

EAGLE RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL
at Alpenglow Elementary School Library
Regular Meeting Agenda
December 11, 2024, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

1. Call to Order: (Quorum - 10 voting members of the Council)
2. Approval of Minutes: November 13, 2024, meeting. Motion Tom Freeman, second Paul Panarese, Passed.
3. Elected Officials Reports:
 - Alaska State Legislature: Senator Kelly Merrick
 - Thankful for reelection to the senate.
 - Seeking communication with constituents this session.
 - Governor’s budget is coming out on 12/15.
 - Bill: Daylight savings vs. Standard time
 - Bill: Servers aged 18-20 at restaurants can transport alcohol from the bar to customer’s tables.
 - Ballot measure 1 passed. Increased minimum wage to \$11.91 per hour.
 - Ballot measure 2 did not pass. Ranked choice voting remains unchanged.
 - Issue: AKDOT to upgrade or remove railing along Old Glenn Hwy (old split rail).
 - Issue: Purchase of snow disposal site
 - Senator Merrick is serving on the following Committees: Finance, Vice Chair of Labor and Commerce, Chair of Community and Regional Affairs.
 - School Board Report: Pat Higgins, ASD Board Member (907) 952-5871
 - Website: ASD Budget Balancing Simulation <https://anchorage-engage.abalancingact.com/anchorage-school-district-budget-balancing-simulation>
 - Closing neighborhood schools issue:
 - Originally seven schools were proposed to be eliminated.
 - Not closing buildings entirely; could find other ways to utilize them.
 - The School Board is voting on December 17, 2024.
 - Three schools were removed from the list: Bear Valley, Tudor, and Wonder Park.
 - Lake Hood, Baxter, Fire Lake, and Nunaka Valley are still on the list.
 - Closing neighborhood schools reduces parental involvement.
 - Biggest challenge to fill the open jobs. Teacher salaries are low compared to rest of the country; ASD does not have a defined benefit plan.
 - Retention of teaching grads coming out of UAA (5+ years) is really good, retention of teachers coming up from lower 48 is not good.
 - ASD currently has 50 long term substitute teachers.
 - There are two job openings for every potential applicant.
 - Curriculum review is overdue.
 - ERVCC is planning to do an “education-only” meeting in January.
 - Submit your questions to Tom Roth in advance if you would like.
 - Anchorage Assembly Report: Mark Littlefield
 - CAO and CEO are up for approval.
 - Waiver for procurement process on the Chugiak Senior Center, had another leak, and looking at entire system.
 - AO2024-125 Change elections from April to November to coincide with the regular November elections. Potential savings of \$341K every year. April elections participation is 20-25% vs. 60-65% in November.
 - AO2024-99 Stop any new Special Limitations and put existing SLs under review. Special Limitations restrain housing development. This bill could potentially allow more housing to be built.
 - AO2024-105 3% Sales tax and property tax reduction. Amendments still need to be voted on.

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- One amendment would make the tax permanent instead of seven years.
- The Administration added two projects to replace snow removal fleet and replace APD fleet.
 - CBERRSA, Girdwood, and Limited Road Service Areas would not benefit from Anchorage snow removal fleet project.
- AO2024-122 Tax Foreclosed Land Process. Attempt to align the Municipality code with Supreme Court ruling.
- AO2024-108 Passed. Provides free parking for those with handicap plates and signs. Increased fines for illegal parking in handicap spots.
- AO2024-101 Passed. Mandatory ID checks for alcohol sales at restaurants.
- Muni.org\plow for plowing updates.
- [Dashboard](#) for Anchorage Residential Build Permits
- Chugiak Senior Center
 - Seeking area-wide bond for phase 2 and phase 3.
 - They have a three-year waiting list and over 200 people on the waiting list.

4. New Business:

- Loretta French Park Presentation: Dan Traxinger
 - Project proposed to Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Rec capital improvements to turf the field at Loretta French Park (presentation attached).
 - History: Chugiak HS did not have fields to practice and play softball. Dan previously worked on Lions Park fields. Dan partnered with Parks and Rec and received a maintenance permit to work on improving the existing ball fields. Dan asked for community donations for Field #1. Dan and community volunteers replaced the infield soil and bases. They borrowed equipment and donated gas and used volunteer hours. Field #2 was done in 2019 and 2020. Prior to this work the fields had been dormant for over 10 years. Field #3 and Field #4 were also done. There are 5 fields total at the park, one being used by the Chinooks team.
Dan's volunteer partner was Carl Waters. Their vision was to provide local high schools with a home field to practice on and host home games. The secondary goal was to provide an opportunity for girls' softball to have summer location to play. Before the season each year 150-200 volunteer hours are put in to get the fields ready for play. The park is clean and dog poop is picked up. In 2020 they started playing games there then covid. In 2020 the Junior Olympic State Tournament was hosted at Loretta French Park.
Eagle River and Chugiak high schools have their home fields there now and have their own score boards. Twenty-five home games were played there this past season.
Alaska Futures tournament for younger kids is hosted there. Statewide 20-25 teams are coming in for this event.
A homerun derby and the Birchwood Jamboree are hosted during Bear Paw Festival. The Special Olympics Shriver Camp is also hosted there. It is a one-day youth-run softball camp.
The Great Alaska Showcase hosts 15-25 college coaches at Loretta French. They come up for a skills clinic and recruiting camp. The athletes statewide have gotten 10-15 scholarships per year.
Dan has provided 25 letters of support to the Chugiak-Eagle River Parks and Rec Board.
The Protect the Game program that trains and certifies veterans as umpires is run at Loretta French. In conjunction with Battle Fields to Ball Fields it is a free-of-charge program for vets to get certified.
The Birchwood Church League has 13 teams that play there.
 - Prior projects:
 - 2020 - Hardened the gravel in the dugouts and hardened the fields.
 - 2022 - Score boards (Purchased by \$51K public donation; Parks and Rec covered the installation cost and project oversight)

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- Batting cages (Purchased by \$38K public donation; Parks and Rec covered the installation cost and project oversight)
- Field Groomer (Purchased by \$11K grant)
- They are averaging 1000 hours per year of volunteer time, which can be estimated as \$20K per year of volunteer time. In return the community gets high school fields to practice on and the economic impact of having home games, tournaments, and camps there.
 - In 2025 they plan to use \$100-130K of donations to outfit the bating cages with nets, upgrading dugouts, backstop padding, additional field upgrades, and buy a sound system.
- Requesting that turf be installed for all four fields. Saves a bit of money on Tufus to condition fields and eliminates the need for weed control. Kids can start playing on the field earlier in the year. Their season starts in April. Turf is safer and allows longer seasons. Oberg has one turfed boys' baseball field, and the Chinook baseball field has turf. There are no turfed girls' softball fields in this area.
- Dan has requested \$2 Million from the Parks and Rec Capital Improvement Projects budget, to be voted on January 13, 2025.
- Motion to submit a letter of support for CIP request, Motion Pete Panarese, second Tom Freeman, Passed.
- ERVCC Resolution 2024-03 Council Boundary. Motion Mark Littlefield, second Pete Panarese, Passed.
 - Did not change the boundaries, other than adding 3 parcels that have no residences.

5. Committee Reports:

- Parks & Rec: Ruth Armstrong/Jared Goecker (Alt)
 - Sarah Davenport reported that 4 projects (of 21 projects) were approved as requested Capital Projects.
 - Areawide Playground Improvements
 - Beach Lake Trail Phase 1
 - Mirror Lake Single Track Jump Line and Beginner Connector
 - 10-Mile Mushing Trail
 - The Mirror Lake Master Plan was adopted by the Parks and Rec Board
- Federation Community Councils: Alex Jorgensen/Joy Webb (Alt)
 - DPW Capital Improvements changing community council involvement timeline. Surveys to begin in January to get feedback on time for development.
 - Money within FCC to help with Community Councils.
 - \$75 annually to help with membership outreach.
 - Help pay for bulk postal mailings.
 - Suggestion to add community council area to property tax post card.
- Emergency Preparedness: (Marvin) Dean Cox
 - Not Present
 - Reported that a few more people have started online training. Need around 10 people to be able to have an in-person training.
- Education: Tom Roth
 - Not present
 - Reported that the 2025 capital improvement bond will be on the April ballot.
- CBERRRSA: Crystal Kennedy/Arlene Rasic (Alt)
 - Board plans to ask assembly to raise mil rate cap, 2.4 mil rate instead of 2.1, on the April ballot. Excessive snowfall depleted the fund balance. On the January assembly agenda.
 - Improvements to Glenn Hwy ramps upcoming. Does not include Hiland or Artillery exits.
 - Crystal is the rep and would like to step down in February. Seat needs to be filled.

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- Arlene is already expired and needs replacement for alternate.
 - Carol Creek development near MAC center. CBERRRSA is working with PNC and developer to
 - Turner Bridge is opening.
 - Kevin Cross has requested that CBERRRSA enter an agreement with DOT to have McKenna plow Eagle River Road. DOT recently hired a contractor to do Eagle River area DOT roads (3-year contract).
 - Eagle River Loop Road mill and fill planned for 2025.
6. Comments from Eagle River Community Council Membership/Guests (3 minutes each)
- Mark Littlefield: Comment on Kelly Merricks report. Encouraged members to bring potential project request to the attention the CC, Parks and Rec, CBERRRSA. Create a wish list.
7. Upcoming Events:
- Next ERVCC meeting will be held on January 8, 2024, 6:30pm at Alpenglow Elementary School Library
8. Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

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