

Basher Community Council Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2010

Baxter Elementary School, 7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order by President Dirk Sisson at 7:06 pm.

Guests: Rick Sinnot, ADF&G Area Biologist, Paul Honeman, Assembly, Sue Rodman, Anchorage Fire Department

Agenda:

- April minutes
- Year round firng at Fort Richardson: Draft EIS

The April minutes passed with minor revisions.

Ted Trueblood stated that Mike Hawker was successful in getting 250K approved for the design phase of Campbell Airstrip Road (Mile .3 to .7). Representative Hawker personally argued for the project in front of the Governor and encourages folks to write letters in support of this funding to the Governor.

Barb Hood asked if the Governor has the community council resolution supporting road improvements, and Dirk Sisson confirmed that he does. Barb suggested that we follow up with a cover letter to the Governor with the resolution attached.

Mary Rozenwig stated that Con Bunde will not be running for another term, and she suggested that we extend invitations to the candidates who will be running for the seat. The election is in November.

Rick Sinnot: Presentation about bears and other wildlife

Rick stated that we live in epicenter of bear country. There have been several unfortunate incidents on the Rovers Run Trail resulting in a temporary trail closure during summer 2009. It is likely that the City will close the trail again when there are enough salmon to attract bears. Rick distributed a handout about bear behavior and conflict avoidance and gave a brief presentation on conflict avoidance. When travelling in bear or moose country, think about it before you go—are you traveling in likely bear moose country? Does the timing increase the likelihood of an encounter? Are you alone or with a group? And finally, consider what your reaction should be in the event of an encounter. If you are interested in more specific training, there are several bear clinics around town. Rick says that Stuckagian is the best neighborhood in Anchorage regarding bear/garbage infractions. 75-80% of Stuckagain residents have bear-proof cans, and probably 10% take garbage to the dump themselves. There were very few trash infractions in our neighborhood over the last few years. Black bears generally are not predatory, just looking for food. If bears start following you around, then let officials know. Those are the ones we are worried about. Officials will kill bears that habitually follow people. Brown bears are an entirely different matter. You really don't want to surprise a brown bear on the trail. Every now and then one

reacts aggressively and there is a mauling, like the events last summer (2009) on Rovers Run. Let Rick know if you have a bear that is hanging around. ADF&G does not move bears anymore, because other areas don't want our problem bears.

Moose can be more dangerous than bears. More people are hurt and an equal number killed in Anchorage by moose. We are coming up on the most dangerous season—when moose have calves. Dirk asked about the status of the assembly's bear protection officer. Rick stated that it passed, but Mayor Sullivan said there is not enough money right now. They are laying off police and fire personnel, so we are not going to get a bear officer at this time.

Number s to call during work hours: Rick 242-0424, Jesse Coltraine 267-2811. After hours or weekends: call state trooper number.

Rick said that if you see a bear in your neighbor's trash, don't hesitate to turn your neighbor in—they will get a citation.

Rick was asked about the ADF&G position on the Ft Rich live firing proposal and the potential effects on wildlife. Rick stated that year-round firing at Eagle River flats might stir up the white phosphorous and could potentially kill ducks and otters. ADF&G also has concerns about the Snowhawk Valley alternative—it is a moose rutting area in mid September to late November, and the area accommodates 30 plus moose. Dall sheep are also very sensitive to noise, and would very likely be impacted. Rick thought that the Army will probably select the Eagle River alternative, and ADF&G would probably also lean toward the Eagle River alternative because that's where it has been historically.

Chuck Borg stated that although the Army indicates that Eagle River flats (Alternative 2) is the preferred alternative, Alternative 3 has a lot of literature, and represents a lot of background work. Rick responded that he thinks it is possible that they might want both ranges in the future and perhaps that is the reason for amount of literature on Alternative 3.

Barb Hood noted that there is a 1000m habitat buffer on the shooting range, and asked how this would be enforced. Rick stated that, from a wildlife perspective, the concern is noise, not that they would hit animals during firing exercises. Infrastructure and footprint are also major concerns.

Barb asked about the long term influence of white phosphorous on wildlife. Rick stated that it burns when exposed to air, but below water, it does not burn and persists in the environment. In Eagle River, birds ate the pellets containing white phosphorous and died. If the Army wants to train using white phosphorous, they would need to use Snowhawk.

Ann Gabler asked: what is reason for not using the existing training site at Fort Greely? Rick responded that he thought that the Army's reasoning was the displacement and disruption of home leave. Dirk stated that there was a whole chapter on justification and needs that he did not print out in the packet.

Sue Rodman: Presentation from Anchorage fire department:

Sue brought copies of recent annual reports. Last year there were 139 fires totaling 17 acres—every summer there are lots of brush fires. Two years ago there was a 10-acre fire on Tudor, and a massive

response involving retardant drops. This year is the first year without a helicopter in Anchorage, so we really need to use caution, especially around neighborhood and trails. If you see a fire report it using 911, otherwise call APD at 786-8900.

Sue passed out the updated firewise guide, and it includes recommendations for homeowners. The fire department also does risk assessments that can be applied for online. Residents are reimbursed 70% of the cost for trees that they recommend having removed. Funding is available now and through next year, but there is no guarantee for the future. You can call the Sue Rodman's office if you have questions. Sue encouraged folks to follow the open burn guidelines in order to keep the right to burn.

John Beebee asked if we doing the chipper this year. Sue said that we can probably do it in August. Sue will contact Dirk and he will let the community know. The branch limit is no bigger than 6-8", and no longer than 6 ft lengths. Sue said that now is not a good time to prune spruce trees; they are beginning the growth phase, and pruning causes them to release sap which can attract bark beetles.

Sue said that there are no planned controlled burns in FNNP this year.

Ted asked about who the standing dead trees along the ROW (mostly birch), belong to. He said that there is a lot of brush and fuel, and it would be nice to get rid of some of that. Sue responded that not all of it is high fire danger material, but they have a keen interest in keeping fire off the road, she recommends running a mower or hydro-ax along road regularly. Ted and Bob Groenweg responded that hydro-axing is done every year within the subdivision, but not along Campbell Airstrip Road. Sue said she can help out with that and will look into it. The fire department can also help with spruce trees on your personal property.

Dirk asked about the status of the spruce bark beetle. Sue responded that beetles are at normal levels. Recommended preventative measures include pruning up in fall, and watering around drip line in June and July if dry.

LRSA Update (Bob Groenweg, Ted Trueblood): good year last year, we have left over money. Over the next two weeks expect alder clipping. No time line yet for oiling—usually takes place first part of July, but is weather dependent. For potholes between mile .2-.7, call the muni pothole hotline, which is on the muni website. The LRSA contractor fixed the potholes by the gas line this spring, and they have held up really well so far.

Year round live-firing at Fort Richardson:

The Army is considering year round live firing at Fort Richardson. Dirk just found about magnitude of the proposal last Friday. The justification and need is that troops now have to go to Greely, and that is inconvenient and costly. Dirk distributed an information packet and map explaining the three possible alternatives, listed below:

1. No action
2. Resume at eagle river flats.
3. New installation east of Scenic Foothills in Snowhawk Valley

The risks to the neighborhood are fire and noise. Dirk asked if the community wants to take a position on this. The comment deadline is Sunday June 13th. The Chugach Foothills neighborhood will oppose the Snowhawk site for the following reasons: 1) it has been selected by the state and would be contaminated if it were transferred; 2) they are concerned about misfires to Snowhawk Valley and Ship Creek;; and 3) they are concerned about water supply contamination.

Ted Trueblood motioned that the community council draft and issue a resolution opposing alternative 3 based on concerns about fire, noise and impacts on wildlife. Barb Hood seconded the motion. Ted stated that we should get draft resolution on the table to strongly oppose Alternative 3 and run it by the Executive Committee. Chuck Borg stated that he agrees and asked where the opposition to the proposal can be heard. Dirk stated that comments can be emailed or faxed to the person indicated. Ann Gabler stated that the resolution should be very specific, this is a scary alternative and the fire danger is severe. Dirk stated that our neighborhood could have a high noise impact if conditions are conducive. Dirk will write a resolution and run it by the Executive Committee before submitting. Barb Hood voiced her agreement, but also voiced concern about voting on a resolution without prior notice to the community. Need to make sure we are in compliance with Robert's Rules. Without advance notice, a resolution can pass with 2/3 vote. Chuck Borg stated that the resolution should be cc-ed to the congressional delegation. Eric Ash stated that we need to raise a human cry before momentum builds. The military has to listen to congress. In addition to the resolution, we need individuals to contact congress—we need to interact at highest level.

A call to question ended the discussion there was no opposition to the proposed resolution opposing Alternative 3.

Neighborhood cleanup:

Dirk reminded everyone that Saturday is neighborhood cleanup. He will have garbage bags and cookies at the Basher Trailhead.

Paul Honeman assembly report:

The Anchorage Assembly has been reorganized and Dick Trainy is the new chair. The first quarter budget revisions include restoring bus service on Veteran's day and also on the day after Thanksgiving. Paul asked the community council to consider a resolution supporting the proposed police academy that was included in the budget prepared by the assembly, but vetoed by the Mayor. The Mayor's projection has academy farther out in 2011.

Barb Hood stated that she was concerned about the timing of the proposed resolution—trying to act with prior notice to the community. Bob Groenweg stated that he would like to hear other side of the

issue before voting on a resolution. Ted Trueblood suggested that individual members could write the assembly and mayor if they are supportive.

Ted Trueblood mentioned that he sent an email to Paul Honeman about the appropriation for the Campbell Airstrip Road improvements. It passed again this year and is a top priority. Ted would like to see a response from the assembly that is more responsive than that of previous assemblies. Paul said he will look into it. The funding for an east side district plan that would include Stuckagain neighborhood was recently cut. Paul will be taking action on this. The Hillside district plan was recently approved after a year-long process.

Neighborhood block party in July: Gwen Hufford volunteered to coordinate. Dirk will send an email to contact Gwen if interested in helping.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Boucher
Secretary, BCC