

Eklutna Valley Community Council
May 7, 2021
Meeting minutes

The meeting was chaired by council president Rick Sinnott and began at 6:30 p.m. The council met at Rochelle's Ice Cream Stop pavilion. The meeting was convened outside so that we could maintain physical distances. Forty-one council members were present: Helen, Tom and Bronson Bohn, Margan Grover, Dan Thompson, Buff and Deb Rix, Randy Bangerter, Bob Reagan, Glen and Mary Keller, Lisa and Rick Sinnott, Debbie and Steve Thon, Erlinda Downing, Mike and Gwyn Wiedmer, Dave Fox, Linda Hilton, Todd and Linda Hehl, Keith and Vicki Darby, Rochelle Cheely-Williams, Alexander Williams, Richard Burton, Derek Lampert, Monique Garbowitz and Greg McConnell, Jim Riley, Jim Redding, Josiah Trout, Jennifer Nesmith-Neumeyer, Natalie Rancourt and new members Aaron and Sierra Moore, Teal Sky Heller and Russ Carpenter, and Brian and Debbie Slater. Also attending was Joy Boston, community liaison officer for JBER.

This was a record attendance, beating the next largest gathering of 27 members in October 2015. About half of the adults who live or own property in the valley were present. Rick introduced the council officers to the new members and asked everyone to recite their names and approximate home locations for the new members' sake.

The meeting agenda was approved unanimously with no changes. The minutes of the October 3, 2020, meeting was approved unanimously with no changes.

Dan Thompson reported conducting a "forensic audit" of the council's account, during which he counted \$445.64. Dan mentioned a yard sale that many residents participated in two years ago. He suggested that another such event this summer might help raise funds for the community council. We have no current plans, but money has been known to make things happen. Any project that taps the community account will require a majority vote by council members. Dan agreed to discuss his idea for a yard sale with interested parties.

OLD BUSINESS

Historic minute. Rick asked if anyone knew the name of the person who had built most of the streets and driveways in Eklutna Valley. All of the old-timers knew the answer was Skip Cheely. He even graded the Eklutna Lakeside Trail all the way out to the glacier in the 1980s.

Update of the neighborhood map for Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department. Rick said he had sent a map showing local homes to the Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department during the valley's last major wildfire, in 2010, indicating how many people lived in each structure. This was for safety purposes. The fire season is once again upon us. If the fire department is required to make a snap decision regarding which structures to protect, we'd like them to make sure all of the nearby residents are safe before working on an unoccupied structure. The map hasn't been updated in over a decade and lots of new homes have been built. Rick asked if he should update the map, indicating numbers of adults and children. There was general agreement. Linda Hilton suggested also tabulating the number of indoor pets. Rick agreed to compile the information. The map will be kept strictly confidential and shared only with the fire department.

Local crime report. Other than the body recently found below the pullout near Mile 6, there was not much to report. Dan reminded people to contact residents if something suspicious is

happening in the neighborhood. Helen mentioned the community Facebook page as a good place to post notices of suspicious behavior. There was some discussion of outsiders gaining access to the Facebook group, but Helen and others assured us that the group was private and limited to people who live and own property in the valley. Helen is the gatekeeper, and she said several people whose names she didn't recognize have asked to join the group. Rick said he knew the names of homeowners and property owners, and he agreed to verify any requests. He also noted that joining the group is voluntary and, of course, members should be wary of disclosing private information.

Erlinda resurrected her idea of placing a camera on a lower section of road that the Anchorage Police Department could use to monitor vehicles in the event of a crime. She recommended looking into meteoblue.com. That website has a series of weather cameras that take a photo once an hour, which wouldn't be particularly useful for monitoring vehicles on Eklutna Lake Road. The AWWU water treatment plant already has a camera that records traffic on the road and APD has used it in the past to identify vehicles of interest.

NEW BUSINESS

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson news. Joy Boston told us JBER is advertising 150 jobs in non-appropriated funds positions for retail, child care and recreation programs. Part- and full-time positions are available. If interested, you can visit www.jberlife.com/jobs or call Human Resources at (907) 552-4563. She also said that anyone who is eligible to use JBER medical facilities can order and renew prescriptions by texting "Get in line" to 1-855-856-5501. There is a new JBER pharmacy Facebook page (www.facebook.com/JBERPharmacy/) with a QR code for prescriptions and other information. And finally, if you're tired of listening to your cassette and 8-track tapes, the 9th Army Band is offering a fine live performance to honor women veterans on May 22 at 1:30 p.m. at the VA Hospital on North Muldoon Road and another on Memorial Day from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on the Delaney Park Strip (between 9th and 10th Avenue and I and L Street). Check out their Facebook page for more information (www.facebook.com/9thArmyBand).

Solar power initiative. The person overseeing this program couldn't make it to the meeting, but Josiah is our liaison and he explained what's happening. The Alaska Center is coordinating a program to make it easier and cheaper to incorporate solar energy in your home. The more homes that participate, the less it will cost individuals. Solar panels and related equipment are eligible for tax credits. They are still looking for participants, and Josiah posted information on the community Facebook page.

Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board issues. Bob Reagan is our elected representative to the CERAB. He advised that others might want to attend the meetings (generally only about two/year) to become familiar with community issues. The CERAB doesn't often address land use and zoning issues that affect our community council, but it will be worth our effort to network with them in case we need their support for an issue that affects us more than Chugiak or Eagle River. Anyone interested can contact Bob for more information.

New commercial ventures. The Cheelys have sold their commercial property and part of their residential property. The new managers, Aaron and Sierra Moore, who will be living in the Cheely's former home, said they would be renovating the ice cream shop and expected to open around May 30. Skip and Tena and their kids Rochelle and Ryan (and their families) will move onto the remaining property. Two other new residents, Russ Carpenter and Teal Sky Heller, said they had purchased a property just west of the Thons and were planning to build four small

cabins to rent to older and disabled visitors. They will offer adventure tours like whitewater rafting.

Warning sign. Natalie Rancourt brought up an issue concerning hazardous winter road conditions. She and others have assisted numerous visitors who have driven into roadside ditches or whose vehicles have been challenged by ice or deep snow. Eklutna Lake Road is one of the last roads to be plowed and sanded after a storm event. Along much of the road there is no cell phone signal. Natalie suggested calling the state's Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to ask them to post a sign at the bottom of the road warning of potentially hazardous winter conditions and the lack of cell phone coverage. Rick asked Natalie if she would be willing to contact DOTPF if he found their contact information. She agreed to spearhead the request. Rick said he'd be willing to write a letter of support from the community council, if needed. He asked if anyone opposed that idea. No one present expressed any reservations.

Road cleanup. Rick said the annual road cleanup would begin at 9 a.m. on May 8 and invited people to attend.

The meeting adjourned at about 7:30 p.m.