbara Trost, Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large, and CERAB alternate; Val Jokela, Secretary-Treasurer, alternate Road Board

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things. However, the projects should move along at same rate. New trails developed in the ski trails, and mushers have request for trail development and improvement funding. The Boy Scouts are supporting Mirror Lake. Lots of community projects. Out of mil rate: 90% is operations and 10% is Capital. Audit money moved to fund balance needs assembly approval to move it. March 8 there was a request for detailed budget over the last 5 years. Not enough staffing for pool, so hours have been cut. MOA trying to pay for certification and training for the pool in order to have enough staff. Ski Chalet will have Wifi in 9 months.

d) **Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board:** Debbie Ossiander-CERAB provides thoughts to city only regarding title 21. Some developers waiting after meeting approvals to start a project and any changes up 18 months. The new proposed change is for 6 months only wait time. Applies downtown, R4, more lot coverage R9. Changes on keeping outdoor animals on small lots: Big lots-greater than acre 1 animal per 1000 square feet, no wild animals. Does not apply to dogs or cats. Only change for us is we did not allow hazardous waste treatment plant on industrial property. Hazardous waste is by the Birchwood Airport. Eklutna proposing large scale plans. Transporting hazardous waste not good along North Birchwood.

e) **Treasurer's report:** Val Jokela \$181.00.

f) **CVFD:** Acting Fire Chief John Della Crose: maintain 101 members, 94 responses, check your roofs, and snow falling off roof onto meters. See snow melting and forming-snow event ok, certain depth should shovel. 4,777 volunteer hours. April ballot-bond item. Fire service area money bond and medical. Board of supervisors missed deadline, so there will be a write-in for Darryl Parks. Reviewed the bond language. Introduced Chief Scott Fisher who comes from WI. He is very impressed with Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department. Very hard in lower 48 to get volunteers.

g) **Birchwood Patrol Report:** Last week 3 stolen vehicles that were left running and unlocked. Now that we are back to in-person meetings, we will follow-up and reach out to APD to have an officer to attend our meeting.

h) Legislative / Assembly / School board reports:

Dan Saddler: 54th day. Representative Saddler is on the budget committee, and 15 subcommittees: natural resources, revenue health and services-slight increases, or less. Responsible cuts and 1 increase for seniors for home visits, and meals on wheels. HB98 state ownership of submerged lands-Feds slow to grant ownership. Resources committee gov big carbon bill. Let state lease underground carbon dioxide. Voted to support that bill. Paid to not cut down trees. Ed funding, pensions, worker retention, workforce development to keep educators. Workforce-difficult to find folks to work...work force task force put together. Met with Robin Dern: discussed funds for retention of teachers. Legislation marijuana convictions-wants feedback should someone's marijuana arrest be made public? Hoping line item so road board can keep up maintenance. Will bring it up with Kelly Merrick-capital item. #1 request for capital funding is Starnier Bridge. Carol thank Dan for legislative Sunday March 5 meeting. Representative Saddler can be reached at: representative.dan.saddler@akleg.gov or 907-465-3783

Kelly Merrick: Starnier Bridge is the #1 capital budget request. CAPSUs for \$1M. Got it in the budget, gov vetoed last year. Senior Center expansion-20 unit facility. Anchorage townhall-good to see Chugiak-Eagle River there. Rescheduled event at the senior center in the future. Filed SB95-Mia Costello worked on specialty license plates. Idea is to transfer responsibility to DMV for specialty plates—each organization will pay for plates. Critical minerals bill-encourage resource development of critical minerals. Importing from unfriendly countries and could be cut off-need to be sure we are self-sustaining: there is no bill no yet. House is in possession of the operating budget. Then full finance and House floor then Senate is the route. Striving to finishing this session

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on time. Senate has capital budget and then pass to house. Randy when we manage resources SOA—and guidelines on benefit for AK or individuals...Friday Willow Project hoping for positive outcome from Biden. False narrative about resource development. Contributes to operating budget. Senator Merrick can be reached at: senator.kelly.merrick@akleg.gov or 907-465-3777

Carl Jacobs: since last mtg FY 24 budget approved. Deficit \$80M balance tasked with engaging series of exercises-end product is a \$3M cut to administration. One time funding from federal covid \$ and vacant positions from classroom positions that could not be filled. Salaries not commensurate with positions. Bus drivers-fail to offer living wage. Will continue to struggle unless state increases BSA. Roughly 20% less spending dollars. 2 bills addressed bill 65, SB 52- both address BSA. First since 2016. There will be an \$85M deficit for FY25, if no changes. District approved proposal to move 6th grade to middle schools. 6-1vote. This is a 2 year roll out project, so will see the year after. Boundary line review. Lottery application open a few more days. Next meeting is March 20th. Sending 2 board members to Juneau for a week.

5. Appearances:

6. Old Business

a) Update Starner Bridge/Aurora Borealis: Matt-Aurora Borealis (AB) moving forward with the bridge with hopes to vacate BLM right of way. Looking at new options. Right of way reserve: most of large lots 2.5 acres. Most lots have right of way reserve and so do joined lots. AB cuts the corner of properties. Randy McCain supports road but not at his expense. MOA abandoned servicing the road. Randy blocked it 2 years ago. Lots folks interacted with Randy-not opposed-if community wants access-they should pay for it. Understand swap-abandoned right of way reserve, will give them the right of way on his property. Randy believes the Administration-is less than forthright in negotiations. Randy worked with home owners to get easements. Mark Littlefield investigated. Only right of way reserves are for roads. 2 separate issues: construction bridge-temp road maintenance easement, and another movement to bypass property. Randy will open for that and then re-block the road. Call into Tony Marks replacement for Mark- Wants easement opened and maintained. Initially seen as fair exchange. Once develop route, board will maintain road and traffic control pieces. If make it straight, then will have problems, redo road? Debbie feels empowered to speak for BCC. Don't want to move road and make it work. Road board does not have authority. Debbie to talk with Mark Littlefield. Want to keep the intent of current path. TBC

b) Update Alice's application #29087-Val Jokela-JD Council representing Alice's is requesting to table until August 23-24, 2023 MCB Board meeting. This will be discussed March 8 or 9 at the MCB Board Meeting. Chugiak-Eagle River has special land uses and marijuana retail stores are prohibited. TBC

c) Birchwood Airport Master Plan-Val Jokela-no updates

d) Beach Lake Master Plan-Val/Barbara-trail improvement funding from Will Tagan, CMBR spurred trail development-crossed dedicated mushing trails-grade separated so no dog team can accidentally cross pedestrians, loose dogs. Support from Representative Cross, so it moved forward quickly. Boutet conceptual plan-option 1 BLMP, other option is by Will. Josh thinks the cost will be between \$1.2-1.7 for grade separated. Create summer only trail would be option b. Folks are using it in winter. Fencing, signage, trail built out. Pending BOS approval, better plan more funding. Looks like push is for summer only trail and deal with incursions later. Mushers became involved late in game, Will is not willing to

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put money towards the trail—originally he put \$250K to trails, but not now. Musers need to get more active. And see if we can find \$1.7M. Birchwood Council supports and these trails are protected and dedicated by ordinance. Option B would destroy the intent of the BLMP as it has been shown, signs and fencing do not work and it is a dangerous mix of dog teams and pedestrians and loose dogs. Option B would be more advertisement and attract more users. The money only good for 2 years. Parks is saying ok. There have been no votes yet from CC's, and Parks and Rec is neutral at this point, and behind the Master Plan timeline. Park and Rec feels the project has been neglected. Resolution to protect park to all CC's. Push BCC's position to other councils. Friendly request to other councils for support. Looks for \$\$\$\$. Do we need \$\$ all at once? Can be built in a couple of years...get designs this summer and construct next year. BCC will write a resolution in support of the mushing trails and Master Plan.

e) Vacant vs Abandoned-Debbie Ossiander-Neighbor bought abandoned lot. City says clean up and that you are on the list so you'll get fined. Wanted to keep mobile home for storage. If you own the lot the derelict seller should have cleaned it up. Way ordinance written if completely fix problem can't be vacant have to move someone in or show going to build a house. Once on list-id as derelict property you have to work to move off list, or continue to be fined. Neighbors are happy that he is doing a good job. Will not fine him now. No provision for appeal. Kevin Cross emailed and says he'll fix and work on code.

f) Update Federation of Community Council-re:10-year review of community council boundaries-MOA review of CC boundaries.

7. New Business

a) Comprehensive Plan Resolution update-Matt-Need to vote-ask city to update Chugiak Master Plan-Matt moves to adopt resolution #4. We are at 16 years. Barb says to fix typos-and seconded. Like sent to CC and planning department and assembly reps-approved

b) BCC P.O. Box-Matt-remove mail box could route things to on-line source. Keep mailbox or alternative and go electronic. Mark said can use Federation mailbox, if we drop box.

c) Upcoming elections-MOA-last day to register was yesterday. Debbie reviewed the 14 bonds and FCC also sent out to all members a summary of the bond issues.

8. Open Forum

9. Adjournment 8:58PM