

Basher Community Council Meeting

September 14, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Baxter Elementary School, Library

2991 Baxter Road

Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Officers Present: Dirk Sisson, President  
Matt Moore, Vice President  
Sandra M. Mierop, Secretary  
Don Crafts, Treasurer  
Troy Weiss, Member at Large  
Ted Trueblood, Member at Large

Members Present:

|                   |                    |                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Don Crafts        | Greg Kuijper       | Dave Keddington |
| Kris Keddington   | Kris Mann Kullberg | Rick Kullberg   |
| Bruce Talbot      | Luann Piccard      | Diane Schenker  |
| Carlton Roberts   | Loran Baxter       | Duby Baxter     |
| David Matthys     | Peggy Rotan        | Nancy Boardman  |
| Dirk Sisson       | Penny Rohacek      | Ted Trueblood   |
| Susan Kent-Crafts | Edward Mjolsnes    | Robin Klein     |
| Jessie Kullberg   | Kris Kullberg      | Martha Linden   |
| Sandra Mierop     | Steve Mierop       | Troy Weiss      |

Guests:

Karen Bronga, Anchorage Assembly  
Capt. David Robertson, Anchorage Fire Department, Spenard  
Stephanie Dufek, Anchorage Fire Department  
Representative Laddie Shaw  
Linda Shaw  
Paige Brown, Sen. Cathy Giessel's Office  
Jen Schmidt, UAA and ISER  
Michael Rehberg, AMATS Community Advisory Committee  
Chelsea Ward-Waller, MOA Transportation Planning Department

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Dirk Sisson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and asked for a Motion to accept the Minutes from May 11, 2023.

**MOTION:** A Motion to accept the minutes from the May 11, 2023, meeting of the Basher Community Council was made by Ted Trueblood; seconded by Diane Schenker.

*After correction of a few minor issues, the MOTION was APPROVED.*

## **ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATIVE REPORTS**

Assembly Member Karen Bronga updated the BCC regarding a tour of homeless camps. More money was being added to the camps for portable toilets and lighting. She spoke about some of the problems in the camps. The Assembly is working on a plan for a cold-weather shelter and leasing hotels with a cost of \$1.2 million per month. Solid Waste Services has an administration building that was recently abandoned by the Municipality in an industrial area which can possibly be used for a low-barrier shelter. It already contains showers, lockers, and a kitchen that is in great shape. Hotels have been purchased for housing. There are many unhoused that need more structure and will not function well in their own housing, and the SWS building will be able to serve those people better. The renaming of the port honoring Don Young has been postponed to do more research about naming protocols within the Municipality. The AMATS is accepting survey responses until October 9 regarding the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Rep. Laddie Shaw noted that he is the representative covering the area from Stuckagain Heights to Whittier. On the radar for the House are inmate deaths, enacting legislation for NOAA and the Health Service, and preserving the Permanent Fund.

## **FIRE RESILIENCY COMMITTEE**

Troy Weiss gave an update regarding the Fire Resiliency Committee (FRC) which was formed and adopted at the May 2023 BCC meeting. Members of the FRC have been attending monthly meetings led by Ky Holland from Rabbit Creek. Capt. Eric Lawson from Station 14 and Troy put together a white paper, now in Version 6, regarding what to expect regarding emergency response to a wildfire in the subdivision. Troy highlighted that the one of the key points is communication during an event: Smart 911; Pulse Point; IPAWS (FEMA); radio stations. Phone trees are very important for making sure that everybody is safe. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to help compile phone-tree lists for our community. Troy discussed the fire drill in July, led by Capt. Lawson. The community mustering point in the event of a fire emergency is at the Mountain City Church parking lot where the drill was held. Thirty-three BCC members attended in the pouring rain. Again, emphasis was placed on communication; what to do if the road is closed; being aware of our neighbors with special needs. AFD Capt. David Robertson went over the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) program. He noted that two 15-year-old fire trucks will be replaced by next year at Stations 3 and 5; and five new fire trucks and five new ambulances are planned for 2025. Ten new employees (six paramedics) will begin in 2024. AFD is suffering from many retirees and recruitments from the Pacific Northwest; five people were lost just this year. Anchorage has a Mobile Crisis Team that travels around in gray Explorers that help with people struggling, and they also help clear the docket for firefighters and EMTs to dedicate to emergencies. Cardiac save rates are a shining star for AFD: the percentages were 48.3 percent for 2022, and 58.4 percent so far this year. Stephanie Dufek, Firewise coordinator for AFD, noted that wildfire preparedness assessments are still being performed. She mentioned that she applied for Federal grant funds for AFD to obtain three new brush trucks and PPE. She also had Firewise Alaska brochures available for distribution. Dr. Jen Schmidt, associate professor of natural resources at UAA and ISER, presented a simulation about how a fire would move and progress based on a model that she developed in the event of a fire at the "Legos." Some of Dr. Schmidt's key takeaways were: if you see smoke, leave; focus on preparation; houses should be "hardened" with a 30-foot perimeter; no spruce trees, especially, should be within that 30-foot perimeter, but worst-case scenario, limb-up spruce trees 8 to 10 feet; where leaves go, embers go.

### **ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS (AMATS)**

Tracy Ward-Waller, senior transportation planner, noted that every four years the Municipal Transportation Plan is revisited. Ms. Ward-Waller spoke about various transportation plans, but also noted that the program is financially constrained so that every piece of the plan will not be implemented. Michael Rehberg is the Assembly District 5 representative on the AMATS Community Citizens Advisory Committee and he noted that public input is being accepted until October 9<sup>th</sup> at: [www.publicinput.com/2050](http://www.publicinput.com/2050)

### **COMMUNITY COUNCIL SURVEY FOR THE 2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)**

The No. 1 focus for the Campbell Airstrip area is for a fire egress that is 4-wheel-drive capable for an accessible trail at the end of Atelier. This survey will help to prepare the next CIP for a possible bond issue. Also being contemplated is a trail along Campbell Airstrip Road.

### **LRSA UPDATE**

Ted Trueblood reported that the LRSA Board of Supervisors has not formally met since the last BCC meeting in May. The primary focus has been on accomplishing the 2023 summer work program, which was quite a bit larger than any in recent years. To fund this year's summer work plan, in April the LRSA Board decided by a unanimous vote to take a \$100,000 draw on our fund balance of \$367,000 and surface all of the remaining nearly two miles of gravel roads with RAP. This was all accomplished, with the exception of the upper end of Farpoint, where the existing roadway is too narrow to surface with a full road width, but will be a high priority next summer. The LRSA also had the contractor do some ditch and berm improvements at the S-curves to help contain potential winter flooding from the South Fork of Campbell Creek.

The LRSA met informally with our contractor on August 16<sup>th</sup> to review possible repairs to Basher Road at the top of the big hill. As the initial step, it was decided to have the contractor do some ditching work on both sides of the road to help prevent water from saturating the subgrade. Surfacing improvements will have to wait until next year due to weather and funding constraints.

Following the April passage of the MOA Proposition 6 which created the Chugach Park Access Service Area, the four LRSAs most impacted (our LRSA and three Hillside LRSAs) have been working together to compile a list of projects for a possible bond proposal in 2024:

1. Rehabilitation of those sections of Campbell Airstrip Road (CAR) within the Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP) which were not included in the rebuild/overlay project which Muni Street Maintenance was able to complete in 2017. The original paving of this portion of CAR was accomplished about 30 years ago by the MOA using State grand funds. The paving of these sections is essentially worn out, and they experience frequent and widespread frost-heaving and potholing. This 3.1-mile section of CAR is maintained by our LRSA and is entirely within FNBP, and we receive no tax revenue there, but we have been receiving annual maintenance share from the Muni Parks and Recreation Department. This is the only access road to our neighborhood and the numerous Chugach State Park trailheads. Several traffic counts indicate that upwards of half of the traffic on CAR is from nonresidents accessing various trailheads. The LRSA has been working with the Muni street maintenance foreman to establish a cost estimate. But, absent his input, the LRSA believes that this work will run around \$500,000.

2. Construct an overflow parking lot for the Basher Trailhead. The existing parking lot is quite small, and is often filled to capacity. Additional parking is needed to relieve the frequent on-street parking of trail users when the existing small lot is filled. Oftentimes, the parked vehicles spill out along both sides of CAR, which turns into Basher Road at this location. This is also where the road reaches the top of the hill, and there are curves at both ends, making the hazards of on-street parking especially dangerous. The site being investigated is below the Chugach Electric powerline within FNBP. A site visit was held several years ago, attended by all of the affected parties, and it was agreed that this site is the most favorable. An engineering study will need to be accomplished to investigate the feasibility and acceptability of this plan. A 30-vehicle parking lot with a trail connection to the Basher Trail is envisioned. A preliminary estimate of costs for a Design Study Report is \$300,000.

3. Accomplish the necessary engineering, permitting and soils investigation to develop an acceptable plan to relocate CAR away from the South Fork of Campbell Creek to avoid winter flooding and frost-heaving, and to reduce the severity of the existing very sharp “S” curves, making CAR safer for all users. This section of CAR is located in the flood plain of the creek and experiences winter flooding about every two years when the creek freezes off, causing very hazardous driving conditions. In addition, the low terrain at this location is very wet and is underlain with poor soils, resulting in several very large frost heaves every winter. Finally, there are two very sharp curves (posted at 25 mph) which annually result in numerous vehicles running off the road. A preliminary cost estimate for this Design Study Report is \$300,000.

Ted Trueblood noted that all LRSA Board of Supervisors’ meetings are open to the neighborhood, and they are publicly noticed by the MOA and the Basher Community Council. Our LRSA meets quarterly, with the next meeting being in September to review the summer work and the remaining budget for this coming winter work.

(Basher Community Council meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.)