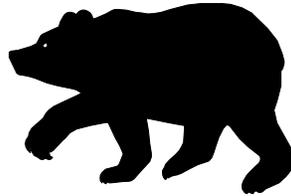




Community Council: *At the root of Better Government*



Bear Valley Community Council (BVCC) Meeting Notes BVCC meeting – February 13, 2008 Compiled by Scott Pexton

The council meeting was held in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive. The meeting started at 7:04 PM, with approximately thirty-five people including at least twenty-nine council members. Thus, a quorum of members was present. BVCC Chair Cheri Lipps started the meeting, introduced herself, and invited representatives from the Anchorage Animal Control Center to address the council.

Animal Control

Three representatives, Brad Larson, Scott, and Travis talked about animal control issues that they are involved with. Animal Control is involved with oversight and control of domestic household pets, including dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, and lizards. Numerous copies of three folded paper brochures about animal control issues were distributed to council members. The brochures were entitled: "*What you Should Know about Barking Dogs*", "*Responsible Pet Ownership and the Law*", and "*Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Title 17*".

Brad Larson indicated that the Animal Control Center generally deals with three main issues: licensing, vaccinations, and pet control & confinement. All dogs in the Municipality of Anchorage need municipal dog licenses, which require documentation that the dog has been vaccinated for rabies. Other vaccinations are recommended, but vaccination for rabies is required. Control and confinement of animals is a matter of public health to avoid the potential for bites, animal attacks, and cars hitting animals. Dogs should be under voice command, leashed, or in a fenced area when on the owner's property. While on the owner's property, a dog can be under voice command, but the dog must be in sight of the owner unless the dog is tied up or otherwise confined. Animal control officers enforce the municipal code under Title 17 and may enter onto private property to control loose animals.

Beth Harmon indicated that she lives in Bear Valley in a house that sits back over 200 feet from the road, and that an animal control officer came onto her property and took both of her dogs. She was still upset about the situation and considers dogs taken from a person's property to be theft. She felt that the officers had specific intent to take the dogs from her property even though in her opinion the dogs were not disturbing anyone. She indicated that dogs with remote control training collars and invisible electric fences should be considered under control of the owner if the dogs are on the owner's property.

Cheri asked whether the municipal code could be changed to address this type of technology. This would be something for people to bring to the Assembly if a change to Title 17 is desired, as the animal control officers must enforce the existing law as it is currently written. There are only five animal control officers for the entire municipality, which covers land from Chugiak to Girdwood. For safety reasons, the current policy is that animal control officers first secure loose

dogs and then attempt to make contact with the owner after the dog is secure. Animal owners or residents with questions about animal control issues can go to the Animal Control Center at 4711 Elmore Road to talk to someone directly, or phone or email questions. If someone is dissatisfied with the manner in which Animal Control deals with an issue, they can also contact the Mayor's Office or the Ombudsman to describe the situation.

Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility (AWWU)

At approximately 7:25 PM, Cheri introduced Chris Kosinski of the Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility (AWWU) public affairs office. Chris Kosinski handed out "Frequently Asked Questions" sheets with information about AWWU South Anchorage Water Improvement Projects. He provided an overview of the AWWU system as it relates to South Anchorage. Chris indicated that AWWU has plans to bring water and sewer service to some parts of South Anchorage, but that these plans won't impact Bear Valley. He described how AWWU gets water from various sources in Anchorage including Eklutna Lake, the Ship Creek Reservoir, and several water wells. He mentioned that the water distribution system consists of large main transmission pipes from 24 to 54 inches in diameter, smaller 8 to 18 inch distribution lines, and smaller ¾ to 8 inch piping to connect into buildings and homes. The water pressure varies from a minimum of 40 PSI to 100 PSI maximum, and the peak usage is from Memorial Day to the Fourth of July when people tend to use lots of water for washing cars, lawns and gardens, and recreational uses. He indicated that AWWU prefers to install water utilities within existing road rights-of-way when possible, but will acquire utility easements when necessary. Pipe depth of 10 feet below ground surface is needed to reduce freezing potential, but this can sometimes conflict with the locations of other buried utilities such as gas lines. AWWU looks for overall community benefit when extending service, such as fire protection and fire hydrant service areas. He indicated that the South Anchorage Water Improvement Project (SAWIP) is planning water service projects in the area between Abbott Road and Potter Creek and between Hillside Drive and Lake Otis. They have formed an Advisory Group to consider issues such as the elevation levels needed for gravity-fed systems, closeness to existing water service lines, drainage and geotechnical conditions, and impacts to neighboring landowners. The Advisory Group meets every other week from 7 to 9 PM for six planned meetings to determine a route for a water transmission line. They have a website at www.awwu.biz/SAWIP.

Septic Systems on the Hillside - Anchorage Tank & Welding

Tom Varney of Anchorage Tank & Welding addressed council members. He is a coordinator at his company for the distribution of AdvanTex Treatment Systems. He and an assistant passed out some brochures with information about the AdvanTex treatment systems. These systems are designed for advanced water treatment in areas with high groundwater tables. He indicated that there are approximately 250 systems in use within Anchorage, most of them located in the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak and Eagle River areas. There are also some commercial grade systems in Alaska at schools, etc. These systems filter septic effluent before discharging it, and require a reduced size drain field when compared to other tradition septic systems. The system does not have to be pumped every two years and can last for five or six years before pumping is needed. The cost for a system (installed) is approximately \$20,000, but the price can vary depending on site conditions. AdvanTex systems are serviced twice yearly under a service agreement which requires a yearly fee of \$360. The system is monitored remotely via programmable logic via the Internet connected to a telephone line extension. Automatic email messages are sent to the company if the system has a problem. The float valves within the system act as a switch to send signals to an aboveground control panel. Site soil conditions determine whether an AdvanTex or other type of septic system will work. They come with a three-year warranty on parts. Anchorage Tank & Welding, Inc. has a website at www.anchoragetank.com. Tom Varney's direct work phone number is (907) 272-3704.

Hillside District Plan Update

Heather Stewart and Ms. Jensen of Agnew Beck Consultants and Krista Bishop and Mel Langdon of the Watershed Division of the Municipality of Anchorage addressed council members about the status of the Hillside District Plan (HDP). They indicated that the time line for the plan had been extended by one and a half months. Public workshops are planned in April 2008 with a draft Plan for public review anticipated by June 2008. The public would have the summer months to review the draft plan, which would then be submitted to the Assembly in the fall of 2008. The HDP will address roads, drainage conditions, trails, land use, transportation routes, and sewer and water issues. They are considering a couple of potential new road corridors, one potentially connecting future subdivisions within the Brewster's Homestead land to other existing roads south and west of Bear Valley, and another potential future road connecting Clarks' Road through Section 36 to the north to East 140th Avenue. The HDP will address drainage issues and attempt to tabulate existing problems. Drainage improvements may be employed as development occurs based on criteria or policies adopted in the HDP. Criteria may involve the percentage of vegetation remaining in subdivisions, subdivision drainage requirements, and watershed approaches to work towards connectivity of runoff areas, and pilot projects for different types of drainage controls. Little Rabbit Creek/Little Survival Creek is one watershed area under study to identify problems areas and present conceptual infrastructure mitigation techniques, such as retention basins, passive structures, culverts, or hard engineering solutions. There may be a need for a legal mechanism or authority to enforce the plan for drainage. Active

structures need maintenance, which has associated costs, and there are capital costs for some drainage improvements. Under consideration is the idea of forming a Hillside District storm water utility group or larger road service area with drainage responsibilities. The Chugiak, Birchwood, Eagle River Rural Road Service Area (CBERRSA) is a service area with a Board that has representatives of each community council in the area to advise the Municipality on the level and type of road services desired. This structure is generally larger than an individual Limited Road Service Area (LRSA), and it can use capital funding sources for road improvements in addition to the traditional maintenance funding sources. HDP representatives are considering whether a similar type of rural road service area would work in the Hillside District Area. Information about the Hillside District Plan is available online at <http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/>.

Chugach State Park Access

Thomas Crockett, the South Area Ranger of Chugach State Park, addressed council members and indicated he is generally the first point of contact on state park issues in south Anchorage. He is directly involved with solving problems in the field and not involved with policy or budget issues handled by management. He mentioned that the Grandview trail access to Chugach State Park in upper Bear Valley is one of the few direct ways to access alpine areas of the park. The trail area was identified in a 1986 trail and master park plan. The five-car parking lot at Honey Bear Circle was intended to encourage a strategy to minimize park impacts while providing local access to a Class C trail. Two main issues that have come up with this parking lot include: too many cars using the lot, and parking enforcement responsibility. Tom indicated that the parking lot is not on state land and is likely a municipal responsibility. He cannot enforce rules outside his jurisdiction in the park, nor extend his authority outside park boundaries. He indicated that the Anchorage Police Department could issue parking citations. He suggested some things to help educate the public about the parking concerns, including posting a sign to identify the public easement, stabilizing soil, improving drainage, constructing a bulletin board, and providing handout materials. From a macro perspective, access issues could also be addressed by the municipality in the Hillside District Plan. Mr. Crockett indicated that State Parks is working on a two-year process to re-write a Master Trails Plan for trails managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Much of the focus will be on small foot print impacts, minimal development, and enforceable policies. Another macro project is to survey the official boundaries of Chugach State Park.

Assemblymember Jennifer Johnson introduced herself and spoke in support of the Chugach State Park survey project. She indicated that the boundary survey was a priority and that State Representative Mike Hawker was working on legislation to provide funding for it. Some of the easy parts have already been completed, but contractors will do more complex areas. She said she was on the Chugach Advisory Board and was part of the planning committee. She indicated that she was an advocate of many small parking lots to gain access to Chugach State Park rather than creating more large centralized parking lots such as those at Glen Alps. She also advocates for 20-foot easements through adjacent private landowner's property to access the park. Ms. Johnson said she felt that she had been misrepresented in a previous Daily News feature article about the Bear Valley park access area and parking lot. She also indicated that another area at Canyon Road has very significant parking problems along with partying and fires, etc. A suggestion was made to post a sign further down the hill on the road leading up to the Honey Bear Circle parking lot to indicate when the parking lot is full. The sign would need to be monitored by people living near the parking lot. She also mentioned that James King was the new DNR State Parks Director and that she felt he was very responsive to community concerns about parks.

Laurie Holland expressed that she thought the cul-de-sac parking lot area should be re-designed to reduce the tendency for overcrowding by cars. Lori Schanche of the municipal Public Works Department indicated that she thought the parking lot in upper Bear Valley was better designed than most and that a good job was done to solicit community input during the platting review process.

Election Results for BVCC Council Officers

A motion was made by Dan Stone to extend the council meeting time beyond 9:00 PM to allow time for the council election. The motion was seconded by Rodney Powell. There was no objection to extending the meeting time so the motion passed and the council meeting continued past 9:00 PM. Cheri Lipps indicated that council members that wanted to vote should sign the BV council member sign-in register.

Cheri asked if there were any candidates interested in the Vice Chair position. Two council members were separately nominated: David D'Amato and Laurie Holland. A showing-of-hands vote was taken and the vote tally was 15 votes for Laurie Holland and 14 votes for David D'amato. A recount was requested and the showing-of-hands votes were counted again with the same result. Laurie Holland was declared the winner.

Cheri then asked for nominations or volunteers for each of the respective council positions: Secretary, Treasurer, and three Member-At-Large positions. Each position had one nominee or volunteer, but none of the positions had more than one interested candidate. A showing-of-hands vote was taken for each respective position and each respective candidate received at least 19 votes each. Therefore, each nominee/volunteer was congratulated and declared a winner. After the final vote, the audience gave a round of applause for all the participants and new council officers.

The current status of the 2007/2008 Bear Valley Community Council officer positions is as follows:

Council Chair:	Cheri Lipps
Vice Chair:	Laurie Holland
Secretary:	Chuck Lekites
Treasurer:	Michelle Lekites
Member-at-Large (HALO Representative):	Rodney Powell
Member-at-Large (Assembly Liaison):	Dan Stone
Member-at-Large (Committee Coordinator)	Joe Burnham

For the first time in several years, all BV community council positions are filled. Congratulations and thanks to all of the new council officers!

The Bear Valley Community Council Bylaws are posted and available online at: <http://www.communitycouncils.org/download/967.pdf>. For reference purposes, a brief description of council officer duties is provided below.

Council Chair: The Council Chair is the principal presiding officer that supervises the affairs of the Council, establishes the meeting agenda, and ensures that a monthly or periodic and timely newsletter is published.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair is a mediator or facilitator for each meeting, keeps a member register and sign-in log, assumes the duties of Council Chair when the Council Chair is absent, attends each meeting of the Federation of Community Councils (FCC) as Council Representative, and signs all checks and bank withdrawals as one of the two officers whose signatures are required for authorized disbursement(s) of any funds from the Council financial account(s).

Secretary: The Secretary ensures that copies of the bylaws are available, keeps and reports the meeting minutes, sends copies of the minutes to the Community Councils Center, ensures distribution of meeting notices and agenda, and maintains records, and keeps custody of the membership-voting register.

Treasurer: The Treasurer has charge and custody of all funds of the Council, makes disbursements, reports all receipts and expenditures for the preceding month including the current balance of funds, and signs all checks and bank withdrawals as one of the two officers whose signatures required for authorized disbursement(s) of any funds from the Council financial account(s).

Member-at-large: The member-at-large (Assembly liaison) serves as information liaison between the Council and the Municipal Assembly and informs the council concerning forthcoming Assembly agenda items that may be of interest to Community Council members.

Member-at-large: The Member-at large (HALO representative) attends each meeting of the Home and Landowners Organization (HALO) as Council Representative and reports to the Council on the activities of HALO.

Member-at-Large: The Member-at-large (Committees Coordinator) serves as a coordinator of any committees formed by the Council and periodically informs the council about the status of various committee activities.

Other Issues

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

The next Bear Valley Community Council meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 9, 2008, from 7:00 – 9:00 PM in the Arts & Crafts Room at Bear Valley Elementary School.**

End of meeting notes.