



Community Council:
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**Bear Valley Community Council (BVCC)
Meeting Notes
BVCC Meeting – April 08, 2009
Compiled by Scott Pexton**

The council meeting was held in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive and started at 7:06 pm. Approximately twenty-three people attended. A quorum was present as significantly more than eight council members attended the meeting.

BVCC Chair, Cheri Lipps welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Wade Lacey, Director of the Anchorage Police Department (APD) Neighborhood Crime Watch.

APD Neighborhood Crime Watch

Mr. Lacey mentioned that he is a retired police officer in Anchorage and a forty-two year resident. He said that Bear Valley does not have a high crime rate compared to other areas of Anchorage, but that similar types of crimes occur throughout the municipality. Neighborhood Crime Watch is an effective and proactive crime prevention program. It doesn't have a minimum or maximum number of homes requirement. It does require 50% of homes within a specified geographic area, but the geographic area can be small or quite large depending on the interests of the community. In some areas only two or three homes participate whereas in other areas up to 84 homes participate in a single neighborhood watch group.

Mr. Lacey passed around a one-page handout that listed recent types and amounts of crimes reported in Bear Valley. The handout indicated thirteen responses to an alarm, one animal issue, one burglary, eight parking violations, five regulation violations, eight suspicious vehicle concerns, two thefts, and two reports of vandalism.

Reasons to promote a crime watch program are that it helps maintain or improve the quality of life by encouraging safe neighborhoods, homes, and schools, and provides education and crime awareness. Crime watch is not confrontational and does not include community patrol or involve vigilante activities. It requires a willingness to report crimes and suspicious activities and encourages use of a phone tree and community e-mail notification. When something unusual is observed or noticed, phone the police first and then communicate with neighbors to increase awareness. Crime Watch neighborhoods will generally have at least one meeting annually in an informal setting, such as a barbeque or garage sale. This encourages neighbors to meet and talk to one another and to discuss common concerns.



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Mr. Lacey indicated the average burglary takes only four minutes to get into and out of a targeted home. Criminals focus on areas of opportunity and neighborhood watch programs seek to discourage those types of opportunities. Neighborhood Crime Watch signs tend to deter criminals as they advertise that residents are looking out for each other. Ways to protect your home and property include trimming trees and shrubbery to increase visibility, increased night-time lighting, motion-sensitive lighting, video cameras and web cams, owning dogs, and simply ensuring that doors and windows are adequately secured and locked. Other home security suggestions included:

- Using longer screws for door hinges and deadbolts to prevent doors from being kicked in;
- Preventing vertical as well as horizontal movement of sliding glass doors;
- Using security film for glass doors and windows;
- Checking the look of your house before entering – stay safe and get out if something looks out of place or if someone else is unexpectedly inside;
- Drive the neighborhood and look around as if you were a stranger – try to find areas to clean up and make safer;
- Do not leave garage door openers in the car or in visible areas – check to be sure the garage door has completely closed before driving off;
- Write down license plates and car descriptions if vehicles are parked in unusual places;
- Many thefts involve vehicles and may be avoided by locking the car and keeping valuables out of the car;
- Report suspicious activity – police log and note patterns which helps to solve many crimes.

Several additional home and neighborhood safety tips were mentioned, including:

- Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors and batteries twice per year
- Place fire extinguishers in the kitchen, the garage, and each bedroom;
- Don't hide a spare house key in obvious places (such as under a flower pot or welcome mat, etc.) – instead, carry two sets of keys with you, in case one is misplaced;
- Do not stop newspaper and mail deliveries to your home when out of town - have a trusted friend or family member pick it up instead;
- Don't let a lot of people know when you plan to be out of town;
- Put up Neighborhood Crime Watch signs; the sign location is determined by the participants and the municipality will pay the costs for the signs;
- Coordinate with mail carriers, garbage drivers and waste haulers, road maintenance workers, and newspaper deliverers, etc., as they may observe suspicious activities or note unusual circumstances.



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Anchorage Fire Department – Station 10 Fire Crew Update

Several members of AFD Station 10 Fire Crew attended the council meeting and supported the neighborhood watch program. They indicated that watchful neighbors report fires more quickly allowing fire fighters to prevent fires from spreading. They thanked the community in general for passing fire safety related bonds (Propositions 6 and 7) during recent voter elections.

Fire and safety tips included:

- Ensuring your home street address is visible to simplify searches for homes during an emergency response;
- Provide your phone number and location whenever making an emergency or 911 call so that the dispatcher can send responders to the right place if the phone call is disconnected;
- Clear brush and grasses away from houses and don't store firewood close to buildings;
- Use the wood lots or brush pick-up services to dispose of tree limbs and trimmings (Bear Valley Community Council plans to host a June 13th clean-up coordinated with brush pick-up and wood chipping during that same week);
- Obtain burn permits and follow burn permit instructions if you plan to burn beetle killed spruce materials – burn permits are available online at: <http://afd.muni.org/IsTodayaBurnDay/tabid/61/Default.aspx>, or can be obtained in person during work hours at individual fire stations;
- Don't use wood chips or bark mulch near your house as it is flammable;
- Don't use artificial wood chips as they may be toxic to dogs or other animals if they contain ground cocoa fibers.

BVCC Updates

Assembly Update: Scott Pexton indicated there wasn't much significant to report pertaining to Bear Valley – the next Assembly Meeting to be held April 14th in Assembly Chambers at the Loussac Library.

Hillside Area Land Owners Association (HALO) Update: Cheri indicated that Rodney Powell is seeking Bear Valley representatives to participate in HALO. Interested people should contact Rodney.

Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Laurie Holland indicated she missed the most recent FCC meeting.

BVCC Parks & Trails Committee and Section 36 Citizen's Advisor Committee Updates: Cheri and Laurie provide updates on various parks related activities.



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Storck Park: Cheri indicated BVCC and Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) are seeking up to 19 volunteers for approximately 30 minutes per day, two weeks per year, to help monitor Storck Park and to unlock and lock the entrance gate in the mornings and evenings. Storck Park gates should be opened daily by 7 am or sooner and closed at 10 pm or later. One objective is to reduce illicit activities such as partying, graffiti, and vandalism in the park by keeping people out during the late night hours. Cheri indicated that ideas for improving parking at Storck Park were being investigated by municipal SE Park District Manager, Shawna Popovici and that they were also looking into the concept of having a Storck Park summer host, possibly in conjunction with a school host at Bear Valley Elementary School. Cheri also encouraged members to sign up to participate in the BVCC Parks and Trails Committee.

Section 36: Laurie indicated that another Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting would be held at the offices of DOWL Engineers on August 14th at 5:30 pm to discuss and provide input towards creation of a Section 36 Master Plan. Laurie indicated that the committee had walked through portions of Section 36 during the last meeting. She indicated that it was somewhat of a long distance from Storck Park to the existing hiking trails north of Clarks' Road and that an additional potential parking area may provide better future access to the various trails within Section 36.

Open Forum

Cheri gave a variety of other community updates, including:

- The Bear Valley Community Association sponsors an annual 5 kilometer Fun Run in Bear Valley that tends to interrupt traffic along Clark's Road. Better coordination is encouraged.
- Seeking a woodworking volunteer to build a Kiosk for posting information near the mail boxes along Clark's Road near Kings Way.
- Seeking a presenter to discuss options and concerns for establishing a community composting facility in or near Bear Valley;
- Creek Cleanup Day will be May 9th this year, as sponsored by the Anchorage Waterways Council;
- Anchorage Citywide Cleanup will be held during May 4th through the 9th;
- Cheri suggested that BVCC give an award or plaque to a Bear Valley resident that dedicates a lot of time picking up trash along Clarks' Road and other areas of Bear Valley;
- Municipality of Anchorage 2010 Capital Projects Needs List: A list of various projects was passed out to rank priorities of different potential projects in Bear Valley or generally within the Anchorage Hillside area. BVCC members can fill out the list and return it directly to Cheri or submit it at the May 2009 BVCC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.



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The next Bear Valley Community Council meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 8, 2009, at 7:00 pm in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School.** Please forward any meeting topic ideas to Cheri.

Meeting minutes, notes, agendas and other BVCC topics of interest can be obtained by going to the BVCC web page at www.communitycouncils.org and selecting Bear Valley.