

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 7-9:00 PM

Hybrid meeting: Beach Lake Ski Chalet

And via Zoom

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

1. Call to Order: 6:59 PM

2. Approval of November Minutes: Debbie moved to approve and Ben seconded. Minutes were accepted and approved.

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

a) New assembly email address: assembly@anchorageak.gov

b) Mat-Su Transportation Fair January 30, 2025, 3-7PM Raven Hall, AK Fairgrounds

c) Platting and Zoning Public Hearing was held December 2 about rezoning behind Powder Ridge-folks in Powder Ridge don't want the density. No water line will be run through Birchwood. Will have sewer.

d) Still seeking a replacement representative to FCC

4. Reports:

a) **FCC Report:** Holding their Christmas party next week.

b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Matt Cruickshank – cross connection behind Wells Fargo: we can name the road. As it is in ER CC boundaries, they should have first preference. Lee Jordan Street suggested name by Matt. Increased mil rate want to get on the ballot, sales tax proposition. Turned into calculated risk to move forward or move off for better timing. Several amendments. Project ANC folks introduced what they would like. Increased mil rate to 1.1 is the max we can be at. Pulling out of fund balance at rate of \$400,000. Probably will be another contract increase from McKenna. Starner Bridge opening at the end of tomorrow. Bridge is officially finished when it is paved.

c) **Parks and Recreation Report:** Barbara Trost-ranking and voting on CIP, never got a real budget from staff. Did vote on 4: 220,000 Playground Improvement, multi-use Beach Lake plan, ER maintenance ops equipment, Mirror Lake single-track, and 10-mile mushing trail. \$1.35Mil, Next meeting discuss projects, signed off draft Mirror and Edmonds Lake Master Plan. Still has to go through the assembly for sign off. January PnR meeting. Dan Trax wants to present at our council again as we did not prioritize it with the proposed CIP projects. He will present at the January 8th meeting. Big expense. PnR has the money to do them all. Listed Loretta French Park 3 out of the 4 priorities for Senator Kelly Merrick and she has \$500,000 for Loretta French fields. Mac center operator was audited. Lexi Hill will be attending the January 8 meeting and we will be voting on her becoming the PnR alternate.

2024-2025 board: Debbie Ossiander, CERAB and Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Ben Westveer: Secretary for Publicity, Carol Perkins: Parks and Rec Alt 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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d) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board (CERAB): Debbie Ossiander

e) Treasurer's report: \$204.00.

f) CVFD: Chief Scott Fisher- October: 108 volunteers, 9 ALS, 7 ALS enrolled in class, 2 ALS precepting, 104 responses, YTD 915 calls, 67 EMS contacts, 37 Fire and other responses. Volunteer hours 5,375 for a total of 50,158 hours. Spare fire extinguishers serviced, winter tires switched over and chains added. Structure fire Oct 25. AFD helped. Central Mat-Su assisted. DOT EMS grant \$8,525.00. November: 118 volunteers, 9 ALS providers, 9 ALS enrolled, 3 ALS precepting, send 5 folks per year through advanced EMT. 89 responses for a YTD total of 56,270 total volunteer hours. Dec 9th they had 4 calls at same time within 23 minutes. Had ALS provider for 3, but not for the 4th call. Eagle River assisted. AFD has only been called 3 times to assist through the year. Winter wonderland went well with public. Doing ok, need to increase mil rate and has not been increased for 8 years. Paid up front for one engine and ordered another. Both being specially built. Need new crew station. Presently at the blue station, which is inadequate.

g) Birchwood Patrol Report: be aware of your mailboxes

h) Legislative / Assembly / School board reports:

Pat Higgins-school board-ton of issues-right sizing-funding level can't totally staff all schools. 2011 since cost-of-living adjustment so we are way behind. Alaska is the only state without defined retirement benefit package. Fire Lake Elementary with the growth of the Powder Ridge West subdivision, hope to not close, cuts massive. Lots of feedback. Decision should be based on what is best for kids. Start times are an issue. Staff turnover a lot! When hire from the lower 48, they stay 5 years and leave. Academies are good. Some sense of options. Having college credits is good. ER Valley CC is focusing on education. Need long term fiscal plan. Equitable funding is the issue. Legislature does not want to update cost-of-living. Academy financial drain-Federal grants cover that for only the first 3 years. Board is pushing back-will need curriculum changes. Closing school where there are some special ed kids: not sure where they will go. Remote learning days-if more days than allowed, must make it up at end of year. Audit will be done with curriculum. 50% of kids coming in are behind the power curve. Differentiated instruction makes a difference.

Senator Kelly Merrick-did support increase in BSA. Passed a bill that had a \$680-dollar BSA-vetoed by the Governor. Upcoming session-finance committee, bipartisan, encourage folks to let her know. CIP projects-astro turf ball fields. Split rail fence-request to upgrade, maintain, or remove, road and drainage rehabilitation. Community Councils need to send their CIP requests to Kelly. Difficult to prioritize. Only have so much to put to CIP projects.

Scott Myers-Appointments: Bill Falsey Chief Operations Officer, Chief Equity Officer-Kim Waller, waiver for procurement senior center. Ballot proposition to move elections to November. Save ½ Million dollars. This would change Mayor and Assembly terms to 4 years. Special limitations to stop rezoning applications. Sales tax-original project looking different, and Scott can't get behind it. Vote of people is where it should go and not be decided by the Assembly. Mark Littlefield is not planning to run again. Parking downtown—handicap park for free, mandatory ID for alcohol at restaurants. 1400 homes proposed for Powder West. Scott will meet with Eklutna next week about the casino.

5. Appearances

6. Old Business

a) Update on Casino-concern last meeting was that Eklutna purchased property adjacent to the site. Heard from attorney-believe Eklutna will apply to increase size of the allotment. EIS statement, change size of casino to larger size. Will be appealed in process to BIA. If occurs

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governor and mayor must be notified—then there will be a 30-day comment period. Representative Saddler said the Attorney General or Governor have not been approached. Saddler talked to someone in Mayor's office, and they had heard nothing. Debbie has tried to reach the Mayor's office and has no response from MOA. Concern around a potential waterline going down North Birchwood? Need to know through public comment: concerns about road traffic impact on the Loop and Spur road, and how can the facility have enough space for septic and well. Perhaps public water from Eklutna water line? Maybe that's why additional land. Some of land Marnel gaming has filed water rights to the property. Saddler set up public forum through his office which is an avenue to track comments. EIS? Acorn would conduct it. Should trigger a lot of stuff. Saddler's office has not heard anything. BIA would conduct the study—does not mean we have input because it is private. Allotment is exempt from zoning. Secondary do they need to follow zoning. Trying to make it one allotment? It is industrial zoning, presently. If anyone learns of anything, let Debbie know. Engineering study-Acorn? Once study done is it open to public review on allotment probably not. Sovereign entity.

b) Community Council Boundaries: Vote on Resolution #2024-12-01 Debbie Ossiander- Oppose proposed change to move us back from the mudflats. We want to keep the flats! Patty made a motion to adopt the resolution to keep our Council boundaries as presently written, and Carol seconded. Passed unanimously. Needs to be sent to Tom Davis, Senior Planner-Urban Designer Planning Department, Municipality of Anchorage.

c) Birchwood Airport Master Plan: Val Jokela (FAA Review is underway.)

7. New Business

8. Action Items/Concerns: Powder West R3 zoning is proposing 30 dwellings per acre. Transition district does not show up and this is not what was presented by the planners. This also does not address wetlands.

9. Adjournment: Barb made a motion to adjourn and Carol seconded. Adjourned 8:17 PM