

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 6:30pm
REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Virtual Meeting
MEETING MINUTES – Approved March 9, 2022

Call to order at 6:35pm by Julie Jessen.

Quorum was established: 13 members; 7 guests in attendance.

Federation webpage: [Federation of Community Councils](#)

Introductions and Announcements: none

Meeting Minutes Approval: Draft meeting minutes from January 12, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve by Pete Panarese; seconded by Tom Freeman and Ruth Armstrong. Approved by a vote of 13 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.

Meeting documents are here: <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=4549>

New Business:

Wildfire hazard maps – See meeting documents link above.

Jennifer Schmidt, Assistant Professor of Natural Resource Management and Policy
University of Alaska Anchorage

[Institute of Social and Economic Research \(ISER\)](#)

My work website: <https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/jenschmidt/home>

Office Phone: 907-786-5497. Email: jischmidt@alaska.edu

Ms. Schmidt provided the following information:

- See presentation materials in *Other ERVCC Documents* on our council website above.
- Wildfire hazard assessment describes potential sources of harm. Where homes are located is not captured. Only “fuel” hazard is displayed on the maps.
- Exposure method – provides assessment of the “potential” for wildfire activity. There are 16 classes of vegetation. Exposure score varies from 0 to 100.
- The maps displayed are based on vegetation present in 2014. Spruce bark beetle devastation is not included in these maps.
- Explore the maps in more detail using online tools.
- Suggestions for Eagle River Valley Community Council residents
 - Limited egress routes are a concern. These should be expanded.
 - Fuel breaks would also be helpful.
 - Identify “shelter in place” locations; pilot cars.
 - Consider “chipper programs” to get wood out.
 - Conduct “Fire-wise” assessments. The muni. currently is not have funding available for this program.
 - Deciduous trees are good (less flammable). Trim spruce limbs up.
 - Create defensible space.
 - Clean gutters / reduce fuel for embers.
- Federal funding availability? There is some wildfire mitigation funding in the CARES Act.
- There may also be federal funding available beyond CARES Act, reach out to Trevor at Department of Forestry, Forest Stewardship Program, to learn more. Funding is available at state and federal level.
- Our council could take a more active role to reduce fire hazard within our council.

Follow-up items:

Application for Marijuana Establishment License

Alice's, 12111 Horseshoe Drive, Eagle River

Update was provided by Ms. Joy Webb:

- The process for obtaining state and municipal retail marijuana licenses is:
 - Obtain state of Alaska license.
 - When state license is granted, applicant can apply to Anchorage Clerk for a municipal license.
- Alice's completed their state license application. We are in 30-day feedback period where individuals, community councils and the municipality of Anchorage can provide feedback regarding the state license. (until March 1).
- Alice's proposed location at 12112 Horseshoe Drive, Eagle River, is zoned CE-B-3. In Anchorage, retail marijuana shops can be located in areas zoned B-3. In Chugiak-Eagle River, retail marijuana shops cannot be located areas zoned in CE-B-3 per Title 21. This is not a situation where a variance can be granted. Title 21 would have to be changed in order for this license application to move forward.
- Ms. Kennedy stated the municipality will protest this state application due to Title 21 requirements for CE-B-3.
- Motion by Susan Frischetti, seconded by Pete Panarese to draft a resolution objecting to a state license for Alice's. Resolution approved by a vote of 13 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain. The resolution will be submitted to the State of Alaska, Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office.

Community Challenge Grant Program Launches to Improve Anchorage Parks and Trails

See meeting documents link above for details.

Community members looking to improve parks and trails in the Municipality of Anchorage can now apply for a grant through the 2022 Community Challenge Grant Program. Applications will be accepted until midnight Alaska time on March 17, 2022.

<https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/challenge-grants/>

AMATS:

30-Day Project Nomination Period: 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

See meeting documents link above.

FYI JBER:

Notice that there will be training at the firing range: now thru March 14, some referred to as "explosions."

ERVCC Meetings – Continue with Zoom?

- Members agreed to continue meeting via Zoom until May and reconsider in-person meetings for fall, 2022.

Old Business:

Representative Kelly Merrick - Alaska House of Representatives

Representative Merrick staff member Jayme Jones provided the following update:

- Regarding Lions Club land swap with the State of Alaska for Chugach State Park, HB 304 was introduced on the House floor.
 - Meetings with Resources are being scheduled. This is the only group involved.
 - There is no opposition to this bill that we are aware of.
 - After House, the bill will move to the Senate for consider. Watch Facebook page for progress.
 - There is no fiscal note attached to HB304.
 - A land survey must be performed. We're waiting for Land & Water to provide a cost estimate. DNR will write the instructions for the survey. We are hopeful that the Lions Club can pay the survey costs. This would allow us to avoid the Finance Committee.

Crystal Kennedy - Anchorage Assembly

Ms. Kennedy provided the following update:

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- Municipality is responsible for reapportionment following the 2020 census. Now have 6 municipal districts and must adjust district boundaries.
- Ms. Kennedy is a member of the Assembly's Reapportionment Committee. The committee met today and reduced number of maps under consideration to 4. See website <https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/ReapportionmentCommittee/Pages/reapportionment-maps.aspx> to review maps.
- The number of maps will continue to be reduced and amendments may be made to the final selection before an Assembly vote to approve.
- Community councils have not responded on this topic yet. Ms. Kennedy would like to provide more time for community councils to offer feedback.
- Ms. Kennedy urged members to review maps and provide feedback. E.g What values are important to you. What do you like/dislike about each map.
- Some maps propose District 2 (Eagle River) would lose JBER and instead be joined with Hillside. Ms. Kennedy does not think our district should lose 12,000 people from JBER while other districts make very small changes.
- The current timeline is for the committee's choice map to be introduced to Assembly on February 15. Public hearing to be held on March 1 and the Assembly's final decision vote to be held on March 15.
- May 23 is statutory deadline when final vote must be held.
- Community council resolutions will be more heavily weighted than individual feedback.
- Motion made by Joy Webb, seconded by Pete Panarese to draft a resolution asking Assembly to delay action until at least April 1 so community councils have more time to discuss maps and draft feedback during regularly scheduled meetings. Resolution approved by a vote of 13 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.

Eagle River Community Patrol – Cliff Cook

Mr. Cook provided the following update:

- Patrols were conducted for 18 hours covering 180 miles, somewhat reduced from the usual due to inclement weather.
- With APD leadership changes, there have also been some patrol officer changes.
- There has been an uptick in vehicle theft. When vehicle is left running and unattended, window can be broken and drive away.
- A text was received regarding a person who appeared homeless, blocking bike path near north ER exit. It was confirmed and APD notified. APD intervened.
- Another incident of an individual sleeping on a corner. APD was notified and they picked up the individual.
- Let's keep watching out for each other.

Committee Reports:

CBERRRSA (Road Board): James McCurtain/ Arlene Rasic

James.mccurtain@hotmail.com, 907-301-4042

Mr. McCurtain provided the following update:

- Only one contractor responded to CBERRRSA request for proposals. This is the same contractor we have had. Cost is up 30%.
- The mill rate was expected to increase, but because property assessments increased, the mill rate will be reduced from current 1.92 to 1.9.
- We haven't received nominations for projects, including AMATS. Please send Mr. McCurtain your suggestions for projects in our area or anywhere in Eagle River. Any modal transportation issues should be included.
- Local projects approved for the summer include drainage projects and a pathway in Chugiak.
- Mark Littlefield – We can build pads for mailbox clusters. We can build sidewalks/paths so send suggestions to Mr. Littlefield (CBERRRSA Streets & Maintenance).

Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board – Julie Jessen – Nothing to report.

School Board Report - Pat Higgins, Anchorage School Board

Higgins_Pat@asdk12.org, 907-952-5871

Mr. Higgins provided the following update:

- In March, Mr. Higgins will report on school district bonds.
- Mr. Higgins was in Juneau to present on budget. Net year's budget is a key focus area.
- This year the budget is ok because of federal funding. In September 2024 the federal funds end. We've had no increase in funding from the State. In two years, we anticipate a \$67M deficit.
- Anchorage cost of living is higher, but our schools have not been given a cost-of-living increase for five years.
- The school district has been asked to fund school police officers beginning in July. We don't want police officers to leave school as the relationship with school district and with students has been very good. Counselors are a very important resource for identifying students at risk.
- It's difficult to focus on academic results when financial situation is so troublesome.
- Investment in curriculum is a big issue.
- The amount of deferred maintenance has increased significantly but the bonds outstanding have decreased.
- The public has been supportive of the 'every other year' approach to bonding.
- The search for a new superintendent is underway. See the ASDK12 website for additional information.

Education: Open position – See School Board report.

Federation of Community Councils – Tom Freeman

Mr. Freeman provided the following update:

- Linda Chase was chosen as new vice-president of the Federation,
- The search for a new school superintendent continues.
- The location of COVID test site is at Capstone, 5000 Spenard Rd.
- The federal infrastructure bill will bring funding to Alaska, but we are not sure how it will be administered.

Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Rec Board: Pete Panarese (Chair)

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- **Community Challenge Grant Program Launches to Improve Anchorage Parks and Trails**
See meeting documents link above for details. Community members looking to improve parks and trails in the Municipality of Anchorage can now apply for a grant through the 2022 Community Challenge Grant Program. Applications will be accepted until midnight Alaska time on March 17, 2022.
<https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/challenge-grants/>
Consider new trails you'd like to see in our area.
- Parks & Rec is applying for AMATS grants through the municipality to gain funds from the federal Infrastructure bill. There are many projects initially planned in the '90s.
Three applications are:
 - Improve Eagle River Rd bike path from ER Elementary to Hillcrest and then new construction from Hillcrest out to Mile Hi Road. Create a pedestrian bridge at Wren Street to cross ER Road. This application will be submitted by Feb. 14.
 - Continue Glenn Hwy bike path to Eklutna on east side of Glenn Hwy. (in progress)
 - Build a multi-use trail from Beach Lake Park to Chugiak High School. (in progress)
- As our community grows, we'll need more facilities. These grants provide opportunities to expand our park facilities and trails.

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Platting: Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- In our council area, there was a request for rezoning due to replacement of wooden cellular pole behind the P&M Garden Center location with taller, more structurally robust steel monopole that will provide space for at least 3 additional cellular providers.
- This rezone request was expected. It was discussed at our November 2021 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39pm.

Next meeting is on March 9, 2022 6:30pm via Zoom.

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: Julie Jessen (2022); Vice President: open (2022); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2022); Education: open; Parks & Rec: Pete Panarese/Ruth Armstrong - Alt (2023); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2022); Platting: Pete Panarese (2023); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2023)/Alt: open; Road Board: James McCurtain (2022)/Arlene Rasic – Alt (2022); Secretary: Joy Webb (2022)