

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 16, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** (Quorum 5+ Elected Board Members) 7:02 PM

2. **INTRODUCTIONS** (Board Members / Presenters / Guests from outside the Chugiak Community Council area)

- Jake Horazdovsky, President (at large)..... Present Excused Absent
- Blake Merrifield, Vice President (E. Peters Creek/ Mirror Lake)..... Present Excused Absent
- Paul Schneider (at large)..... Present Excused Absent
- Burke Wonnell, Treasurer (Eklutna/Thunderbird)..... Present Excused Absent
- Darryl Parks (Fire Lake) Present Excused Absent
- Will Tagen (E. Peters Creek/Mirror Lake)..... Present Excused Absent
- Matt Hickey (W. Peters Creek/Mirror Lake opened to At Large)..... Present Excused Absent
- Rashae Johnson (W. Peters Creek/Mirror Lake)..... Present Excused Absent
- Tom Looney (alternate, at large)..... Present Excused Absent
- Harold Parker (alternate, at large)..... Present Excused Absent

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – April, May Minutes Motion Made and Pass

- Minutes Approved as Amended

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- Moved by Jake and Seconded by Matt, passed Unanimously. Members noted that CIP would be discussed in Open Forum

5. **UPDATES**

- Legislative
 - Kelly Meyrick – Senator for Chugiak and Eagle River
 - No Update
 - Rep Dan Saddlers
 - No Update
- Chugiak Volunteer Fire Dept. – Scott Fisher Fire Chief
 - 5083 Volunteer Hours
 - 372 calls total for the year.
 - In April - 102 Volunteers
 - April Responses 104
- Assembly
 - No Assembly Update
- Homeless Task Force
 - No Update

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Alaska Trails Presentation – Haley Johnson
 - Haley gave a presentation on trails in AK specifically the Alaska Long Trail.
 - Lots of different ideas for routes.

- Chugach National Forest has lots of trails, and the park has provided a lot of feedback regarding the ideas and routes for the long trail.
 - This project has been energized in the last few years as there is a lot of money for trail improvements in the state.
 - In the end it will be about 500 miles long.
 - Senator Murkowski's office proposed that this be studied as a national scenic trail. If the study recommends that it become one, then it would require an act of Congress to become a national scenic trail.
 - There was much more presented and more discussion.
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Keith Wilson presenting on behalf of parks
 - In general, Chugach State Parks seeks to increase park access.
 - No park funding is in place currently to build any improvements at the Chugiak Trail Head.
 - There is a funding request to study improvements to the Chugiak trailhead and make suggestions for alignment off the private property.
 - There are meetings for the park that residents can attend.
 - No development is underway to change the Peters Creek trailhead but it has been a long-time goal to make this trail head better.
 - Residents asked if there was a better way for residents to get informed on park access.
 - May routes through the community were discussed for the long trail and not just this one.
 - A resident noted that the park has recently said that the Peters Creek trail is no longer the preferred option.
 - There was a discussion on the long trail plan.
 - There was a big point of order discussion, and the lawyer that Shawn asked to come was very disruptive. There was talk of asking him to leave because of his disruptive behavior. Ultimately he remained in the meeting and Roberts rules of order were used for the remainder of this discussion.
 - There was much discussion on the park, access, ect.
 -
- Peters Creek Trailhead – Emily Davies
 - Emily noted that they are not opposed to the study of funding the trails but are opposed to expanding the parking lot.
 - There was much discussion on the issue.
 - Resolution on behalf of the residents near the Peters Creek trailhead, introduced by Emily.
 - There was a resolution read to the council by Emily. Approved resolutions are on the website.
 - The resolution passed unanimously with 23 voting for it.
 -

7. NEW BUSINESS

- ----

8. REPORTS:

- CBERRSA - Blake Merrifield
 - Sterner Bridge will get fixed this summer.
 - There is a maintenance agreement in place with the Aroua Borealis Road.
 - They are still proceeding with the pedestrian/bike path on the ski road.
- CER Advisory board – Jake Horazdovsky
 - Nothing to report
- Federation of Community Councils (FCC), Darryl Parks
 - Study project for bike lanes in downtown anchorage. 6th Ave out of town will have the left lane reserved as a bike lane.
- Financial – Burke Wonnell
 - No Changes

- Parks and Recreation Board of Supervisors –Will
 - Asked members to call the governor and ask him not to veto funding for the Starnier bridge funding and the trail on the south birchwood sidewalk. There is ½ Million to connect the bike path from the high school to the old glen and money for the replacement of the Starnier Bridge.
- CER Chamber of Commerce- Leslie Lance
 - None
- Secretary – Jake Horazdovsky
 - No comments
- General Council Business – Jake Horazdovsky
 - Cliff Cook with Eagle River Community Council would like all the council to join the chamber of commerce.

9. OPEN FORUM

- Shawn thanked the council for finally passing the resolution on the Peters Creek trailhead.
- Bear encounter on Bear Mountain trail around 11 a.m. Large Black Bear.
- A resident noted that Fire Lake is an active airway and wanted residents to be aware.
- Fire lake access was discussed.
- Other comments from residents.
- There was a community member Andy Craig who died this past week and there will be a service held at the crossing this past week.
- CIP – The priority list from last year was read off.
 - Move the east side and west side frontage road to a lower priority level.
 - East side drive bike path move up the #1.
 - South Birchwood Loop Trail #2
 - Cemetery #3
 - Ski Road Trail #4
 - Bike trail Peters Creek to Eklutna to Palmer #5
 - Snow Dump Site #6
 - Lake Hill Drive will need to be rebuilt in the next few years #7
 - The rest to remain in the general order similar to last year.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE:

- The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, September 19th, 7:00 PM

11. ADJOURNMENT:

- Moved Adjourn by **Darryl Parks** seconded by **Jake Horazdovsky** 9:25 PM

Resolution 2024-03

Regarding: SUPPORTING AN UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE CHUGACH STATE PARK ACCESS FEASIBILITY/IMPACT STUDY

WHEREAS, public access to Chugach State Park (CSP) is of high value to Anchorage residents;

WHEREAS, human use of CSP is not the only value; wildlife and wilderness values must be considered:

WHEREAS, expanding access and parking at the existing Peters Creek trail entrance has repeatedly been identified in numerous government planning documents for over 30 years, without updated environmental assessments;

WHEREAS, the Peters Creek trailhead and first stretch of the “traditional use” portion of the Peters Creek Valley Trail are on private property, said property is not for sale and owners are opposed to a parking lot;

WHEREAS, the existing Peters Creek trail entrance is in a residential neighborhood, and residents are opposed to a parking lot in the neighborhood;

WHEREAS, a parking lot might alleviate parking congestion temporarily, but the existence of a parking lot will attract greater numbers of park users, and, based on other neighborhoods’ experiences, eventually exceed supply;

WHEREAS, recommendations to locate the parking lot on State Park land on the far side of the private parcel would create an unmonitored attractive nuisance, and the neighborhood already has an unmonitored parking problem at the end of Thornton Street which is regularly littered with graffiti and trash as well as hypodermic needles and used condoms, both bio hazards;

WHEREAS, there are significant safety issues associated with any trail development:

- a. The road from the highway to the trailhead is steep and substandard - it does not meet code for required grade, width, guard rails, seismic stability etc.;
- b. School buses do not come up this hill; mail is not delivered up this hill and now even newspapers are not delivered up this hill- all because of road safety concerns.
- c. During the 2018 earthquake the road failed significantly in three places, and the steepest section of Chugach Park Drive was reduced to one lane for over a year;

Chugiak Community Council

May 16, 2024

furthermore during the Bear Mountain fire in the 1990s Peters Creek Subdivision was emergency evacuated.

- d. This substandard road is the only access for emergency vehicles and the only entrance and exit off the mountain for more than 60 residences; during winter months large portions of the road are reduced to a single lane because of snow accumulation.
- e. Near the “No Outlet” sign on Chugach Park Drive another sign warns “Winter Warning: 4 Wheel Drive or Chains Recommended” which is regularly ignored: stuck cars and jack-knifed trailers block traffic multiple times a year during icy and snowy winter months; and

WHEREAS, any increase in traffic to the Peters Creek trailhead would be unwise and would pose significant hazards to residents and visitors;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Chugiak Community Council supports the Alaska State Parks Department or any other involved government agency budgeting for, and expending, funds to produce an updated CSP Access Comprehensive Plan assessing all possible alternatives for CSP access throughout the entire area between Eagle River and Thunderbird Falls that includes feasibility and impacts to existing neighborhoods.

This resolution was passed on 16 May 2024 by a vote of ____ yea, and ____ nay.

Darryl Parks
President
Chugiak Community Council