

Basher Community Council Meeting
February 9, 2023, 7-8:30 pm
DRAFT MINUTES

Officers Present:

Vice President: Chad Hufford
Secretary: Margaret Nelson
Member at Large: Troy Weiss
Member at Large: Ted Trueblood
Past President: Don Crafts

Officers Absent:

President, Jim Wojciehowski
Treasurer, Jeff Allen

President's Report

Vice President Chad Hufford called the meeting to order and read a report from President Jim Wojciehowski, summarizing accomplishments of the previous nine months and announcing that he was "not seeking re-election" as president but looked forward to transitioning to the role of past president.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Margaret Nelson asked for approval of the draft minutes from the November 2022 meeting and without objection, they were approved.

LRSA (Limited Road Service Area) Board Report

Chairman Ted Trueblood reported that the board had met twice since the last community council meeting in November. The board voted unanimously to support proposed Assembly ordinance AO-2023-8, creating a service area to allow funding of projects to improve access to Chugach State Park, which will be on the April municipal election ballot. He explained why the board supported the proposal and encouraged council members to vote "yes". He also advocated to re-elect Bob Groeneweg for Seat A on the LRSA Board in the April election and explained Bob's qualifications and contributions. He summarized the work and budget for road improvement in the past and upcoming years. He complimented our contractor, Northern Gravel and Trucking, for the work they have done with the unusually high snowfall this winter and reminded people not to push snow into the road, which is a violation of municipal ordinance. The board's next meeting is in April, when they will assess road conditions and devise the summer work plan. There was discussion about the dangerously high berms at the South Bivouac Trailhead parking lot, blocking views of traffic along Campbell Airstrip Road, and Ted recommended contacting the Municipal Parks and Recreation department about it. Members expressed appreciation for the contractor and LRSA board.

Basher Community Patrol (BCC) Report

Chairman Troy Weiss said that the eight-member group meets monthly via Zoom to review neighborhood safety items, Anchorage Police Department crime mapping, and exchange feedback on their patrols. Most crimes occur at trailheads, most commonly vehicle break-ins, so patrols focus on showing a presence in those areas to discourage crime. The group also paints parking lines to maximize space in the Basher Trailhead parking lot, and leaves “warning” tickets on cars that block traffic by parking illegally on the roadway. In 2022, volunteers donated 218 hours to complete 269 patrols. Council members expressed appreciation for those doing patrols. Troy also warned people to take care with small pets as there have been pets lost and injured to coyotes in hillside neighborhoods.

Election of Officers

Chad noted that there have been questions and concerns about the election.

Margaret stated seven years had elapsed between elections until May of 2022. Susan Kent-Crafts clarified that each year there was a call for nominations, but no one wanted to run, so lack of elections resulted from lack of candidates, not failure to follow the bylaws requiring opening positions up for election.

Chad stated that Jim Wojciehowski wanted to open all offices up for election now as a “fresh start” because those elected in May 2022 did not serve full terms because the election was held in May, rather than February, and because the May 2022 election did not fully comply with bylaws.

Diane Schenker moved that the current election be conducted in accordance with the bylaws, which provide that only the Vice President and Troy’s At Large seat, both one-year offices, are due for election; that offices with two-year terms are not up for election, having been elected in May 2022. Barb Hood seconded the motion.

There was discussion about length of terms for various offices and problems with the May 2022 election.

Margaret stated that then-President Don Crafts misstated the terms of office for various positions during the May 2022 meeting. Several members countered that a misstatement does not negate the bylaws, which delineate which offices are for one year and which are for two years. Barb Hood said that any misstatements should have been cleared up when the council reviewed draft minutes from the May election meeting, but the May 2022 minutes have not been submitted to the council for approval. Margaret countered that the minutes were made available, but Barb pointed out that despite a request made during the September 2022 council meeting, the council was never given an opportunity to approve the May 2022 minutes.

Chad and Margaret informed council members that in addition to President Jim Wojciehowski stepping down, that Treasurer Jeff Allen had resigned months ago. Several members asked why the council had not been informed of these vacancies until now. Chad repeated that Jim does

not consider himself to be resigning from his two-year term, but rather choosing not to run for re-election for what Jim thinks should be changed from a two-year to 9-month term because of problems with the 2022 election. There was discussion of problems with the 2022 election, including misstatement of terms of some offices, voting on all offices in one election, rather than staggering them as required by the bylaws, and lack of attendance logs to verify that voters had attended at least one council meeting in the 12-months prior to the election as required by bylaws in effect at that time.

Barb stated that some council members had asked Executive Board members prior to this meeting to cite authority for changing terms of offices from what is stated in the bylaws, to no avail. Several members expressed support for conducting the election in compliance with bylaws, and challenged the notion that prior noncompliance with bylaws could justify violating them again now.

Margaret expressed frustration and announced that she was resigning her position as Secretary.

Chad asked whether we are more concerned about the bylaws or our neighborhood.

Loran Baxter said he didn't care if we voted on positions tonight or not, but he didn't think we needed to be fighting about it, and ought to care about what's best for our community.

Cat Coward commented that we all have different values and priorities for the community, and that the purpose of the bylaws is to protect the community, that if everyone is following the same set of rules, the same code of conduct, that is what protects us and keeps us together, and that asking if we want bylaws or a community is a false choice. She added that we need to play by the same rules, rules we agreed to abide by, and voted for, because that's what protects us and keeps us together as a community.

Kris Kulberg suggested that we need time to nominate people for vacated positions and get to know something about the candidates before voting.

Chad asked if somebody wanted to make a motion to postpone the entire election until May 2023 to allow time to figure out which seats are up for regular election and which are up for election due to incumbents resigning. Multiple members pointed out that there was already a motion on the floor.

There was further discussion about requirements for written resignations, and whether the position of Secretary was due for election tonight since bylaws state that Secretary is a one-year term upon initial election, then a two year term after that, and that Margaret had been in office for eight years (seven of which involved no elections, due to lack of nominations), having been most recently elected in May 2022.

Diane offered to re-state her motion: "I move that we vote in accordance with the bylaws on the positions due for election: Vice President, Secretary, and Troy's member-at-large position."

Chad said he thought we should vote for Treasurer because that position was vacated months ago, but objections were raised because council members were not informed of Jeff's resignation prior to the election meeting. Chad and Margaret argued that council members do not need to be notified of resignations, only the Executive Board needs written notice. However, Barb pointed out that the council does have to be given notice of a special election to fill a vacated seat, and was not given that notice prior to this meeting. It was noted that the Executive Board can make a temporary appointment to fill a vacated seat until a properly noticed election can take place.

Someone asked if Diane's motion had been seconded. Diane again restated her motion to proceed with the election for positions due according to the bylaws: Vice President, Secretary and Troy's at-large seat, and confirmed that Barb had seconded the motion. A council member called for the question. Chad asked for a show of hands of those in favor, and most raised their hands. He asked for a show of hands from those opposed, and no one raised a hand. The motion carried.

Election for Vice President proceeded. Candidate Kirsten Marchant introduced herself and explained her background, family history living in Stuckagain, and her interest in and commitment to the community council. She advocated for a united front, noting that we all want the same thing, that we care about the community. In response to a question, she stated she would follow the bylaws.

In response to a question, Chad confirmed that he was not running again for Vice President.

Barb nominated Matt Moore for Vice President, and gave a history of his involvement in the neighborhood and community service, understanding of government processes, and said he is even handed and fair minded. She echoed Kirsten's call for unity. She explained that Matt accepted the nomination via phone and was tied up in another community activity tonight so could not be present for the election.

Chad called for nominations for Secretary.

Diane said the email describing the election process had stated that we would vote on each office, then nominate for the next office, in case someone who lost for one office wished to run for another. Kirsten said she wasn't interested in running for Secretary and there was no indication that anyone else would run for that office. There was more discussion about how to vote for those up for election tonight. Members proceeded to cast votes for Vice President. Margaret asked Loran to help her tally the votes, and Sandi Mierop also volunteered to help. Chad announced that Matt Moore was elected as Vice President with 24 votes. Kirsten got 21 votes.

After some discussion about Troy's at-large seat being up for election, Sandi Mierop moved for unanimous consent to re-elect Troy. Another member seconded it and Troy was re-elected by unanimous consent.

No one was nominated for or expressed interest in running for Secretary. The position will be up for election along with President and Treasurer, at the May 2023 meeting.

New Business

Barb addressed the need for a fire mitigation committee. Because spring is such a critical time, and even a temporary committee could start some planning, until a formal committee could be set up during the next council meeting. Barb suggested that Sandi Mierop chair the temporary committee, since she has been involved in meetings since November 2022 for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Anchorage. Sandi gave an overview of the work by various state and local agencies, grant funds used for the effort, and the critical need to improve egress for our neighborhood. Troy volunteered to help with evacuation planning. There was some general discussion about fire hazards.

Chad introduced Spencer Moore, candidate for Assembly for East Anchorage but said that there was not enough time left for him to address the council. Karen Bronga, also a candidate for the East Anchorage Assembly seat, introduced herself.

A member moved to adjourn. Chad seconded the motion and without opposition, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.