

TO: Federation of Community Councils
THRU: Ted Carlson, President
FROM: Erin Dovichin, Secretary
SUBJECT: Chugiak Community Council Minutes for September 19, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

The President called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Roll Call

Present:

Ted Carlson, President
Deborah Jones, Treasurer
Maria Rentz
Benjamin Sherburne
Pat Tilton
Jake Horazdovsky (alternate)

Excused:

Randy McCain, Vice-President
Erin Dovichin, Secretary
Deb Thorall

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from May 2013. Motion was moved and seconded. Time was taken for people to read the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Copies of the Chugiak Community Council's meeting minutes and bylaws are available on the FCC's website at www.communitycouncils.org (Click on Chugiak). These minutes are a summary form of the discussion and key decisions. Audio files of the full discussion are also available on the website.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

An issue regarding the MEA Substation was added to the agenda under new business. Motion to approve the agenda made and seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE REQUESTS

R&M Consultants, Eklutna Bridge Replacement Project

Rand Gaynor with the municipality's project management and engineering department and Donna Lee of R& M Consultants gave an overview of the project. Design has started including data collection, preliminary engineering, environmental approvals etc. Right now they are just developing concepts, gathering input about features the community would like to see. The project is fully funded and there is no opposition to the project. They just held the first of four open houses. There is a project website: EklutnaRiverBridgeReplacement.com. The public can comment directly at the website. This should not be confused with the Eklutna overpass project which is a different project. The project will be coordinated with the bridge design team at the State Department of Transportation. They are also

coordinating with the Native Village of the Eklutna on historic and traditional sites. The Concept Report will be the result of the input-gathering phase. The Report will go to planning and zoning commission and then they will go into design phase where there will be further opportunities to comment. Also looking to talk to the Chugiak Eagle River Historical Society. Lee gave an overview of some of the initial possibilities and input. Maintenance is an important consideration we've heard as is lighting and a pathway. The timeline: preliminary alternatives, final design by fall 2013; construction beginning in 2015 construction season. Representative Stoltze requested that the planners keep things to a minimum, once safety and access needs are met, so that any remaining funds can be used for other critical community needs. Questions and discussions ensued about bidding, sizes and different potential concepts.

Assemblywoman Amy Demboski

Demboski gave a report on the Assembly's review of the community council ordinance. Every 10 years the Assembly is required to review the ordinance. The Ombudsman reviewed community council bylaws and found that only two of the 38 councils were in compliance with the code. So mainly the Assembly is cleaning up code, refining definitions and making sure the ordinance reflects the code. There are also some major changes proposed though. Some councils require people to pay dues before a person can vote. Some feel that is inappropriate. The proposed ordinance would not allow councils to have mandatory dues. Voluntary donations are acceptable. Dick Traini is also proposing that the age of community council membership should be 16 instead of 18. Demboski wants feedback on this. She is concerned for example that a 16 year old cannot have legal fiscal responsibility. Others have raised issues such as 16-year-olds should not be voting on issues such as liquor licenses. All bylaws must be accepted by the Assembly. Right now councils are just submitting bylaws to the FCC but the FCC is not recognized by code. The proper procedure will be to send the bylaws to the Clerk and the Assembly will review and approve them. If the ordinance passes, councils will have 90-120 days to turn in their bylaws. If they don't, then a default set of bylaws will apply until the Council comes into compliance. The Council's subcommittee has a work session on 9/27 and it is open to the public. Discussion ensued on ways to promote civic responsibility and engagement among high school students, including partnership with school districts, non-voting membership status for those under 18. Demboski also added that the ordinance will also now mandate that the CIP list be submitted directly to the Assembly rather than to the municipality. Carlson brought up that the Road Board should also have to submit directly to the assembly. Demboski noted that would not come under the community council ordinance but could be done through other ordinances.

The budget will be out the first of October. We should be watching to make sure Truck 11 does not get cut.

Rural lighting standards are also at issue. Demboski is watching out to make sure that Chugiak is not required to have the same lighting as Anchorage. We are rural and our community members like less lighting for many of our roads so we'll need to protect that by creating rural lighting standards. Planning is also concerned that some of our roads are not up to standards so we'll also need to make sure that we create rural road standards for the same reasons. Discussion ensued and resources were shared for addressing this issue and making sure we don't have to look like Anchorage.

OLD BUSINESS

Eklutna Monofill Project Update

Carlson reported that the Planning and Zoning meeting on the issue is on Oct 7th. If Planning and Zoning votes in support then it will go to the Assembly and Carlson will go before the Assembly to stop the dump. Carlson is completely opposed to the dump and committed to upholding the Council resolution opposing the dump and to stopping it.

Representative Stoltze shared that some of his conservative Assembly contacts in the Mat-Su have very significant concerns about the similar project proposed in Palmer. He has had great relationships with Eklutna, but he is not comfortable with this project. The Mayor's Chief of Staff of the Mayor called him asking for his help to take the stop

the dump signs down. He didn't even offer good reasons for the project or ask for a discussion. Stoltze was disgusted. Stoltze's default is usually pro-development and that it is up to the landowner what they wish to do on their property, but the more he has learned about it he feels this is not appropriate for Chugiak and is not up to our standards. Carlson reiterated his opposition as well.

Discussion turned to potential alternatives for Central Recycling. Rentz and Horazdovsky shared information on how there is existing code that supports incentivizing recycling with lower tipping feeds that at the Anchorage Landfill for byproducts of significant recycling efforts. Rentz stressed the importance of win-win solutions and this may be one. Horazdovsky explained how there is already a network in place for reduced fees--something has gone awry and the Council should look into it. Some people felt that reduced fees were not necessary and the standard tipping costs were just part of business that Central Recycling should absorb – demolition is part of the bid for projects and they should bid appropriately.

Rentz pointed out that Title 21 is silent on the treatment of solid waste. Because of that, the planning and zoning staff defaulted to DEC in their recommendation, but DEC is only responsible for regulation not in charge of planning land uses. That's what Title 21 is for. This needs to be addressed – most likely by the Assembly -- before P&Z makes any decisions on any landfills.

There were questions about why the Chugiak Benefit Corporation is supporting the landfill. The Chamber of Commerce is also supportive of the conditional use but has remained silent on the rezone. There were also questions on where the Iditarod Historical Trail is and how it could be affected.

Demboski offered a procedural comment that whatever a person or entity's stance is they should inform all the assembly people on their stance not just Demboski. She also sits on the Municipal Enterprise Committee where she has learned that the financial projections for Solid Waste Services are not good and this may complicate the issue of the tipping fees.

Kim Girard, a teacher, said that many of the parents of her students have been saying that the municipality can't possibly put a landfill next to the park that is bringing us all together. They just can't believe it even has a chance of happening.

Sherburne appreciates the discussion of alternative ideas, but said that Eklutna is a member of the community and it is their land and they are looking for a way to make money with that land so that is the entity that people should be engaging on an alternative not Central Recycling. He suggested finding something to offer Eklutna that is a better solution. Discussion ensued about this. Alternative would be to buy their land.

David Baldwin brought up the Chugiak Benefit Association's 14 acres and how they had tried years ago to take the hill behind the building out for gravel, plane it out and build park facilities. One alternative is to take the hill and push it into the hole on the Eklutna land to fill it so the land is buildable or to get other gravel and fill the hole if this is Eklutna's main desire. Discussion ensued on this idea. Neither of the surface owners – Eklutna or the CBA own the subsurface rights to the properties. CIRC and BLM do. One resident pointed out that there is no hole – it is part of the topography of the larger hill and it is at the same level as the Glenn Highway. Removing the hill behind CBA's buildings would completely change the soundscape of the neighborhoods as happened with Loretta French park.

REPORTS

CBERRRSA Road Board

No report in McCain's absence. Demboski reported that there is \$30,000 for a traffic calming study for Chugiak-Eagle River. She needs feedback on what roads are problematic in Chugiak.

Eagle River-Chugiak Parks & Recreation Board

No report.

Treasurer's Report

Jones reported the Council has \$3511.68 and no outstanding bills or obligations.

Title 21/Consortium of Chugiak-Eagle River Community Councils

Demboski asked if we have made a recommendation for who we will put on the Eagle River Advisory Board as that is needed ASAP. Carlson said we have not and we need to address it tonight.

Legislative and Assembly Report

- Nothing further from Assemblywoman Demboski.
- Representative Stoltze reflected broadly on the issues of revenue and spending the State is facing, including issues around social services and education.

FCC Update

FCC will be signing an agreement with UAA to archive the council's records.

NEW BUSINESS

Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board Representative. Both Randy McCain and Gale Armstrong have resigned. Armstrong resigned because he spends much of his time on Kodiak. Rentz nominated Pat Tilton as the Board Representative. Jones seconded. Motion to elect passed unanimously. Jones agreed to serve as the alternate. The Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Recreation Board has a sixth seat which is the Mayor's Appointment. Randy McCain would like to be supported by the Board for that position. Discussion then turned to the Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Council. Jones nominated McCain for the Council's representative on the Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Council. Motion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Carlson received an email inquiring about Eklutna's request for a rezone of the land across from Thunderbird Heights to light industrial and across the highway to heavy industrial. Notices went out to the area during the summer while the Council was on break. Many people were not aware of it because of that. The requirement for noticing a rezone is very small –just 500 feet-- so it likely would not have gone to the residents of Thunderbird Heights just like the people on Amonson were not noticed about the monofill.

Storm drain ditches are needed on Baron and Lampert Circle. Carlson would like the Council to send a letter of support to the Road Board. This issue can wait until the Road Board rep is present so the council can receive adequate information for making a decision.

Jones motioned to extend the meeting for 10 minutes. Rentz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

MEA Substation

Resident Kevin MacNamara gave an overview of the many significant issues with a proposed substation next to his property. The substation is at the end of Steffes Road. Someone from MEA went through the neighborhood initially to let people know about the project but there were no clear design plans and residents were told there would be a public meeting well before any construction started. No public meeting occurred. Suddenly the lot was completely cleared and the grade on the lot razed. MEA had no conditional use permit but somehow had a foundation permit.

The changes increased the height of the towers. High voltage power lines are now 100 feet from his back door. MEA was required to submit a drainage plan and have it approved before changing the grade, but somehow they went forward without that. Most problematic is the size of the substation. It seems sized for an industrial area not a residential area. There are also substantial lighting issues, including 17 safety lights around the perimeter and sound issues. Residents are concerned about their property values with something this large in their backyard. MacNamara bought his house when the small substation was there and it was fine but there was never any sense that anything at this scale would ever be proposed. Residents never even had an opportunity to learn how big the project would be.

Demboski said that Bill Starr and she have been working on this and from what they have seen so far it appears they have exceeded their permit.

Rentz motioned to extend the meeting for ten minutes. Jones seconded. Carlson amended to extend to 9:30 am. Motion passed unanimously.

Residents continued to share their concerns. They have looked at substations in other residential areas – very few even approach this size. The conditional use permit was denied but they have been proceeding on this foundation permit. There are sound issues. There are no buffers now. Demboski reiterated that she and Bill are working on this and are very concerned. Community council opinions on issues like these are important. The Council can invite MEA to the next meeting. The Council can also write a letter of concern. Carlson said the Council will write a letter of concern. Discussion ensued on several ways people can raise their concerns. Contacting the MEA Board directly is a possibility as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Thursday, October 17, 2013, 7:00 pm at the Elsie Oberg Community Center.

The Chugiak Community Council serves Fire Lake, Chugiak, Peters Creek, Mirror Lake, Thunderbird Heights and Eklutna. We meet at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month at the Chugiak Benefit Association's North building, the Elsie Oberg Community Center (18606 Old Glenn Highway).