

Community Council:

At the root of Better Government



Bear Valley Community Council (BVCC)

Meeting Minutes

BVCC meeting – October 10, 2007

Compiled by Scott Pexton

The council meeting was held in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive. The meeting started at approximately 7:10 PM, with thirteen people including nine council members. Thus a quorum of members was present.

BVCC Chair Cheri Howland started the meeting, mentioned that it was fire safety week, and invited the municipal fire fighters from Fire station 10 to address the council.

Fire Safety

Three municipal fire fighters with Fire Station 10 attended the council meeting. Captain Steve introduced other fire crew members, Jeff, Bill, and Dick (one of them couldn't make the meeting). He said that with the change of season there will be increased use of wood stoves, heaters, and water heaters, etc. Lots of fires in homes start due to flammable materials placed or piled near sources of ignition, such as heaters and woodstoves. So it is a good idea to get chimneys cleaned and to clean up cluttered areas in households, particularly those areas near gas-burning appliances.

During the month of October, the Anchorage Fire Department frequently go to Anchorage schools to talk with kids about fire issues, such as discussing fire evacuation routes, use of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. Smoke and CO detectors should be checked to confirm proper functioning and to be sure batteries are working, etc. At least one CO detector should be on each floor of a building and a smoke detector should be in every room. Steve suggested avoiding placing CO detectors near a boiler room or a garage due to the potential for frequent false alarms.

A question was asked about whether Station 10 had been up to the Chugach State Park entrance parking area in upper Bear Valley at Grandview. The 5-car parking lot is sometimes overflowing with twenty to thirty cars, reducing access to some homes; some cars are being parked in clearly marked fire lanes/no parking areas. The fire fighters from Station 10 indicated they have driven up to the area recently, but did not see any cars or overcrowding parking issues at that time. Questions were asked about whether the fire department has a policy if cars are parked in fire lanes and/or blocking fire access to properties? One fireman suggested calling 911 to report blocked access and dispatch would prioritize the call and likely send someone from Fire Station 10 to investigate. Another suggestion was to report the problem to the Anchorage Police Department (APD) community liaison, Sergeant Denny Allen. Sgt. Allen's phone number is 786-2693 and his email address is dallen@ci.anchorage.ak.us.

Another question was asked about how long it takes to air out a garage after a vehicle is parked in it. Steve suggested a garage could usually be ventilated within a couple minutes or so by leaving an outside door open after the engine is shut off, before opening any interior doors connecting to the house. He also indicated that each fire engine vehicle has a gas detector in it, and recommended calling the fire department if you want to have them come out to check CO levels if you suspect a problem exists in your house or other structures. They recommended using CO detectors with visible readout that display the level of CO detected, such as Nighthawk or First Alert brands.

Cheri gave a brief update on Firewise Mitigation efforts underway in Bear Valley. The Division of Forestry plans to burn spruce bark beetle tree slash in Section 36 soon. Fire Station 10 will provide assistance with a fire support vehicle when the burn happens. Scott mentioned that an item recently aired on Channel 11 news indicating that the fire mitigation would oversee the burning of slash in Section 36 east of Heights Hill road and south (downhill) of Clarks Road. Cheri also

noted that the fire mitigation crews planned to remove dead trees and slash in the small unnamed park at the corner of Francesca and Nickleen and may do some work, as needed, at the Carl St. park parcel.

Joel asked a question about burn permits. Burn permits can be obtained on line from the municipal website at <http://afd.muni.org/IsTodayaBurnDay/tabid/61/Default.aspx> and click on the Apply Here link. To determine if it is an approved burn day, phone 267-5020 for a recorded message or go to <http://afd.muni.org/>.

Assembly Updates

None. Assembly members were not available.

Other Issues and Discussion

Cheri mentioned that she was seeking suggestions for a name for the Park area located near the corner of Francesca/Nickleen, and asked if anyone has any ideas or requests for park improvements or signage. She indicated that a parking area within the parcel might be considered by the municipal Parks & Recreation Department to improve access to the park parcel.

Cheri acknowledged and thanked Del Seeba for his continuous efforts to remove trash and debris along the roadways in Bear Valley and she mentioned that she has leftover yellow trash bags from the Bear Valley cleanup day last spring for anyone that wants them for picking up trash in the Bear Valley area.

A question was asked about the status of the mail boxes. Cheri has been working on it. She indicated that there were enough people interested that two 16-box units could be placed in the upper Bear Valley along Clarks Road and one 16-box unit placed in the lower Bear Valley area along Jamie Avenue. However, there might not be enough people to use up all of the mail box spaces so the costs for individuals might be more than anticipated as unused mail boxes would still need to be paid for. Cheri indicated that the accounting process to track amounts required for each person could be a bit challenging, but she would be willing to try doing the accounting for one year, but then the account would need to be settled and funds redistributed in the event of new buy-ins. Cheri indicated that boxes could be installed next spring after details are worked out with the postmaster.

Bear Valley Community Counsel Updates

Cheri presented an accounting summary of the BVCC funds, as follows:

- \$615 was collected during the year (October 2006 through September 2007)
- \$244 was spent during the year for park use fees for council meetings held in Storck Park and for website costs
- \$1381.82 is the total current amount in the BVCC fund now and is available for council activities.

Scott mentioned that an information meeting was being held October 10th and 11th about the Hillside District Plan (HDP) process. The meetings are to be held at Goldenview Elementary School from 6 to 9 PM. Scott passed out a couple of flyers about it. Scott also mentioned that a meeting of the Federation of Community Councils (FCC) would be held October 17th and that the BVCC Vice-Chair was delegated to participate in the FCC meetings. FCC funds are used to distribute council meeting notices and the meetings generally involve many of the 38 community councils in Anchorage. Topics can range from land use, community planning, fire and traffic issues to violent crime, drug use, and gang activity. Scott indicated that it can be interesting to hear how other councils handle various issues and to see what might work for similar issues in BV. It is also a good place to get a different perspective on the variety of issues faced by different communities in Anchorage.

Scott indicated that he would not be volunteering as a council officer again this term due to other commitments and hoped other volunteers would be interested. It was also mentioned that Jim Steele, the BVCC Secretary couldn't be at this meeting due to other commitments and that he also would not be volunteering for a council officer position, but would continue to make updates to the BVCC website.

Joel asked about the status of Section 36. Scott indicated that the Platting Board had approved the Section 36 subdivision plat with seven conditions and that according to the municipal surveyor and the planning office representative, the routes of two access roads would be staked soon. Once all the plat approval conditions are met, the plat is to be recorded at the Anchorage District Recorder's Office, which will make effective the park zoning designation, PLI-p for

Public Lands Institutions-park. He also indicated that hopefully that Section 36 would also be formally dedicated as a park, as dedication as a park would decrease chances for zoning changes by future administrative or Assembly actions.

A question was asked about whether there was much building activity going on in Bear Valley. Cheri mentioned that there wasn't any major activity going on that she was aware of, but that some homes were being built or remodeled near the top of Nickleen and various other areas around Bear Valley. Joel mentioned that he noticed a lot of new survey stakes along the road to Brewster's place in upper Bear Valley.

Cheri asked if any had any particular ideas or concerns to suggest for topics at future council meetings. No one mentioned any specific topics or concerns at this time.

Election Results for BVCC Council Officers

Cheri Howland was nominated and accepted the nomination for Council Chair. No other members volunteered or were nominated for any of the other council officer positions. A vote was held for the Council Chair position and Cheri Howland was unanimously elected with nine votes for the 2007-08 year (Oct. 07 to Oct. 08). Congratulations and thank you, Cheri!

BVCC members were encouraged to consider volunteering, and to invite or nominate other interested members, to serve as a council officer.

The current status of BVCC council officer positions is as follows:

Council Chair:	Cheri Howland
Vice Chair:	Vacant
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Vacant
Member-at-Large (HALO Representative):	Vacant
Member-at-Large (Assembly Liaison):	Vacant
Member-at-Large (Committee Coordinator)	Vacant

Elections can be held at future council meetings for vacant positions when members volunteer or are nominated and accept the opportunity to take proactive steps to resolve community concerns. It would be great to have more members actively participate and help out, especially those that live in the upper areas of Bear Valley as those areas have historically been somewhat under-represented in participation for council officer positions.

Other Issues

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

The next Bear Valley Community Council meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 14, 2007, from 7:00 – 9:00 PM in the Arts & Crafts Room at Bear Valley Elementary School.**

End of meeting minutes.