

# Birchwood Community Council

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## MINUTES

### BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 7-9:00 PM

Hybrid meeting: Eagle River Town Center Community Room 170

And via Zoom

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

**1. Call to Order:** 7PM (Anyone who lives in Birchwood is a member)

**2. Approval of May Minutes:** Matt moved to approve, Carol seconded. No objections to approving.

**3. Announcements:** *(reminder please limit presentations to 5 minutes)*

#### **4. Reports:**

a) **FCC Report:** progress on search for new FCC Manager and new contract with Assembly: Carol Perkins Fed of CC's send reps- Manager-retired looking for one, meeting was June and they met to recognize a community member for support. They chose Debbie and Mark Butler presented her with a \$75.00 gift certificate for Fred Meyer. Mark Butler-served for 16 years as FCC Manager. Recognition in the past: Walt Parker was a great community organizer in Anchorage, and believed a great city is a collection of great neighborhoods. Often 1 person starts an issue and involves others. Chosen Debbie as community organizer. Debbie served on the school board for 10 years, and 9 years on the assembly, CERAB chair, given her life for years. Wished her continued success.

b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Update Starner Bridge/Aurora Borealis-Matt Cruickshank - bridge unsafe, lots of problems, AB is not on legitimate approved right of way, bridged closed, maintenance stopped. Road board top priority to redo bridge and open AB. 2 official actions: exercise all options to open AB, and use all procurement from MOA. Met with Mayor-granted in writing full support to open AB and expedite Starner Bridge. Executive session-full support of 2 motions passed. Been pushing to get money to get bridge. Asking state to support. Approved by legislature 2x and Dunleavy vetoed ---currently resolution request Artillery Road interchange to MTB funding program. Issue run into was no access to other end of road, as it could not open up with a temporary easement. Position of MOA is to not land lock owners. Need access to other side of bridge. If put out to bid cannot award construction across private property. Need official access. Moved rocks temporarily for Horse Drawn Carriage company. Negotiator hired to obtain access and was not successful. Any intent to maintain road...yes with easement. Were given permission to fill potholes from the private owner. Some discussion to condemn section...stalled inside MOA.

c) **Parks and Recreation Report:** Election open for alternate BCC representative for Parks and Rec Board of Supervisors: Barbara Trost: BCC has a long-time member who is ill, and she has been our alternate. Carol Perkins was nomination by unanimous consent. Move to nominate Matt, seconded by Barbara.

Had a presentation on West Lake multi-use trail intersecting mushing trails. Projects underway are for improvement for Mirror Lake, Beach Lake ski trails, mushing trails, pool project started and funded completely, all from the mil rate. Getting into budget year Jan 1, 2024. Approved projects to move forward—\$885K..vote in October. \$75K, lodge repairs—lift station and roofs, \$150K main ski trail, Mt Baldy plot \$450K-Eklutna entitled land swap muni park land CBERRRSA providing 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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grooming services, mushing staging area \$40K, drainage ski trails \$60K, playground improvement \$100K.

d) **Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board:** Resolution passed re: zoning/land use: Debbie Ossiander Chugiak-ER different from MOA—we have our own fire dept, parks, land use laws, transportation plan, land use map. There is 1 representative from each CC to address issues brought up by the assembly or MOA, or about and land use.

e) Treasurer's report: Val Jokela \$184.00.

f) **CVFD:** Chief Scott Fisher: Fred Meyer is the dividing line between paid and volunteer fire service. However, they work together and share equipment as needed. May: 107 volunteers, 10 AOS, 82 response, 4,758 hours, 25,156 hrs total for the year. June: 100 volunteers, 11 AOS providers, 77 EMS responses hours 4767, for the year total 29, 923 hours, July 95 volunteers, 11 ALS responders, 115 calls, 5107 hours for a year total of 35, 030 hours, August 91 volunteers, lost ALS providers-7, 110 calls, August 4619 hours, with a year total of 39,649 hours total. To volunteer, must be 18 years old. Now they have a Jr program, and you apply on line-electronic...fill out the form and drop it off. Can participate training and can go and observe calls. When Jrs turn 18, they can become volunteers. 70-75 calls each month are EMS

g) **Birchwood Patrol Report** Lt Evans if want patrol officer-3 instances of squatters. Do they do homeless camp abatement—will work with APD.

h) Legislative / Assembly / School board reports:

1. **Senator Kelly Merrick-** District L-good Juneau session-both parties bipartisan great accomplishments working together. Need to work together to move forward, and that is happening. Increase funding for education and the Governor vetoed 50%. Did not draw from savings so protected PFD, no new taxes, Starner-did get funding, as well as the cemetery. Governor vetoed both, but did get trail funding for Eklutna lakeside trail-good safety improvements, and better access at Indian Valley. On 23 September from 9-11AM can meet with Senator Merrick at Jitters.

2. **Representative Saddler-**represents Eagle River and north of Artillery Road-District 24. Jim "Morris" Pickle died today, and we lost Gene Peltola, Congresswoman Mary Peltola's husband in an aviation accident. Looking ahead—got an electronic newsletter and mailed out a questionnaire to fill out and send in. Katie McCall is a new staff member. Jan 16, 2024 the legislature will reconvene. Bills in play HB98 submerged lands, HB77-critical minerals development plan-rare earth elements, amend click pick, loan funds, co-sponsor-exempt veterinarians from the same standards as physicians regarding medications, gun safety, open Willow project, support Fairbanks air quality, lower cost of building by using local timber to build homes. Contact Katie or send in questionnaire

3. **Assembly representative Kevin Cross-**Community Councils put on CERAB issues, parks board, trails etc. There is a 120 day budget process-fund balance-2013—some left over—bad news had over 300 MOA vacancies. Police can only arrest if prosecute, and can't incarcerate without due process. Trying to increase wages paid for public safety: there is a 17% vacancy APD rate. Alaska State Troopers are attracting APD employees---better health care plan, as well as retirement. There is a 46% vacancy rate in the health department. Over 56% of the police vehicles are over 9 years old. There is also a shortage of mechanics, so the vehicles don't get repaired. Need to get the wages up to attract good folks. Housing-request "HUD Obstacles to Housing 400K update comp plan. Need to update area comp plans to participate in the grant program, so we can take it and apply as we would like. Vacant and abandon property: MOA list of properties—fines and looking at ways to rehab the properties and create housing. State transportation infrastructure plan-website make comments-got to let them know what our priorities are. State and AMATS only know who speaks

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up. Kevin serving on AMATS so can help promote projects. Artillery Road did not make the list. Assembly resolution—should be priority amended STIP---\$47-50M have \$6M for planning. Attend CC's and let your voice be known.

4. **Ken McCarty**-homeless task force representative- June-look for criteria for folks coming into shelter-then structure-3<sup>rd</sup> and Ingra-20 acres used—JBER portable structures idea-collapsed and town halls canceled. Other places MOA can purchase—nothing is going to happen by November. Mark Hamm noted camps in Eagle River, Mirror Lake Park, Glenn Hwy by Chugiak High School.

## 5. Appearances

a) Salmon Restoration and Eklutna Community Clinic Services: Brenda Hewitt, Tribal Administrator, Native Village of Eklutna-1) Eklutna Community Clinic open to everyone whether you have insurance or not, or on Medicare, you can go to the clinic. They also have Dental services, Ophthalmologists. There are PA's and registered nurse on staff. They are associated with South Central Foundation. 2) BCC passed a resolution to support getting more water and fish in the Eklutna river. October, Eklutna will meet with utilities. There is a 1991 agreement that will minimize the impact on fish. Go towards water release from AWWU, so fish cannot get to lake. New dam or make some changes to current dam for fish ladder, so they can.

b) West Beach Lake Multi-Use Trail: Lucy Wittlinger, Park Planner, Huddle-Jeff Urbanus: update project and briefing all CC's. There was a stake holder meeting September 12. Public meeting Sept 19-6:30-8:30 in Room 170. There is a 4 mile trail phase 1 funded and phase 2 not funded. Gravel trail for all non-motorized users. Projects matched with CMBR \$250K, matched by MOA \$250K. P&R and 4/6 councils are in support. Scope of project has some changes-entire trail from Knik Arm to the High School is part of the BLMP, taking to urban design commission (UDC). Start at one parking lot—doing some swaps with trail. ID entire alignment. Minimum built back to Beach Lake Parking lot. Not a lot of engineering or permits if goes to UDC and approved, still need funding for board of supervisors and not have to go before UDC again. 2<sup>nd</sup> half bridge over Fire Creek. Cross multi-use trails with mushing trails. Master plan called for a grade separated crossing. Now it will be an at-grade chicane, with 100-foot site distance. Gate opened or closed seasonally. Displacing mushing trails---moved to improved site distance, turn around, out of wetlands. Realigned 1.9 miles of trails, decommissioned 1.1 miles of trail. The goal is to provide safe mushing trails. With UDC process project submitted to UDC comment period 3 months, then public meeting. Today, at 65% design stage. Make application to UDC early October. Public hearing January. Matt asked about the Deputy Director being let go especially with so many projects—who's acting—the position is open for 4 weeks, and a new director could make different decisions on all these projects. Jeff is the only one working on the BLMP. Mike Braniff is wearing both hats. Ken McCarty asked about e-bikes-not sure at this point? Outhouse needed as part of the plan. Yes, horses can still be ridden in the park.

## 6. Old Business

a) Birchwood Airport Master Plan-Val Jokela-no meeting held this past summer, so not sure where the plan is.

b) Comp Plan Resolution passed February 8, 2023: Matt Cruickshank-passed resolution to update comp plan for community as the last update was 2006, and it needs to be updated every 10 years-many different scores for projects depend upon a current comp plan!

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c) Eagle River Cemetery potential bond: Debbie Ossiander-ANC cemetery—big portions are reserved for groups. The number of sites for individuals is limited, and the Anchorage Cemetery will be full in 3 years. Presently ashes can be put in the columbarium. Girdwood actively working to get a cemetery, and we are active to get one here. Hired a company for initial planning for site by Eagle River High School. Moving to put bond on ballot in April for cemeteries, which would update Anchorage, give Girdwood a cemetery and allow us to start one here. The challenge is to get folks to vote. Citizen's need to pay for it. It is way less expensive if all of the MOA votes for. Presently there isn't a Chairperson to take the lead. We just have a site, but no cost estimate. Debbie has a fact sheet on costs.

d) Alice's retail store application update: tabled indefinitely at the September 21-22, 2022 meeting. It will not be brought up until the applicant requests it to be on the agenda. There is a land use code in Eagle River against retail marijuana stores in Title 21. Val Jokela

### 7. New Business

a) Draft 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan comment period open through October 9- BCC concerns: Debbie Ossiander/Matt Cruickshank-MTP if have pop of 50K-federal funding to our community the TIF-2026 and MTP- goes until 2050. If not MTP then picked up on TIF. Environmental Justice-low equity---60% income—air quality control cut out of pie. There will be no federal \$\$ unless inject projects. If project being funding has to be on MTP—Eagle River road rehab—mile 5.5, Hiland road cloverleaf—proposed reduction thru Eagle River from 4 lanes to 2 lanes, and that is not being requested by anyone here. Integrated management study---Artillery road interchange—CBD study. \$8M for Artillery road interchange. It did not make the MTP. Request to have Artillery road interchange added to incorporate motorized and non-motorized. Need to advocate for this. To access: type in ANC MTP public comment. Massive amount of money from Feds can't get them on the books. Pick projects by set priority penalized Chugiak-Eagle River-don't address future growth. Public input.com. Barbara made a motion for BCC to request Artillery road project be included in the MTP-Debbie seconded: discussion, objections needs to go to Kevin Cross—unanimously passed.

b) Update MOA Capital Improvement Plan Priorities: Debbie Ossiander Nominate Starner Bridge, Artillery Road, extension bike path Peters Creek, roundabout Chugiak HS—study? 3 options-no strong support. Concerned about safety—ASD redo, move entrance down...could not go underground because of sewage issues. Ken told ASD did not want round about? Neighbors concerned with traffic unable to get out with all the backups...would not alleviate pedestrian crossings. Did not think students would use an overpass. Trail Peters Creek-North Peters Creek road..DOT's responsibility. Jeff-U all CIP requests-a. bike path er road, Old Glenn bike path to high school, Thunderbird falls not isolated, Lady bug rock bike path. Bike path will be installed 0-5.5 Eagle River road. Starner Bridge, Artillery Road, trails...Non-motorized project—extend trail north into valley from Ladybug rock, part of long trail extension. Motion add 2 projects-Artillery road, Starner bridge, non-motorized trail- Barbara seconded..amendment-lady bug rock trail extension out to the valley. Ski road and Old Glenn north—amendment. Passed unanimously.

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**8. Further discussion:** motion made and seconded to extend the meeting 5 minutes:

Barbara said the September 11 BOS meeting the Mayor showed up-Parks and Rec director put forth that he was willing to take a 2% reduction in the budget. She is working to understand how this works, as part of the budgeting process. Does the BOS reduce the mil rate? Mark Littlefield---did not get an answer. The Mil rate set by assembly—don't have to follow BOS. Braniff says it is what he is doing. Fire Chief Scott Fisher said he has to present a budget showing 2-4% reduction overall budget for vol fire and a proposed budget with no increase. Can go before assembly as BOS. Mike Braniff says the budget process works fast...decided quickly? Have BOS take a position? Don't necessarily have to do what the mayor requests. Budget does not have a line item for CVFD. Need to do something with facilities. Barbara will continue to seek clarification.

**9. Adjournment:** 905PM