

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting  
Wednesday, May 10, 2023 6:30pm  
REGULAR MEETING  
Alpenglow Elementary School  
MEETING MINUTES – Approved September 13, 2023

Call to order at 6:33pm by Julie Jessen. Quorum was established.

Webpage: Federation of Community Councils

**Meeting documents are here:** <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=4549>

**Approve Minutes:** Motion to approve April 12, 2023 meeting minutes by Tom Freeman; seconded by Tom Roth. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **Representatives' Reports**

**AK Senator Kelly Merrick** - No report

**AK Representative Jamie Allard** – No report

### **Assembly Report – Kevin Cross**

- On June 20 an area-wide cemetery board will be formed to bond for area-wide instead of local only support.
- Procurement procedures will be used to identify land for new cemeteries to be maintained by Parks & Rec.
- Assembly has been working on housing issue. Land use codes are being modified; particularly R7 and R10. Goal is more affordable housing for young people (25-35) to recruit new residents.
- Budget was passed. Property taxes will be lower due to bonds paid off exceeding new bonds and many job openings (~300) at municipality; 20% shortage at municipal departments.
- Invest in trails and parks since this is a draw for young people (25-35).

Questions for Representative Cross included:

- CERT by-laws that were provided by other areas are very diverse. Would it be helpful to have by-laws drafted at muni. level instead of having each community council or district draft these? Can consider this.
- Heritage Land Bank draft 2023 work programs is out for review. Several leadership positions are vacant in HLB resulting in some chaos at this department.
- Land use zoning changes will convert commercial to residential or mixed use. We have shortage of B3 land in Eagle River.
- Artillery Road interchanges improvements are needed. Transfer \$4.5M of remaining state grant funds to DoT to fund another Artillery Road interchange study. It is more likely state will fund eventual construction if state develops the plan. Draft Resolution 2023-9 was read aloud (See Meeting Docs link above). Motion by Mark Littlefield, seconded by Tom Freeman to approve the resolution. Passed by unanimous vote.

### **School Board Report – Carl Jacobs**

- High school graduation in Eagle River on Monday, May 15.
- School board approved change in school start times effective 2024-25 school year (See Education update below.)
- Proposition 14 moved marijuana taxes to fund child care initiatives.
- Alaska House Bill 6, Kelsey's Law, will require one hour of education on the science of addiction, to be provided each school year. Hope this is approved to begin in fall semester.
- School Board officer elections were held. All officers retained their positions. Andy Holleman will be ERVCC contact beginning in fall.
- Mr. Jacobs was thanked for attending our council meetings and providing updates.

### **New Business:**

#### **AMATS-Anchorage Transportation Planning**

## Eagle River Valley Community Council

May 10, 2023

Page 2

Unified Planning Work Program Comment Period: May 1, 2023 - June 1, 2023. The Draft 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Narrative defines the transportation planning activities and products to be developed by AMATS and other transportation planning agencies during the federal fiscal years of 2024 & 2025 (October – September). See document for review: [2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program](#)

Review the document and send your comments!

- Email your comments to: [upwp\\_comments@PublicInput.com](mailto:upwp_comments@PublicInput.com)
- Record a voicemail with your comments at: 855-925-2801, project code 6355
- Send your comments by mail to: Permit & Development Center, 4700 Elmore Road P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage AK 99519-6650

### **Chugiak 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade – Help needed.**

Financial support, candy distribution and marchers are needed for the parade.

### **Wildfire and Egress Report Update**

Jennifer Schmidt, Associate Professor of Natural Resource Management and Policy

Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) University of Alaska Anchorage

ISER website: <https://iseralaska.org/> Work website: <https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/jenschmidt/home>

Office Phone: 907-786-5497

Ms. Schmidt will join us at our September meeting. Key take-aways from the latest wildfire and egress report update include:

1. Work with the Fire Dept. to identify places for temporary shelter-in-place since secondary egress out of Eagle River Valley is limited due to terrain.
2. Given the potential for entrapment, set a goal of getting 50% of the homes in compliance with Firewise principles.
3. Development of a community chipper program would help residents to work towards the Firewise goal.
4. Limited cell service is putting people at danger, and this needs to be fixed to help save lives.
5. Work with EOM to plan practice drills simulating what might happen if a fire blocks off part of Eagle River Road. This would help residents to realize if they would get a Rave communication, where they would get their information from, and where they would go.
6. Future development needs to be done in a manner that promotes public safety.
  - a. Avoid sharp turns that prevent access by emergency response vehicles.
  - b. Propose development that avoids creating more one way in and out neighborhoods.
  - c. Avoid sharp inclines that also make it very difficult for emergency response vehicles.
7. It would be worthwhile to work with the Fire and Police departments to identify current roads that are constructed in a way which makes their access difficult. Some have been identified in this project and that could serve as a starting point.
8. Develop a list of residents to the extent possible to help account for who is safe and who is not safe. This will also help with potential evacuations and avoid wasting precious resources should an emergency occur.

### **CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Information – Julie Jessen, Art Skoog**

- We've had several residents express interest in serving on a CERT. We are still looking for individuals to serve on a coordinating committee to draft CERT by-laws before we consider ERVCC sponsoring the CERT.

Questions included:

- Have any other Chugiak-Eagle River area community councils participated in the Wildfire Egress meetings with Dr. Jen Schmidt? Only South Fork
- What is the time commitment for CERT? It's a two-year commitment with an initial 3 day training. Also participate in other training and exercise during the two-year commitment.
- We're looking for individuals to work with Michelle Torres (State of AK) over the summer to draft CERT by-laws.

## Eagle River Valley Community Council

May 10, 2023

Page 3

- Cell tower expansion needed – cell phones were overloaded during 2018 earthquake. Need better coverage for RAVE program notifications. A letter of support was drafted regarding placement of a cell tower past milepost 8. See meeting documents link above or [23May Cell Phone Coverage.April 17.2023.pdf](#)
- What providers will use the new cell tower at P&M Gardens? AT&T, Verizon, GCI.

### **Request for ERVCC representative for Housing and Homelessness Committee**

Chugiak-Eagle River District Community Councils have been asked to choose one representative to be a part of this work with the Housing and Homelessness Committee. Each community council representative should be a conduit for the opinions of the respective community councils within their Assembly district. A draft timeline for this work has been developed and can be found here, along with other helpful documents:

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/Clean-Slate-Approach.aspx>

- Mr. Joe Hackenmueller and Mr. Ken McCarty volunteered to fill this role. Each gave a brief introduction. A vote was held and Mr. Hackenmueller was chosen by simple majority.

### **ERVCC By-Laws review and revisions** (See Meeting docs link above: Bylaws)

- Crystal Kennedy and Julie Jessen volunteered to review ERVCC by-laws over the summer and report back to the council in the fall. Additional volunteers are welcome to join them.

### **Motion of Support for Federation of Community Councils office**

- Resolution 2023-7 supporting institution of the Federation office was read aloud. (See Meeting docs link above.)
- Motion by Tom Roth, seconded by Mark Littlefield to approve. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries Project Update**

- Resolution 2023-8 supporting existing boundaries for ERVCC was read aloud. (See Meeting docs link above.)
- Motion by Mark Littlefield, seconded by Tom Freeman to approve. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **Eagle River Valley Community Council Annual General Meeting and Elections**

Mr. Tom Roth presided over the elections.

- Open three-year ERVCC Board positions:
  - Motion by Joy Webb, seconded by Tom Freeman to elect Julie Jessen for Seat #4.
  - Motion by Joy Webb, seconded by Julie Jessen to elect Tom Freeman for Seat #5.
- Open one-year officer positions:
  - Motion by Scott Bailey, seconded by Tom Freeman to elect Julie Jessen as President.
  - Motion by Tom Freeman, seconded by Julie Jessen to elect Tom Roth as Vice-President.
  - Motion by Julie Jessen, seconded by Tom Freeman to delay Treasurer position until fall, given the community council has no funds.
  - Motion by Tom Freeman, seconded by Julie Jessen to elect Joy Webb as Secretary.
- Open one-year committee positions:
  - Motion by Julie Jessen, seconded by Tom Freeman to elect Tom Roth as Education representative.
  - Motion by Joy Webb, seconded by Tom Freeman to elect Pete Panarese as Platting representative.
  - Emergency Preparedness position is vacant. Marvin Cox volunteered to fill this position. Motion by Tom Freeman, seconded by Julie Jessen to elect Marvin Cox as Emergency Preparedness representative.
  - Capital Improvements position is vacant. Mark Littlefield volunteered for this position pending further investigation; further action delayed until fall.
- Each election and delay listed above was approved by unanimous vote.

Old Business:

**Eagle River Community Patrol - Cliff Cook**

- Patrols conducted for 18.5 hours covering 111 miles.
- Bears are out. Take care of trash and birdfeeders. Moose are ornery.
- We have some transients in the Eagle River area. Crisis Intervention Team is available to help.
- Community Patrol will support Grad Blast on May 15 for CHS and EHS and Torch Run for Special Olympics May 20.
- Mail theft is down but track your packages.
- Report all crime to APD on 311 (or 911 if emergency).

**Committee Reports:**

**CBERRRSA (Road Board) – Crystal Kennedy**

Notes read by Ms. Jessen:

- All hauling of snow/ snow removal has been done for the season (barring any major new snow fall!) Revenues from other contractors and vendors using the snow dump have reached \$120,000 this year and will probably exceed that once all the payments are received.
- Storm drainage clearing was done early to minimize any flooding from melting snow.
- Street sweeping will begin on May 1st to be completed by June 9th. The contractor will jump around in various neighborhoods to try to avoid garbage pick-up days. Try to keep parked cars off the street until after the sweepers have been through your neighborhood.
- The CBERRRSA board heard from the Muni PM&E project manager, Nicole Ream on the status of the Eagle River Traffic Mitigation project. That project has had many community discussions over the past 7-8 years, discussions with DOT and the MOA, but there's not really a plan yet. The conversation is around three connected projects: Interchange with the Glenn Highway, intersection of Artillery Road, Old Glenn Highway and Eagle River Road, and a new connecting road between Brooks Loop and Centerfield Drive and making traffic entrance onto Cross Drive and in front of Pizza Man one way. There are many challenges to this traffic mitigation project including full funding, a change in leadership at DOT, ROW and private property rights, overall impacts to the nearby businesses, and in general, the community opinion on a solution to the intersection. Rep. Dan Saddler was briefed on the status recently and will be monitoring progress. With the funding left over from the original \$8 million, a request is being made to use \$4.5 million to go ahead with 65% project design for the interchange and the intersection. DOWL Engineering is nearing a 95% completed plan for the Brooks Loop and Centerfield connection. Most likely, CBERRRSA will have a motion before it next month to pass a resolution to support designating \$4.5 million for planning.
- CBERRRSA was made aware of the ERVCC request to MOA Traffic Department for a traffic study up Stewart Drive in connection to the Mile Hi trail head access. CBERRRSA will wait for the Traffic Department's response with their recommendation of whether or not to do the study. Most likely it will be CBERRRSA that will be expected to expend the funds for the study should Traffic recommend it and CBERRRSA will consider that decision after they have heard from MOA Traffic. We expect that response in the fall.
- Many thanks to Mark Littlefield who retired as supervisor of ER Street Maintenance at the end of April. Mr. Tony Winsor is the new supervisor of Eagle River Street Maintenance.

**Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Julie Jessen** – no meetings held.

**Education - Tom Roth**

Eagle River Valley Community Council

May 10, 2023

Page 5

- School start time changes have been approved and will go into effect 2024-25 school year. Start times will be elementary schools-8am; high schools-8:45am; middle schools-9:30am. Start times are for Tues-Friday. Mondays each school will start one hour later.

**Federation of Community Councils - Tom Freeman**

- Anchorage Audubon Society is giving away 10,000 white spruce seedlings to help replace spruce beetle tree loss.
- Farmers Market begins in Anchorage.
- Rank your choices in the Capital Improvement Projects list.
- Sullivan Arena Homeless Shelter closing.
- APD continues work on body cameras.
- School board members Donley and Holleman were both re-elected.
- FCC elections will be held next Wednesday.

**Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Rec Board – Mark Littlefield**

- Two resolutions were passed.
  - West Beach Lake Trail-Have funds that needed match. This has been moved forward.
- Chugiak Pool repairs discussion continued. \$3M does not cover all repairs. We have \$5.2M in fund balance and \$4M to cover pool repairs.
- Mac Center has a new manager, Kevin Summer. Ice is down and will return in June 13. We will host Arctic Winter Games next year. Mac Center will be closed every weekend until fall. The website is up and running (to make reservations).

Questions for Mr. Littlefield included:

- Carol Creek project and impact on Mac Center? In first phase of Carol Creek, there is no access via Mac Center. Second phase of Carol Creek has not been approved but current plans could impact Mac Center.

**Resolution 2023-2 Recognition of Pete Panarese**

Resolution was read aloud and approved by unanimous vote.

**Platting - Pete Panarese – Nothing to report.**

Motion to adjourn at 8:19pm.

**Next Meeting September 13, 6:30pm at location TBD.**

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: Julie Jessen (2024); Vice President: Tom Roth(2024); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2023); Education: Tom Roth(2024); Parks & Rec: Ruth Armstrong(2026)/Mark Littlefield(2026); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2023)/Jared Goecker-Alt(2025); Platting: Pete Panarese (2024); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2024)/ Alt-Vacant (2025); Road Board: Crystal Kennedy (2025)/Arlene Rasic–Alt (2024); Secretary: Joy Webb (2024)