

Birchwood Community Council

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MINUTES

BIRCHWOOD Community Council

Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 7-9:00 PM

Hybrid meeting: Beach Lake Ski Chalet

And via Zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88131919316?pwd=RDA5ZGYrSlhORFhyOUtCM2dTRmJXdz09>

1. Call to Order: 7:01 PM

2. **Approval of May Minutes:** Motion made by Patty to accept and 2nd by Carol: Minutes-approved

3. Announcements: *(reminder please limit presentations to 5 minutes)*

- a) Community Council Boundaries-10-year review project-need a volunteer to follow this project-Debbie will observe and Val to assist
- b) FCC representative needed to take over from Carol Perkins
- c) Liquor License renewals in our area-2 and overall for Eagle River-Chugiak-15 -if a CC does not support, assembly will hold a hearing after notification to the city clerk. No issues from BCC.
- d) Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan-assembly atty-lack of current plan—so late getting it renewed every 12 years. Girdwood went to assembly and city and wanted to do comp plan-outreach to us to do the same. Amt work and tech expertise-contacted Craig Lyons city planner—total cost is \$450K. Not ready for it. Past adhoc group-Chapter 10. Scott Myers-estimates \$400K..appropriated already \$200K. Girdwood finished theirs. Next year's budget finish Chugiak-Eagle River's. Girdwood hired someone to do their plan. Talk to Mike Edgerton-not equipped to do it internally. We can provide input.
- e) MOA and Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Rec Trail Survey-Shaun Sexton reached out to Kelly's office
- f) SOA Partners in Safety Open House Wednesday September 18-Loussac Lib 4th floor 3:30-6:30
- g) DOT survey will send out links to respond to BCC membership
- h) ALPAR \$500.00 cash grants to promote recycling

4. Reports:

- a) **FCC Report:** Arianna Bellizzi-FCC new Executive Director. FCC provides non-profit support to CC's funded by grant from MOA-new website 2025, easy and more visible to visually impaired individuals. FCC is hosting a Townhall training series—3 parts at Wilda Marston Theater 7-8PM or stream through U-Tube: September 23 Demystifying CC's, October 21 Navigating Community Council Meetings, November 18 Guiding Community Council Meetings. Get mx out. BCC has an open delegate position for FCC which is run by board of delegates. Meetings available via zoom. Spoke with assembly members and realizes our area is different. FCC function is to support local government. Meetings are held the 3rd Wed of every month 6-8PM.
- b) **CBERRRSA Road Board Report:** Matt Cruickshank -Starner Bridge update-on schedule for completion this summer—ceremony, reinforced the bank, code updated—sand blasted i-beams before new decking. Mil rate-need something from community- we have a fantastic model that is in jeopardy. There is a running deficit of \$4-500K per year. Presently pulling from the fund balance which is running out. There has been a significant increase of 25% in contract for 2024-2025 board: Debbie Ossiander, CERAB and Co-Chair; Matt Cruickshank, Co- Chair, Road Board rep; Ben Westveer: Secretary for Publicity, Carol Perkins: Parks and Rec Alt rep; Barbara Trost, Parks and Rec rep; Patty Friend, Member at large, and CERAB alternate; Val Jokela, Secretary-Treasurer, alternate Road Board

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snowplowing. \$8-900K deficit-mil rate has to increase. Funding comes from capital and operating budgets. If we increase to 1 mil---with operating budget, we cannot use capital funds and sacrifice the mil rate, and we don't do bonds in Eagle River or Chugiak. How to fund-through CBERRRSA capital. Through 1 mil collect-CBERRRSA passed a motion to have the assembly approve to raise operating tax cap to 1.4. We need 1.2 to remain in the black. Residential exemption---reduces tax base and senior exemption-forward thinking-settled on 1.4—If not approved by the voters May 2025, there will be a loss in services. Less overtime, longer responses for plow outs. Get out word to support tax increase. Need to hit deadlines to get them in place. Will get through this year from fund balance.

c)**Parks and Recreation Report:** Barbara Trost-Board of Sups unhappy-John Rodda was based out here, although assigned to Anchorage Parks and Rec: He retired and there have been a number of directors. Before an audit, folks in Anchorage did not know we have a separate budget. Have a new Deputy Director, Kelly Jorgenson and Project Manager Jeff Urbanus-don't understand the service area concept. The Board of Supervisors is a volunteer board. They met separately as they are not getting budget questions answered and the administration is not taking direction from board, as they are supposed to. User groups are also unhappy with how they are treated. Mac Center-FLAMI is not running the center correctly. There is an active embezzlement case. FLAMI did not have a valid contract and Anchorage did not know how it operates out here. Board is setting down ground rules for Parks and Rec staff-so the board is getting more information now. When dealing with Capital improvement projects, the board did not hear about them until voting on them. Barbara will send a list of Capital improvement projects to Val send out to BCC members. Get list out in advance-projects in May—6 projects are moving forward. There will be 10 projects talk about and rank at the next board of supervisors meeting. There is enough money for all projects except to build a new rec center at the cost of \$15M. Debbie concerned about autonomy issues. Meeting with MOA manager-Steve Romanelli is the board chair of sups. Confusion about how service area works. Board riled up...need more time for decisions. Wrangle CIP process. Have boundaries CP—can move MIL rate-Parks and Rec. CIP creates a set amount of funding. During COVID have extra money can set aside. Don't want to misuse those funds—Dog park-phase 1 and there is funding for phase 2. Project will go into next year. Mushing trails ready October-chicane gates. Trails runnable but not the final look—Dee Lake trail to parking-lot next year. Dan Traxinger Loretta French ballpark-artificial turf-6 years ago fields vacated. Softball org-partnership with Park and Rec and refurbished. Home fields for ER and Chugiak HS. With grant money got 4 new scoreboards which upgrades the fields to a national level. Project presented at August meeting. Lots of support-\$2M. Volunteer passion-When have a solid partner—facilities better used when you have a paying partner. Church leagues have also benefitted. Obtained grant of \$200K invested back into Loretta French-field 1 Chugiak and field 2 ER. Have softball tournaments during summer-best fields in the state.

d)**Chugiak Eagle River Advisory Board:** Debbie Ossiander -reps from each CC-give advice on any zoning issue. Approached by comp plan, and long-range transportation project.

e) **Treasurer's report:** \$204.00.

f) **CVFD:** Chief Scott Fisher- Provided a report from the summer months: June-110 volunteers, 10ALS, 93 calls, 543 calls. 4, 990 hours total of 28 674 hours. Attended Arctic Thunder and it was a good event to solicit recruits. May-104 volunteers, 11 ALS, 79 calls, total of 450 calls, 5, 123 hours. Structure fire Old Glenn- got the new radios—up to 58 radios. SEMT money paid for ½. Took money from ANC so took SMET money. \$100K loss per year. July-108 volunteers and 10 ALS, 77 responses 620 total, 47-EMS transports, 30 fire and other responses. Vol hour 5,046, Total

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33,720 hours. August-108 vol and 11 ALS, 88 calls 708 total, 57 EMS transports, 31 fire and other. 5,641 hours, with total 39, 061 hours to date. ISO audit-no results for 2-6 months. Debbie said CC's can help and support CVFD.

g) **Birchwood Patrol Report:** no report

h) **Legislative / Assembly / School board reports:**

Senator Kelly Merrick-legislative session-balanced the budget-did not go into savings. \$1700 PFD—without new taxes, senate finance committee, increase exemption for seniors and she stopped that. It would have been based upon the first \$450,000 value of a home. \$4M to keep homeless shelter open during summer-senate took it out-put money back in would have been additional 300 folks on the street. Increased penalties on fentanyl. Closed loop holes on catch and release. One time increase on BSA, worked on and learned the history home school funds. Can't use school allotment for religious schooling. Advanced resource development. Carried critical minerals bill to floor with Representative Saddler's assistance- Supported the Willow project-best interest for all of AK. Starner Bridge-project moving forward-used CIP budget and got funding from SOA-\$1M put in capital request.

Representative Saddler-bill to help Alaskans with disabilities. Gov vetoed-5 bills. Issues-Starner bridge. Settled with Randy McCain over Aurora Borealis and as a result were able to save \$3-4K to open the road. North ER Bridge-30-day project—provision for emergency access was made. Voyles Rd-intersection below grade—SOA responsibility going thru AMATS ER Loop Road-put in new curbs and sidewalks. South Birchwood Loop sidewalk access using capital funds.

Scott Myers-new MOA manager, AO2021-69-APD cameras, A) AO 2024-81-short term rentals: MOA to collect and report information on their room tax returns 2) AO 2024-82 track info- -scrap metal dealers-catalytic converters. 3)AO 2024-77-ability to remove items out of impounded vehicles. AO-2024-84 at risk, economic housing updates, tax incentives for multi-family affordable and workforce housing. AR2024-30---\$4M=solid waste keep open throughout summer. Volunteers-needed for the naming commission ---road in south anchorage needs naming. Board of sups at the Senior Center and Mark Littlefield working to gain support for another building. There are 200 on the waiting list Senior Center—needs additional beds. Voters support another building 40 beds. CIP community survey.

Kelly Lessens-school board members elected and were reassigned to CCC's. They will be sharing Birchwood CC. Strategy 2028 strategic plan: Early reading proficiency for grade 3: English proficiency from 32.4% May 2023 to 46.4% May 2028, Math proficiency grade 8 from 34.5% May 2023 to 1.5% May 2028 and College, Career Life ready will increase from 81% June 2023 to 90% June 2028. Budget passed back in Feb-revise and use 1- time funds to diminish accepted risk-school security measures. There was no closing the fiscal gap—\$86M shortfall-tasking administration with balance budget mid-Dec- clear path forward-how align efficient operations-right size school district-no detailed time line on school closures which will factor into the budget. Policy based upon what some principals are already doing on cell phones. Stakeholder feedback. Resolution BCV ABC-potential closure of school. Reflects comments: Kelly would like it emailed to full board. Concerns early dismissal elementary school students. Will look at data as school year progresses. Last school board meeting-kicked back governance committee.

5. Appearances

6. Old Business

a) **Birchwood Airport Master Plan:** Val Jokela-defer to October meeting.

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b) **Resolution in support of Birchwood ABC PTA** position to keep the school from closing-Matt/Debbie-Adopted and move to send resolution to the school board 2nd by Patty

7. New Business

a) Potential Eklutna Casino-defer to future meeting if we hear anything further

b) **Long Range Transportation Strategy**- Daniel McKenna-Foster-MOA-broke up into Girdwood, MOA proper-survey QR code—what do you want to see in public right of way? Develop key goals-establish public document. Easier to get funding. Process makes priorities heard. We have our own priorities-document our priorities. The Survey has an omission-Carroll Creek project without upgrade to Harry Mac Road. There is no way in the survey to address this dilemma for new road construction. Dan will update link and then send out to members. Debbie s-4 presentation-blatant examples of massive changes. ANC LRT-was not going to include traffic Glenn Hwy.

c) **Powder West** briefing-S4 Group-Craig Bennett and Kyle Smith-Eklutna: Comp plan showing use-rezone-transportation facility. Overall, Powder West-rezone-1. Comp plan-1/2 trans reserve all reserve, 2. Tract plat: Can have tract with multiple zoness, 3. Rezone. Next 2 weeks full submittal, public hearing mid-Dec-assembly opens- month to month and a half-record September 2025. BCC questioned where the utilities specifically where the water line would come from—clearly it would not come from Birchwood and confirmed by AWWU. There are 3 connections through Powder Ridge for sewer and water-No plans to bring...development at least a year from now—existing CUP-B3 business R3 residential. Mixed use. Residential 30 units per acre. CE-R-3. Case-can't separate them...just a rezone-no variations. Want a narrower road-variance needed -no variances needed for rezone. If rezone approved all 3 will go through. Roads have to be built to “full” standards. Connectivity-prior to any development access looked at. Developer builds the roads. Carroll Creek-outside road...are not up to developer. Current roads are adopted. CE- R-3 is what the comp plan recommends, and it provides the most flexibility. Platting Board will hold a public hearing on October 2 at 6:30PM Assembly Chambers.

d) **MTA fiberoptic** down Valley Road-right of way and utility easement-have to be in utility easement. Seems MTA has different rules than other utilities?

e) **Eklutna Community Clinic**-limited dental, optometry, health education and takes most insurances and is for the entire community-Brenda Hewitt

8. Action Items

9. **Adjournment:** Lexi moved to adjourn 8:58PM, seconded by Patty or Carol?