

Eklutna Valley Community Council
June 26, 2014
Meeting minutes

The meeting was presided over by council president Rick Sinnott and began at 7:05 p.m. The council met at the new Eklutna ranger station. Eighteen council members attended: Steve Remme, Tena Cheely, Heather Marks-Cheely, Debbie and Steve Thon, Vicki and Keith Darby, Margan Grover, Randy Bangerter, Richard and Bernice Burton, and Lisa and Rick Sinnott. Two candidates for state office were also present: Gretchen Wehmhoff and Patricia Chesbro.

The minutes of the October 16, 2013, meeting were approved with no changes. Lisa reported \$466.64 in the council's funds.

Rick passed on a message from Ranger Keith Wilson, reminding members that only dead and down wood could be gathered in Chugach State Park and it could only be burned in an approved park campsite. Both candidates introduced themselves and made some brief statements.

Improving Internet service. EVCC sent a letter to MTA asking the company to consider increasing Internet speeds in our area. Currently, the fastest speed available is 768K. Many neighborhoods in other parts of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley have access to eight times faster speeds through MTA. According to our April 2014 survey of 23 Eklutna Valley households (18 or 78% responded), all but one use MTA as their Internet provider. Nineteen people from these households use the Internet at home for business (average = 1.1/household). Sixty people use the Internet at home for communication and recreation (average = 3.3/household). Of the 17 households using MTA service, 13 were paying for the highest speed available (768K), 2 thought they had 512K, and 2 weren't sure. All 18 households polled indicated a willingness to upgrade to a faster speed if it was available at a reasonable price.

MTA responded, claiming that extending fiber optic cable up Eklutna Valley would cost about \$500,000 and their revenues won't justify the investment. In the past MTA has relied on government grants to provide service to small, rural communities. Those grants have dried up. However, the company is working with the FCC and our congressional delegation to have them reauthorized.

Capital Improvement Survey. Every year Anchorage's community councils are asked to rank a list of proposed projects for their areas, although none have funding at this time. There are three categories. EVCC officers ranked Eagle River/Chugiak road and drainage rehabilitation as first priority for Project Management and Engineering. We ranked the Eklutna Lake Road upgrade as first priority for the State of Alaska. Finally, we ranked forest health and park safety as first priority for Parks and Recreation.

Updating the community council charter. As required by the municipality, EVCC is updating our bylaws. A draft of the new bylaws were read and discussed. Several revisions were suggested and all of these are reflected in the revised draft (attached). Because the bylaws require that any vote to revise bylaws be conducted at a second community council meeting, we will be meeting again to vote on the new bylaws. Most members at this meeting thought the end of August was the best time for a follow-up meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.