

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 6:30pm
REGULAR MEETING
Alpenglow Elementary School
MEETING MINUTES – Approved May 8, 2024

Call to order by Julie Jessen at 6:30pm. Quorum was established.

Webpage: Federation of Community Councils

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

Approve Minutes: Motion to approve February 14 meeting minutes by Ruth Armstrong; seconded by Jared Goecker. Approved by unanimous vote.

Representatives' Reports

AK Senator Kelly Merrick – no report

AK Representative Jamie Allard – no report

Anchorage Assembly Report – Scott Myers

- Welcome to Mark Littlefield as our new representative.
- At this week's Assembly meeting there was a comment about using Mac Center as a homeless shelter. However, this location does not meet criteria to be used for that purpose (lack of public transport, etc.)
- It appears likely the public restroom and cemetery bonds failed. Representative Allard is pursuing alternatives for the cemetery.
- There was lengthy discussion at Assembly meeting on Eklutna Hydro Project.
- Mayor's vetoes were overturned by Assembly.
- Upcoming topics – many departments are hiring. Boards and Commissions volunteer approvals are being "held" until mayoral election is completed. Eagle River is under-represented so consider applying for a position.
- What are our council's priorities for capital improvement projects?

Anchorage Fire Department

- Seventeen (17) new employees are attending academy and will be on line in June. All are replacing retirees. One hundred (100) are eligible to retire in next two years. It takes 6-12 months to replace someone. Have total of 350 line personnel.
- See the "current wildfire map" on muni.org website under Fire Dept. Sign up for emergency alerts here, too.
- Firewise inspections are available by Fire Dept personnel to provide advice on your property.
- Contact the Burn Hotline to learn rules and dates for open burning.
- Check your smoke alarms to be sure batteries are fresh and alarms are working properly.

School Board Report – Andy Holleman – written report

Holleman_Andy@asdk12.org, 907-742-1101 Extension 1

- We are moving ahead with our amended budget, counting on about \$100 increase in the Base Student Allocation. This much was added to the original budget for next school year when the House and Senate passed a bill adding \$680 to the BSA. Any increase is uncertain at the time.
- Principals have received their FTE (Full Time Equivalency) numbers for staffing this fall. Reductions are being made around the district, including administrative posts. If there is no increase in funding at the end of the session, there will be additional cuts, at a difficult time of year. Our hope is to avoid dismantling programs now, as we're not able to walk back staffing changes, which are being made now, if funding comes later.
- We're moving into a time of graduation and crossing-over ceremonies all around the district.
- We are on budget to finish out this school year.
- Contact Mr. Holleman at phone number or email above anytime with questions or feedback.

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New Business:

Alaska Trails

Haley Johnston, Deputy Director, haley.johnston@alaska-trails.org | 907.444.5766

Ram Valley Access project

- Chugach State Park Advisory Board needs more representation from Eagle River. Consider volunteering. See application link at bottom: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/chugachadviseboard.htm>
- Ram Valley lost “public access” in 2019 when access over private property was withdrawn.
- 2024 – Alaska Legislature approved funding to investigate possibility of public access to Ram Valley. Alaska Trails is spearheading this investigation and will report back to Chugach State Park.
- Have 5 potential access sites under investigation
 - Need publicly platted road.
 - Identify needs to acquire new real estate.
 - What are potential costs?
 - Parking lot potential?
- There is no legally mandated process to solicit public input.

Comments and questions included:

- Will this be year-round access? Only 1 trail in Park is officially winter access now but anticipate year-round use.
- Will police coverage be increased? Troopers patrol state land. Chugach rangers are trained officers. Municipal troopers cover trailheads. This is outside scope of current effort which covers access plans only.
- Timeline? 5-year timeline to look at access. Current 5-year grant for access investigation ends in 2029. If additional funding is obtained, there will be another 5-year plan.
- Why Ram Valley now? Has been on park plans for many years.
- Type of trail and visual impact? Currently looking at Class 2 trail- must be hand built, single track (1 person).
- Wildlife? Area with rams, grizzlies, moose and avalanche danger.
- Any projections on volume of future use? No information is available. We only have phone survey data on current use.
- Submit your substantive comments to haley.johnston@alaska-trails.org, Ben.Corwin@alaska.gov, Ricky.Gease@alaska.gov, juliekjessen@gmail.com
- Motion by Mark Littlefield, seconded by Ruth Armstrong to draft Resolution encouraging Chugach State Park to have a robust public engagement period for Ram Valley access. Ms. Jessen will draft for review at May 8 meeting.

Eagle River Valley Community Council Annual General Meeting and Elections – May 8, 2024

Board Positions expiring May 2024 (3-year term). Officers are chosen from Board. Board members generally fill officer or committee positions.

- Seat #3 –Currently vacant.
- Seat #6 – Pete Panarese (incumbent)
- Seat #7 – Joy Webb (incumbent)

Officers (Chosen from Board for one-year term)

- President – Julie Jessen (incumbent)
- Vice-president – Tom Roth (incumbent)
- Secretary/Treasurer – Open
- Federation of Community Councils representative - Open

Standing Committees (one-year term)

- Education- Tom Roth (incumbent)
- Platting Board - Pete Panarese (Incumbent)
- Emergency Preparedness – M. Dean Cox (incumbent)

Additional items

- Representative Allard is trying to include the cemetery on state capital list. Write to her if you support (or oppose) this.
- EagleExit meets third (3rd) Tuesday of every month, 7pm, at Chugiak Senior Center. A new topic is covered each month. April topic-Cost of exiting. May topic-Education. Please join us.

Old Business:

Eagle River Community Patrol - Cliff Cook (written report)

- Patrolled 12 hrs. covering 75 miles.
- Petty crime is increasing in our area. Be sure to report it to 311 or 911.
- Increase in homelessness including open fires. Report to 311 or 911.
- Bears are waking up. Take down bird feeders and secure trash.

Platting – Pete Panarese – nothing to report

Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Rec Board – Ruth Armstrong

- RFP for Mac Center is due April 9.
- Chugiak Pool is open now but will close in November for major renovations (\$4.5M).
- Input is being solicited regarding parks. A request was made for updated playground equipment at Oberg Park. Send new park or park improvement suggestions to Ruth Armstrong.
- Loretta French scoreboards are being changed.
- There are many open positions at ER/C Parks and Rec.

Federation of Community Councils – Joy Webb

- Mayoral update – several videos are available. See end of March minutes on FCC site.
- Housing presentation, University of Anchorage Economics Dept.
- “Anchored Home” initiative presentation, Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness
- Arianna Bellizzi has been hired as new, full-time Executive Director of Federation of Community Councils.
- Nominations for FCC executive board will be accepted at May meeting.
- Revised community council boundaries will go before Planning & Zoning in June. Each community council should review the recommendations.
- Meetings are open to the public. Next meeting is April 17, 6-8pm, either in person at BP Center, Birch Room or via Zoom. Two presentations:
 - Anchorage Economic Forecast & Sales Tax Initiative
 - HOME initiative, Ordinance 2023-87(S) by Assembly members regarding changes to Title 21. This ordinance will amend/repeal chapters 21.04, 05, 06 and 07 to change residential zoning districts.

Emergency Preparedness - Dean Cox

- Training for Community Emergency Response Team will consist of 20 hours of online coursework followed by one (1) day of in-person training (July 6). More volunteers are welcome.

Education - Tom Roth – no report.

Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Julie Jessen – no meetings held.

CBERRRSA (Road Board) – Crystal Kennedy

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- No plowing done for recent snowfalls. Street cleaning starts when berms on roadways are melted and must be completed by June 1.
- Fund balance was used for plowing in 2023 due to heavy snowfall though it was not depleted. Higher mill rate has been approved to help replenish the fund balance.
- Eagle River Traffic Mitigation Plan – Have <\$5M. Presentation on status planned for this month.
- Public meetings anticipated in May for Artillery Rd interchange.
- Creating wish list of state capital projects for 2025 (e.g. War Admiral/Sun Beau/ER Loop completion), drainage projects.
- Send project ideas to Ms. Kennedy by April 22 so we can keep an active list for potential state funding.

Adjourned 8:22pm.

Next Meeting May 8, 6:30pm at Alpenglow Elementary School, 19201 Driftwood Bay Dr, Eagle River

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: Julie Jessen (2024); Vice President: Tom Roth(2024); Education: Tom Roth(2024); Parks & Rec: Ruth Armstrong(2026)/Jared Goecker-Alt(2026); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2024)/Jared Goecker-Alt(2025); Platting: Pete Panarese (2024); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2024)/ Joy Webb-Alt (2025); Road Board: Crystal Kennedy (2025)/Arlene Rasic–Alt (2024); Secretary/Treasurer: Joy Webb (2024)