

Birchwood Community Council

P.O. Box 670984 • Chugiak, AK 99567-0984
birchwoodcouncil@gmail.com

Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 7-9 PM

Meeting held over Zoom

1. **Call to Order:** 7:04 PM
2. **Approval of March 9, 2022 Minutes-** Debbie moved to approve and Patty second. Minutes approved.
3. **Announcements:**
 - a) April 19 4:30-6:30 Seward Highway and 36th Ave interchange Open House #2 at the Loussac Library
 - b) AMATS Draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 30 day comment period open through May 5. Go to AMATS website and then go to the TIP page to view project nominations. Email comments to: amatsinfo@anchorageak.gov or mail to: Permit and Development Center, 4700 Elmore Rd. P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, AK 99519-6650
 - c) Notice: MOA clerk stated there are 50 marijuana establishments in Anchorage.
4. **Reports**
 - a) FCC Report: No report
 - b) CBERRRSA Road Board Report: Matt Cruickshank-did not have quorum, so moved date, Aurora Borealis-bridge will find funding-legislative support, question about-widening Hillcrest, Shims, Almdale, Husky James Way and Terrace Lane-widen, no bike paths-Debbie asked to have it moved at the end of the agenda for Aurora Borealis business.
 - c) Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board: Debbie Ossiander-frustrations at lack of MOA support, no staff, no appts, or help for minutes. So, Debbie created a resolution for Advisory board-brought up at assembly and passed unanimously-staffed by MOA and everything goes through board, now thanks to Crystal.
 - d) Parks and Rec: No report
 - e) Treasurer's report: Val Jokela: \$277.00
 - f) Tim Benningfield-CVFD: 100 members, March response 313 calls with 4,824 hours volunteer, 14,704 hours to date. Met with Mayor and MOA manager. Still looking for replacement at Peters Creek. March 3 announced that Tim will be leaving this spring. Final Day April 27. Going back to lower 48 to be with family. Thanks to Birchwood Council. He is actively involved with the hiring committee for his position.
 - g) Birchwood Patrol Report: No report
 - h) Birchwood Airport Master Plan: Val Jokela, Ken McCarty- Birchwood Airport Association did a survey that is more user focused. To get to it and take it, go to repenmccarty.com website and you can take survey there. The airport is 80 years old. The history of the airport is being lost. Can capture facts at everythingabouttheairport. 3 suggestions: shorten the present runway by 1000 based upon bad data that only smaller general aviation planes land at Birchwood. Larger planes do use the airport. Need Air carriers to document how much they use Birchwood. FAA guidelines about runway length and airplane size is based upon lower 48 standards. Asking Senator Sullivan to let the administration know that Birchwood Airport does not fit with lower 48 standards.
 - i) Legislative/Assembly/School Board and other reports:

2021-2022 board: Debbie Ossiander, Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Val Jokela, Secretary and Treasurer; Gretchen Wehmhoff: Secretary for Publicity; Barbara Trost, Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large

Birchwood Community Council

- 1) Rep McCarty-AK Bill Bear-kids in high school get tech training. Kids from Palmer visited the Capitol. HB53-military families PCS into community can enroll before get here. Several bills to be presented. Operating budget sent from house to senate, Easter this week-end folks on leave. Working to get \$\$ for Peters Creek Volunteer Fire Department
- 2) Rep Kelly Merrick-Starner Bridge has mixed reviews because of the number of houses past the bridge. Mayor put forth Bridge Capsa Project- Looking for funding specifically for bridges that can qualify. Kelly will follow up. Are competitive grants available. Chief Bennigfield stated from a safety standpoint the bridge is not necessarily impactful, but now it is a serious concern because of private nature of Aurora, as the road is blocked and emergency vehicles, or waste removal can't get to the homes. Capital budget co-chair will push for it.
- 3) Crystal Kennedy-budget 1st quarter revisions, tax reduction in this budget, use last year's money that is left over, Mayor to spend it on somethings, such as fire or police departments. Assembly work session Friday will look at different things suggested and proposed. Amendments to budget, then mil rate will be set by assembly...maybe this Friday April 15. Chugiak ER Adv Board-detail into code, now board should function properly. Each CC will know their reps and alternates. Boards and Comm-Sept-October. Get nominations in ASAP with documentation to submit by August. MOA manager office will assign staff member to board. Eliminate sunset provision. Debbie did a great job explaining frustrations and needed fixes at the assembly meeting. Last assembly meeting for Crystal was April 12 and then she is off. April 26: certify the election. Kevin Cross is the new representative. We appreciate what Crystal has done for Birchwood CC.
- 4) Kevin Cross-lots of work sessions, budget, go on u-tube and log into April 12 meeting talking about senate redistricting which is 1:40 minutes in. Felt there were negative feelings towards Eagle River.
- 5) Jamie Allard-here to listen-congrats to Kevin.
- 6) Pat Higgins-tomorrow announce Superintendent selection. Focused on making some results-oriented changes that start at the top. Improve academic outcome. School bonds did not pass. Restructure, lesser bonds, public feedback on bonds. SOA funding for school pre-school, reading. Some kids missed a year plus.
- 7) Dan Saddler-asked if only airport association members fill out survey? Deadline is April 30. Stated anyone can fill it out. Can it be written for non-aviators? Val to coordinate with Birchwood Airport Association to create a survey for non-aviators.
- 8) Joy Boston- National Cemetery vet service- Contact Virginia Walker to get help to get on base. April 30 there is an honor flight returning to Ted Stevens. Involved are WWII , Korea, Vietnam vets all expenses paid trip to DC. This is important as some vets were not so honored when they returned from service. Next month May 30-at the Vet memorial park strip, there will be a Memorial Day celebration and June 4 10AM is the Arctic Valley Run-can sign up for either the 5 mile or 12.6 mile run.

5. Appearances:

6. Old Business:

Birchwood Community Council

- a) Julie Esty MEA-MEA elections-booklet info on candidates-Eagle River district is open and there is 1 at-large seat. 2020 vote improved by-laws-hired legal services and brought them up to speed. Vote by paper and sign envelope, or electronically on smart account. Due April 25. Annual meeting at Menard Center April 26th. Hybrid also via Zoom. Project-clearing near Fire Lake, Undergrounding overhead lines-outside of Pippel substation. Park substation upgrade-Haleigh is the project manager. Conditional Use permit approved through MOA. Moving into the construction phase. Email to adjacent land owners. Project skd: final lead time items coming in-supply chain issues...some smaller items are behind. Start in June and completed in Dec. Initial step is to demolish the current infrastructure. Cannot use existing concrete-rebuild upgraded substation. Kevin Cross said go to MEA website and click on the link about the project. Email for Julie and Haleigh
- b) AMCO update: it is true there are zoning restriction for other businesses besides marijuana. Community is the way we want it. 2- Community Councils are concerned about the shops. Get something on Advisory board. Super majority without limitations.
- c) Concerns impact closure of Aurora Borealis-Debbie wrote a resolution that talked about the problems with closure: "We believe Aurora Borealis is an important road to the community: It is an alternate route to Glenn Highway in an emergency. It is a well-traveled road for 50 years. Arbitrary closure raises specific issues. Fire tanker trucks get water at Starner. Trucks go up Glenn go down to creek and lengthens time for response. Neighbor Jon Nauman has significant economic hardship for his business which is his principle source of income and its gone. Debbie talked to residents and there is no trash service now. One neighbor carries his garbage across Starner to a dumpster. Big fire trucks can't go over bridge but maybe ambulances can? Road getting worse due to lack of maintenance. Periodic ice dam floods...addressed along Aurora. This year could not get in and there is potential flooding to Valley, Helleva and Blair. CC takes the position to reopen Aurora Borealis: Jamie Allard pushes back on replacing the bridge. It is a fixture in the community and can do power of eminent domain...will use as easement. If not volunteer community come in and take. It. Road board offered to buy Right of Way. 11 said yes, 2 said no. On the part of only one person's action is causing ripple damage through-out NB area. Chief Benningfield-lot of opinion and fact communicated. Person built berm this season—will put up gate when snow goes away. Only thing encourage-bridge has never been part of CVFD operations. Never take an ambulance across bridge—before berm, had agreement to use Aurora Borelais. One incident Fire Dept had to drive light duty vehicles across—challenge to get to the person with berm in place and in a light truck drive out to the ambulance. Rep Merrick found Starner in a CAPSA-project. History in SOA for roads in existence and in this case for at least 50 years. Issues such as Forest Park mobile homes-MOA deemed it an emergency because of health risks. MOA could determine this to be a public safety hazard and risk, and could take over. Crystal will raise this question with MOA manager. This is a way to push the issue. Ben W. -been driving on it using it 10 years plus—as it is a public ROA. Road is a mixed bag of ROW's. 5 different ways to solve. Blockage past curve. Tom Prunty-of 4 houses south side of bridge-he owns 2, no emergency service, no trash, condition of road is deplorable, significantly impacted by this. City did not want to deal with AB. Solution buy 4 properties other side of bridge. Kevin Cross- Board of realtors-2 neighbors access crossing back of property-7-10 years-

Birchwood Community Council

new owner put up fence. Neighbor encroaching won...because of precedence. If trail used for years...should fail. Jamie A-power of imminent domain-personal experience-Chugach Park—folks use her drive way...trail that has been used and it is allowed. This though, is safety issue. Chief Bennigfield -Easy to say drive on it, someone has to maintain it. This year there would have been 5 frozen in vehicles because of needed maintenance. Be sure Administration is on-board and become part of road system. Debbie talked with Mark and board said did not want to do power of imminent domain. Mark went out to talk with homeowners...2 no's stopped going forward at this point. Ben W-precedence exists—who build the road? George Steffas might have built it There is a legal ROW at present...have to finish last 150 feet. McKinley View shoots straight over to bridge. Chief clarified this is not the case as there is connection to McKinley View to AB, as it is down a cliff. Debbie moves to “Remove water supply and emergency.” Second by Matt. Debbie will present at Chugiak CC next week. Hope is to get several CC to agree and go to road board. Mark Littlefield- Shared resolution with Advisory -vote failed for imminent domain and instead visit homeowners and 2 said no. Could CBERRSA vote on imminent domain? Mark stated it is a long drawn-out process, and he did not think community wanted to do it. MOA services not provided to people is the key issue. Jamie will talk to MOA about options. Mark stated it not just a road problem, it is also the bridge. Debbie's focus is road access more than just the bridge. Actively pursuing bridge—hoping get that-resolve issues and then look at the road. Carol Perkins-40 years ago rebuilt bridge and it was done by the community and Kenai Supply lifted the timbers. MOA before provided engineering. Why did owner block road? Patty F-quick comment-Chief B earlier said he had a change of opinion on matter. Call question: any objections to approving amended motion: none and it passes!

Resolution Aurora Borealis Road# 2022-04-01

We believe that Aurora Borealis is an important road to our community because...

It is the alternate route to the Glenn Highway for North Birchwood residents in the event of an emergency, and

It has been a well-traveled and used public road for over 50 years, and

It serves some local residents as their economic lifeline (Horse Drawn Carriage Company), and

Some residents along Aurora are no longer able to use public services, even emergency response access has been limited, and

The road is significantly deteriorating, and

Periodic ice dam floods from Peters Creek may now impact larger areas since they can no longer be addressed by local government.

Therefore, Birchwood Community Council requests that Aurora Borealis Road should be reopened as soon as possible.

Birchwood Community Council

7. New Business-None

a)

8. Open Forum

- a) CIP project-poor drainage Hillcrest etc...roads are narrow and issues with drainage. Mark Littlefield proposing road re-build for Hillcrest, Shims, Almdale, Husky, James Way, and Terrace Lane. Introducing ideas. McCarty suggests speed bumps to slow speed. Traffic management maybe put raised intersections. Debbie-saw contractor knock street signs sideways-let Mark know. Stop sign knocked over at Valley-Helluva.
- b) Ben W. When go back to in-person meetings? Debbie will go back to chairing meetings. Idea suggested of holding hybrid meetings. Rep McCarty and Jamie Allard in support of hybrid meetings. Matt to check on internet for hybrid. Dan Sullivan also in support. If we have internet access at the Chalet will pursue.

9. Adjournment: 8:52 PM