

Eklutna Valley Community Council
November 1, 2012
Meeting minutes

The meeting was presided over by council president Rick Sinnott and began at 7:00 p.m. The council met at the Sinnott's house. Sixteen council members attended: Steve and Cheryl Remme, Skip and Tena Cheely, Heather Marks-Cheely, James Riley, Buff and Ana Rix, Bob Reagan, Debbie and Steve Thon, Mary and Glen Keller, Helen Bohn, and Lisa and Rick Sinnott. Randy McCain, representing the Chugiak-Eagle River consortium, and Gail McCain attended. Tom Harrison and Keith Wilson, representing Chugach State Park, also attended.

The minutes of the October 27, 2011, meeting were approved with no changes. Lisa reported \$466.64 in the council's funds.

Title 21 update. Randy McCain reported on the most recent issues regarding the Chugiak-Eagle River consortium's efforts to draft a separate chapter for land use regulations under Title 21. The consortium is comprised of a representative from all six community councils in the Chugiak-Eagle River area. The consortium's primary goal is to ensure that local land use values are incorporated into the municipality's update of Title 21.

According to Randy, the Municipality of Anchorage's planning staff and the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission are not happy with the draft chapter. One major concern is the creation of a Chugiak-Eagle River advisory board. As envisioned by the consortium, the advisory board would consist of representatives from the six community councils plus a representative from Eklutna Village. As such it would continue the oversight and local representation from Chugiak-Eagle River constituents. However, it would only act in an advisory capacity to the Planning and Zoning Commission and municipal planning staff. The advisory board would not comment on all permits or land use plans; however, it would comment on permits and plans with a "regional" impact.

The second major concern is the consortium's requirement for the municipality to use a "C-E" prefix for all zoning districts in the Chugiak-Eagle River area. The concern here is that the municipality could revise a zoning district, for example R-9, in response to an Anchorage Bowl concern, and the revision would apply to all land zoned R-9, including in Chugiak and Eagle River. The consortium thinks local concerns are better met if the municipality is required to consider changes to the zoning districts separately. Again, the advisory board, upon notification that the municipality was planning to revise a zoning district, could not veto the change, but only give advice.

Randy had copies of a resolution passed by the Birchwood Community Council supporting the consortium's draft of Chapter 10, including the advisory board and the "C-E" prefix on zoning districts. He said Chugiak and Eagle River community councils had passed similar resolutions in support.

Members discussed the issue. A motion was made and seconded to send a resolution similar to Birchwood's. Members voted unanimously in favor.

Chugach State Park. Tom Harrison, the park's superintendant, and Ranger Keith Wilson discussed several recent developments in the park. The recent high water in

Eklutna Lake flooded the lakeside trail and waves caused by high winds caused severe damage to large sections of the trail. The lower trail used by bikers was most heavily damaged, but even sections of the main trail were badly eroded, although still usable. Park staff are still gathering information on the extent of damage and assessing potential for repairs. No repairs will be made before next summer. They hope to get funding through FEMA but, if that's not available, they'll need a legislative grant because the annual operating budget has no money for such extensive repairs. The park's operating budget is about \$1.3 million, with 71% of being personnel costs. Subtracting money for vehicles, fuel, and utilities leaves little for trail maintenance.

A concern was raised that some portions of the main trail were already badly eroded from ATV use. Skip mentioned that several years ago he had found a local business that would provide a grader and gas and he had volunteered his time to grade the main trail, but that the park had declined his offer. Skip seemed willing to help repair and grade the trail next summer, if he could put together the same deal. Harrison seemed interested but cautioned that he'd need to be given a detailed plan to review before he could issue a permit. Skip and Rick agreed to discuss the offer over the winter and, hopefully, draft a plan for grading the trail and repairing eroded sections. Harrison believed he could obtain gravel.

Harrison also discussed the new Eklutna ranger station, which has running water an oil furnace and cost \$300,000. It isn't ready for occupancy yet, but may be finished by December. Debbie asked if we might be able to use the building for community council meetings. Harrison told us to talk to Wilson about it.

The park has been working on plans for trails and access for several years. The biggest change in the Eklutna area is a proposed non-motorized trail along the south side of the lake, making a complete loop with the existing trail. There is no funding for this trail at this time. There may be funding for a new public-use cabin on the south side of the lake, and there will be a chance for public comment.

Steve Remme asked that the meeting minutes reflect the community's appreciation for the grooming of cross-country ski trails by Ranger Wilson and other staff the past two winters, and a general job well done. There was general consensus among members that Wilson is doing a great job.

Eklutna River Bridge update. Rick had asked the municipality for information on the Eklutna River Bridge and read the response from J. Rand Gaynor, the project administrator. According to Gaynor, the bridge has full state funding for design and construction. He's been told to proceed as quickly as possible with a construction contract bid and hopes to begin construction in summer 2014. Best-case scenario is that the bridge will be completed towards the end of summer 2015. There will be ample opportunities for the public to provide input next year during the design phase.

Future meetings. Members expressed a willingness to meet more often. We agreed to include a short community council meeting during the annual spring cleanup.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.