

**Eklutna Valley Community Council**  
**October 3, 2020**  
**Meeting minutes**

The meeting was chaired by council president Margan Grover and began at 5:10 p.m. The council met at Rochelle's Ice Cream Stop pavilion. The meeting was convened earlier than usual and on a Saturday so that we could meet outside and maintain acceptable social distancing. People were encouraged to wear masks. Twenty-two council members were present: Margan Grover, Dan Thompson, Buff and Deb Rix, Randy Bangerter, Helen Bohn, Bob Reagan, Glen and Mary Keller, Lisa and Rick Sinnott, Bob and Cindy McElroy, Debbie and Steve Thon, Erlinda Downing, Mike and Gwyn Wiedmer, and new members Dave Fox, Linda Hilton, and Derek and Melissa Lampert.

The meeting agenda was approved unanimously with no changes. The minutes of the October 15, 2019, and January 29, 2020, meetings were approved unanimously with no changes.

Bob Reagan reported spending council funds on a dump fee during the May road cleanup. The total dump fee was \$82.19. He and Bob McElroy split \$60 of the fee and Reagan contributed another \$1.19 because the cash box didn't have exact change. So he believes he spent \$21 from the council funds and we should still have \$445.64.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Road sanding.** At our last meeting members asked Margan to write a letter to the municipality, asking them to ask McKenna's to sand Eklutna Lake Road above Mile 2 when they sand the road up to the Ernie Turner Center. Margan called the muni and they agreed to sand the road last year. Members wondered if that agreement was still good this year. The new president was tasked with calling the muni again.

**Historic minute.** Rick hadn't prepared a topic for the meeting, but he referred to the Eklutna Valley history blog's latest article on the battle between park officials and the U.S. Army to train large groups of soldiers on Eklutna Glacier. The article is being published in four parts. The first three parts are available at: [eklutnavalley.home.blog/2020/07/31/charge-of-the-light-brigade-how-the-u-s-army-lost-the-battle-of-eklutna-valley/](http://eklutnavalley.home.blog/2020/07/31/charge-of-the-light-brigade-how-the-u-s-army-lost-the-battle-of-eklutna-valley/)

**Local crime report.** Not a lot of criminal or suspicious behavior in recent months. The trail camera that monitored Erlinda's driveway was stolen. Dan discussed the reasons why community members were on high alert over the past couple of years and reminded residents to take photos of suspicious vehicles' license plates if they can do so without endangering themselves and also to post suspicious activity on the community Facebook page or call neighbors if timing is essential. Council members asked that the new president compile a phone list of valley residents.

**POW-MIA parking.** This topic was raised even though it wasn't on the agenda. Several members described groups of people and pets walking on the road and cars doors being opened unexpectedly into the roadway.

Rick and others explained what we've learned so far. The park has no funding to provide parking at the trailhead (about Mile 5) and they don't feel any particular responsibility to do so. The trail was not built and is not maintained by the park. Its destinations – Mt. POW-MIA and Gold Star Peak – are not in the park. However, several newspaper articles have promoted the

trail and because of COVID-19 park use is much higher than normal; thus, the two small pullouts nearest the trailhead are often full and people are parking in the ditch and partly on the asphalt.

The State of Alaska upgraded and maintains the road, but DOTPF is unlikely to do anything until someone is killed. Right-of-way issues were not settled when the road was upgraded and both sides of the road consist of gravel and dirt at the angle of repose. Any widening on the uphill side will require massive retaining walls. Widening on the downhill side will require tons of fill and probably retaining walls of some sort. There is no cheap or easy fix and DOTPF hasn't allocated funding for the project.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board report.** Bob Reagan was the acting chair for the last meeting of the CER Advisory Board. He briefly summarized the issue that they passed a resolution on. The municipality periodically updates Title 23, the ordinances that control the building code. Prior to the 2012 revision, the municipality had adopted the International Fire Code, but had exempted new single and double-family homes from the requirement that they have a fire hydrant nearby. During the 2012 revision the municipality decided against adopting the special exemption. They haven't been enforcing the requirement for nearby hydrants; however, in the 2020 revision the municipality proposed to offer home owners four options – build within the maximum distance allowed to the nearest fire hydrant, store your own water, fire resistant construction/defensible space, or install a sprinkler system. These requirements are intended to safeguard homes in the event of a wildfire. The municipality intends to enforce this new revision. The advisory board asked the assembly to postpone a decision on this new requirement until at least October 27, to give residents more time to review and comment on the decision.

**Update on restoration of Eklutna River.** Two years after the lower Eklutna River dam was removed Fish and Game biologists have found juvenile coho salmon ½ mile upstream of the old dam site. Coho fingerlings remain in freshwater for two years before going to sea, so these juvenile fish were born last spring or this spring.

**Election of EVCC officers.** The current officers had served two terms. A single person indicated a willingness to run for each position. After a motion was made and seconded for each office, the following people were elected unanimously: Rick Sinnott, president; Margan Grover, vice president; Dan Thompson, treasurer; Randy Bangerter, sergeant-at-arms.

The meeting adjourned at about 6:04 p.m.