

TO: Federation of Community Councils  
THRU: Ted Carlson, President  
FROM: Erin Dovichin, Secretary  
SUBJECT: Chugiak Community Council Minutes for October 17, 2013

**CALL TO ORDER**

The President called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**Roll Call**

*Present:*

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

*Excused:*

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No minutes have been prepared yet from the September 2013 meeting. The Secretary is still on travel out of state.

*Copies of the Chugiak Community Council's meeting minutes and bylaws are available on the FCC's website at [www.communitycouncils.org](http://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**

Carlson added Eklutna Industrial Rezone to item 5 on the agenda. No other agenda items. Agenda approved.

**APPEARANCE REQUESTS**

**Rick Davidge, Rural Lighting Standards**

Davidge is speaking as a private citizen. He gave an overview of the issues around increased lighting proposed for Potter Valley Road that his neighborhood faced, including moving from 5 to 38 additional streetlights that were not wanted by the residents. Because there was no rural lighting standard, the system engineers had to use the municipal standards. Several neighborhoods became very upset. There was an attempt to build in new "dark skies" standards to Title 21 that the Mayor vetoed and though it passed, Potter Valley Road was then reclassified such that the new standards did not apply and the additional lighting was still required. Several community councils then allied to try to establish a rural lighting standard and have drafted an ordinance that uses the same rural standards as the State Department of Transportation. Davidge is requesting Chugiak Community Council support for their ordinance,

and they would like us to join their alliance. Assemblywoman Demboski expressed her concerns about these increased standards for lighting and roads that take a way from the rural character that we care about in Chugiak. Demboski has been working with this coalition for months. Davidge strongly encouraged the Council to join the alliance, support the ordinance, and to become very familiar with the issue, including the handbook that guides the current lighting standards in order to protect our rural character in our neighborhoods.

#### **Tim Potter, DOWL-HVM, Eklutna Gravel Pit Amendment**

Potter gave a detailed overview of the Eklutna Gravel Pit site. Heavy rains created drainage issues at the pit because Eklutna River is actually geologically perched and so there is a barrier that means rainwater drains into the gravel pit. Eklutna, Inc. has had a conditional use permit to do the extraction. When the water came into the pit it came up 4 feet against the piles, screen and plant. They are now asking for a permit modification that will allow the piles, screen and plant to be moved gradually north as the project proceeds in order to avoid the water. It is a minor modification and could pass on a consent agenda at planning and zoning. In addition, the tribe has been working with the Corps of Engineers to try to restore salmon habitat on Eklutna River. The village would like the excavation and reclamation to begin as soon as possible and is in support of the modification. Discussion ensued about the details of drainage on the site.

#### **Monofill Update**

The Planning and Zoning Commission denied the rezoning request. Eklutna has 20 days to appeal. Decision-making on the conditional use permit was delayed for four months. Potter reported that it is likely to be appealed and it may then go to the Assembly. They will be doing water testing and geohydrology analysis and that's why they asked for the delay. The delay also provides time to see whether DEC will issue a permit. Eklutna intends to continue to seek approval for land uses including the monofill. Discussion ensued about details of the water testing and geohydrology analysis.

#### **Gary Kuhn, Director of Engineering, MEA, MEA Substation Update**

Kuhn provided an overview of the larger electrical system and then the MEA system and connections between substations within the system. Many upgrades are needed in the system. This substation is one of them. Kuhn talked about the various considerations in designing the upgraded substation as they tried to minimize impacts on local landowners. Duane Adams from DOWL began giving an overview of landscaping design and showing the property that is most affected. Kevin MacNamara pointed out that he is that landowner and described how it is affected. Adams described how they are trying to landscape to minimize some of those impacts. The capacity of the substation is increasing and they need additional space as a result. They took the design to planning and zoning and they rejected it. Kuhn stepped through the various steps they took with planning and zoning. MacNamara pointed out that he has not found many other residential substations this large. It is a huge concern for him as a landowner. The current substation can support current growth but not predicted growth and outages are a big concern. This substation is overdue for upgrade. They are currently not working due to a stop work order from Jerry Weaver. Demboski said unlike the monofill this process will not come before the assembly and because of that she is personally going to testify against this project. She is very disappointed with how MEA has handled this project. She described how MEA avoided doing the community meeting, avoided working with the community councils. That's not how we do things in Chugiak. Our community voice was completely left out. The planning and zoning staff should never have issued the footings and foundations permit. Process matters a great deal and she will fight this to the end because the community was not engaged appropriately. We deserve to have this project vetted. Demboski outlined how things could have been addressed in the beginning. Though she is a big private property rights advocate, the impacts of this to neighbors and the poor process are unacceptable.

Discussion ensued including questions regarding relocation or back-up plans. Distribution circuits are already there and so it would not be easy to move the substation. One participant gave a discussion of the history of the area with MEA and how they provided power when others wouldn't. MEA cannot currently answer how it might handle the property if they don't get their permits and it needs to be restored. There was also discussion about the structure there and how it is possible for it to be there without a permit. They have permission from Weaver to store it there

because it is a prefabricated structure and doesn't require the same permit. Discussion continued around the impacts to residents and how they were not adequately engaged or given notice of the scale and potential impact of the project.

#### **Tom Dreyer, S4 Group, Eklutna Industrial Rezone**

Dreyer gave an overview of a map of the proposed zoning changes and provided the context for the area. Discussion ensued about the need for screening from all roadways not just the Glenn Highway and recommendations for screening, particularly in areas that will intersect with the replacement and new improvements on the Eklutna River bridge. There was also discussion of the various businesses that might come to the area and potential protections for salmon and the river.

Sherburne motioned to extend the meeting for 15 minutes. Rentz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Dreyer requested a resolution from the Council to the assembly. Rentz proposed that we discuss the resolution at the next meeting since this was our first opportunity to hear about the details.

### **REPORTS**

#### **CBERRRSA Road Board**

No report.

#### **Eagle River-Chugiak Parks & Recreation Board**

Jones motioned to replace herself as the Parks and Rec alternate with Maria Rentz. Horadzovsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Rentz reported that she attended the meeting. Discussion of single track mountain biking trails. Discussion of the budget, including equipment upgrades. No votes taken.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Jones reported the Council has \$3816.63.

#### **Title 21/Consortium of Chugiak-Eagle River Community Councils**

No report

#### **Legislative and Assembly Report**

Assemblywoman Demboski gave an overview of the upcoming Assembly meeting. Budget is a primary issue. There's a proposal to increase ambulance transport fees. Demboski is working on that as it currently disproportionately affects the volunteer communities. There has not been discussion this year of shutting down our fire trucks. Discussion ensued about the differences between Chugiak and Anchorage in everything from the ambulance fees to rural road and lighting standards. Discussion also ensued around the repeal issues before the assembly and the dates and dynamics of the decision making.

#### **FCC Update –**

No report

### **OPEN FORUM**

Carlson encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming open house on the Glenn Highway/Artillery Road exchange improvements. This project is going to affect everyone because of the bottleneck in traffic to and from Anchorage.

Rentz motioned to extend the meeting 15 minutes. Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Horazdovsky volunteered to represent the Council on the alliance regarding rural lighting and road standards. He will attend the meetings and keep the Council informed. Discussion ensued again how we need to be proactive in order to protect our rural character here and on how we are increasingly rammed down throat.

There was a brief discussion on what's happening on Needles Loop. Deborah Jones can't find the permit and has not receive any notification. The landowner would need some type of permit – either land use or conditional use permit to develop and it should be prominent displayed. If he doesn't have a permit, call planning and zoning and report him.

There was a brief discussion of the Chugiak Council bylaws and the minimum age of membership, the Council Facebook page, and potential training sessions for council members on duties and responsibilities.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 21, 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).*