

Basher Community Council Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2011
Baxter Elementary School, 7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order by President Dirk Sisson at 7:07 pm

Guests:

Jason Kohler, Anchorage Fire Department, Wildfire Mitigation Office
James Dennis Anchorage Fire Department, Station 14
Wendy Wilber, CRW Engineering
John Smith, Municipality of Anchorage, Project Manager—Campbell Airstrip Road Upgrade
Elise Higgins, Alaska Botanical Garden, board member
Adam Trombley, Anchorage Assembly Seat I

Attendance: 30 signed in

February 3, 2011 minutes were approved with no amendments.

AFD Update, James Dennis, Station 14:

Station is preparing for the upcoming wildland fire season and assessing the water supply at the tank at the top of the residential area.

Jason Kohler AFD Wildfire Mitigation Office

Jason Kohler gave an update on the shaded fuel break that is planned along the southern boundary of the neighborhood (follow-up to presentation at Feb 3 BCC meeting).

The goal is to create a shaded fuel break on the south side of Stuckagain Heights between the neighborhood and the Middle Fork of Campbell Creek. The proposed fuel break would start near the Basher Trailhead and continue east for 1 mile toward Near Point. The goal is to create a 200' wide buffer between the forest and the neighborhood. The first 100' will have less aggressive thinning—downed and dead fuels will be cut and piled, healthy spruce will be limbed, and all birch and other deciduous trees and shrubs will be left standing. In the second 100' ft, most of the spruce will be removed. In the event of a wildfire, this would provide a primary holding point for a hand line or hose line. The goal is to fight the fire before it becomes a structure fire. The fuel break can also be used for aviation support for water or retardant drops.

The current schedule calls for the hotshot crews to begin work on May 9th and, if they are not called on a fire, they will work on the fuel break over a 3-week period. Crews will burn piles under a smoke management prescription that will not smoke out the neighborhood.

Jason answered several questions from community members about the location of the break (the centerline is flagged in), and site rehabilitation after pile burning (AFD will plant short grass such as fescue and bluegrass to occupy seedbed and fend off invasive plants, deciduous trees and shrubs will also be planted).

**Wendy Wilber, CRW Engineering and John Smith, Municipality of Anchorage, Project Manager—
Campbell Airstrip Road Upgrade**

The design study portion of the upgrade is funded by a \$250,000 state grant that will cover initial planning and design work. CRW Engineering was selected as the contractor.

There will be an open house on May 11th at 7:00pm at Baxter Elementary. The purpose is to hear the community vision for the road upgrade. The design team has not yet made any decisions, but the issues and solution here will likely be similar to the recently upgraded Kincaid Park access road, which has a separated paved trail along the length of the road. After soliciting community input, the design team will submit the plan to the Municipality Planning and Zoning Commission.

The following comments and questions were addressed:

Comment: it would be best if the trail and sidewalk stayed on the same side of the road.

Response: the trail needs to be on the lower side of the road, we could look at extending the trail to the Tudor intersection.

Question: what will the width of the road be?

Response: two 11' travel lanes with a 5' paved shoulder and a 3' gravel shoulder on either side, then slope and fill; 38' shoulder-to-shoulder. Dimensions fit the design criteria for "country lane." Kincaid Rd is classified as a "collector."

Question: the main purpose of the trail is to keep bikes off the roadway; will the city plow the trail in winter?

Response: not certain.

Question: by making the road more accessible, won't that attract more users? There are other safety issues, like blind spots and dangerous curves. Improving the road and trail will bring more bikes on to the upper road, where it is more difficult for cars to get around them. Improving and widening the road will also bring more traffic to the park trailheads.

Response: the goal is to improve the section of road that is the "missing link" (mile 0.3 to 0.7); increasing traffic to the neighborhood is a community question.

Question: after the concept report is complete, how much more funding will be needed to complete the road construction? and where will the funding come from?

Response: the current estimate is \$4 million. The project is not on the AMATS, and bond money goes to arterial and collector roads, so the money will have to come from the state.

Question: what is the next step?

Response: we will know more about pre-construction costs in the next few months, we will go to the legislature with that.

Comment: the traffic counts and speed study will provide a solid case; we can also make a case for state funding because the road is a major access to State Park trailheads.

Comment: the road safety could be improved immediately by removing the brush from the road edges.

Response: brushing is a municipality issue, and the current road is not in the right-of-way. The right-of-way issue will be resolved as a part of this process.

Adam Trombley (Seat 1), Assembly report:

Adam Trombley gave a brief update on the municipal budget, budget revisions, and amendments. He discussed the new amendment to allow chickens in residential neighborhoods—there is a provision in Title 21 allowing chickens, and Title 21 is currently in a testing period. Mr. Trombley invited community members to call or email to give him their opinion on the chicken issue. He is concerned about chickens and chicken feed becoming bear attractants, and some residents he has spoken with are concerned about noise. Mr. Trombley also invited input on the ballot advisory requiring box stores that sell liquor to check identification for a "red line" indicating an individual is not allowed to purchase alcohol.

Elise Higgins, Alaska Botanical Garden

Elise Higgins gave a brief overview of the history of the Alaska Botanical Garden. The goal of the non-profit is to provide programs, educate the public, and provide recreational opportunities. The BG is interested in building a structure on site for staff. There is currently a lot of vandalism, and an on-site facility will help them keep an eye on things. They have also requested funds for a research garden that would enable them to plant educational demonstration beds. Ms. Higgins said that there is no conflict between the BG and the proposed road improvements.

Ted Trueblood, LRSA update

Oiling will take place in a few weeks. Sweeping will start soon. Road improvement will continue up Basher, and some alder brushing is on the schedule.

Misc:

Saturday is neighborhood clean-up. Meet at 10am at the Basher Trailhead and pick a section. Leave bags at the North Bivouac Trailhead by the sign.

Gwen Hufford is planning the Stuckagain Block Party for July. The date is not yet set.

Next meeting is in October: Elections will take place for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Member-at-large.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Boucher
Secretary, BCC