

Minutes from the Basher Community Council Meeting

March 31, 2009; 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

The meeting opened with approval of the 8/27/2008 Basher Community Council Meeting minutes.

Several guest speakers were invited to the evening meeting and took the floor immediately.

Mike Price of the Anchorage School District spoke to the council members regarding the upcoming Propositions #1, which if passed by public vote, would complete construction (new auditorium at Service High School and completion of the Girdwood School). The Eagle River High School sewer and water lines that were deferred in 2003 would also be completed under the proposition #1.

Proposition #2 would primarily focus monies on school building roofs, boilers and lighting system upgrades and/ or replacement. A community council member asked why new bleachers were slated for the auditorium, and Mr. Price replied that industry standards for construction of bleachers have changed from weaker materials to stronger ones for safety. The new bleachers will be steel.

Dwayne Adams representing Anchorage Tomorrow spoke to the council members regarding Proposition #3, #4, and #5. Proposition #3 is a road bond for collector and drainage area improvements. Proposition #4, a parks bond, focuses on improving trail continuity between the Chester Creek to Campbell Creek/ University-Medical District, to address safety issues with trails disconnected by city roads. A portion of Proposition #4 would address library remodeling. Finally, Proposition #5 will address emergency medical services for Anchorage.

LRSA Candidates Jeff Allen and Ted Trueblood were introduced to the community council. Eric Johnson was not able to attend. All candidates are running unopposed.

Chuck, the Lake Otis Station Safety Manager, USPS, was available for questions about mail service and address mismatches when the municipality changes address. Persons affected need to contact the Municipality to straighten out the mismatch. There will be new post boxes replacing the aging boxes for the Basher community members. The USPS will provide adequate notice of this change, with detailed instruction on new key retrieval at the Lake Otis Station. Rodney our postal delivery person has expressed concern with delivering mail to the boxes along the road that require him to be exposed to the woods behind him. There was some mention that some years ago residents requested street-side mail delivery, but were denied by the USPS. If residents want street-side delivery, then residents must request this and have rationale provided to the USPS. Some residents noted that there have been mailbox break-ins, as an additional safety issue. Another resident noted that the USPS does a good job maintaining winter access to the boxes – very good snow-

removal.

Rick Sinnot, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Wildlife, spoke regarding bear activity in the Stuckagain area and Far North Bicentennial Park. He reported that the bear-proof trash containers were a big success, with 100% participation in our area, and no reported bear-trash incidents. This year's focus for wildlife management in Anchorage: information dissemination with education is number one. He said that if an animal were an imminent threat, then he would kill the bear. He warned that there are early rising bears this year and to pay attention and let him know if there are any problem behaviors noted. Mr. Sinnot also shared that the Municipality has closed Rover Run during the summer season.

Even though he likes trails, Mr. Sinnot said that he and his colleagues are uncomfortable with some single track trails proposed for development in the Far North Bicentennial Park and Stuckagain area for the following reasons: bears travel to fish Campbell Creek through existing gaps, that are proposed for single track development. He has reservations about proposed trails that would close off these gaps that the bears go through to access food.

Mr. Sinnot shared that tight turning trails like these single track trails will lead to human safety issues in these areas that are known bear corridors. (Lisa Holzaphel) representing Single Track Advocates, asked Rick why he had changed his mind about the development of a single track trail on the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road, adjacent to Stuckagain community. Mr. Sinnot replied that he has never supported the idea, and if there was impression that he did, this was a misunderstanding. Rick referenced the radio collared bear tracking data that was still being collected in 2007, with research outcomes now available and revealing bear corridors. Mr. Sinnot also referenced a September 2008, trails meeting, in an Appendix A.

Ted Trueblood provided the LRSA update. 1.14 mills was budgeted last year and we have overspent this budget. He predicts that we should budget 1.25 mills this year. Primarily, the focus will be to grade and oil the road. LRSA maintains 10-miles of road. The lower road section .3 - .7 miles were slated for improvement, but vetoed by Governor Palin. Stedman and Stolz will put together a bill and those bills that were vetoed in 2008 are to be the top priority. Ted estimates that the project will require \$2.9 million for the road and off road trail. Ted recommends that all community members send e-mails of support for the project to their representative. Search for topic at legislative website: ".3 - .7 Campbell Airstrip Road." The parking areas along the road are the responsibility of the parks.

Sue Rodman with Wildfire Mitigation spoke about fire abatement activities such as a chipper day, as was provided last year. Due to minimal turnout last year, she asks that the community council survey interest and then request a chipper day, if it is something that the community would like. There would be mailbox notification if a chipper day is scheduled, the chipper would be free of charge and the location would be in the parking lot of the Chugach State Park. Ms. Rodman said that there are three alternate chipper locations in the Anchorage bowl that are available to us all the time.

Ms. Rodman recommends that residents call her office and ask for the Firewise Home Program, which will allow 70% of the costs of tree removal to be reimbursed by the Firewise Program. This program will likely begin in May. Reminder: Please prune spruce trees in the fall, NOT the spring, to maintain good tree health.

Ann Gabler, Basher community resident, brought the subject of the Parks Planning Trails Plan to the floor. The plan proposes a number of projects that affect the Campbell Airstrip Road as well as the trails. For more information she suggested that residents visit a collaborative site created by Basher community member Rick Liotta, of FPL Solutions, LLC.

Mr. Liotta explained that the site is expressly designed for dissemination of information regarding the Park Trails Plan, and allows Basher community residents to request a login account to make comment on the issues as well. He is willing to help in any way.

Go to: www.fplsolutions.com or, find the website through the Basher Community Council's website (Municipality of Anchorage Community Councils) and find the link to access the collaborative website.

Bruce Talbott, Basher community resident, explained some of the proposed trail projects in more detail. Project 12 is for safety reasons to get runners, walkers and bikes off the road. Many residents chimed in that they have concerns for safety for persons jogging, walking and biking on the Campbell Airstrip Road. The LRSA group added that the road is the foundation of the system and ought to be brought to DOT standards of safety as a first priority, before focusing on parking lot expansion/improvement, as these are secondary to the road safety issues. Community members questioned if it would be better to have a bike lane versus a parallel trail. Some residents expressed liking the idea of getting bikes off the road, while some acknowledged that not all bikes or runners will want to use the trail in the treed area (off road).

Bruce shared that project 15 is for improvements to Campbell Airstrip Trailhead Parking Lot, and Project 6 is for a Grade Separated Crossing at the North Bivouac Trailhead (something like an overpass bridge for trail traffic). Some residents asked about money to do the projects to improve the parking areas, when the road needs to be improved to allow safe access to these parking lots. Some residents asked if the Municipality should share greater burden of the cost of maintaining and performing road improvements since the city is proposing increased public usage of the park.

Many residents stated that the S. Bivouac Trailhead should remain open, and be cleared to increase safe access to Campbell Airstrip Road. The idea of a bridge or overpass to connect the N. Bivouac to the S. Bivouac seemed overly expensive and community members suggested selective clearing in the area of the S. Bivouac to mitigate safety concerns and cost. The speed limit on the road was also discussed as a mitigating factor.

Project 24 was discussed and had input from a resident with backyard to the power line. She expressed concern for safety reasons that development of this #24 trail

system will force already stressed bears from the bear corridor into her family's backyard. Another resident had questions to do with designing project 24 in the bear corridor.

Bruce Talbott provided information about the Municipality's website for public comment on the proposed trails. The comment deadline is April 29, 2009. The decision date will be May 14, 2009.

Ann Gabler shared that there is an Anchorage Bike Plan, and that this public document designates Campbell Airstrip Road as part of that bike plan. Community members expressed concern for road improvements to address public safety and liability and felt that the city should share the burden of cost.

For those interested in trails, Bruce announced that there are monthly evening trail meetings at the Campbell Science Center, held every first Monday of the month, commencing at 6:30 PM. There was consensus that not all of the trail projects could be discussed due to the lengthy agenda this evening. Community members were invited to remain and view the park maps of proposed trail projects.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.
