

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 6:30pm
REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Virtual Meeting
MEETING MINUTES – Approved November 11, 2020

Call to order at 6:38pm by David W. Schade.
Quorum was established.

Introductions and Announcements:

Ballot Measure 1, Alaska's Fair Share Act, Mr. Harry Crawford

See <https://alaskasfairshare.com> for more information.

Mr. Crawford spoke in support of Ballot Measure 1. Mr. Crawford was a member of the Legislature from 2000-2010 including a member of the Finance Committee. Unlike other states, Alaska taxes the oil industry on net profit rather than gross production. Conoco Phillips experienced \$26/barrel profit. Due to the structure of Alaska taxes, the state had a negative credit (i.e. we pay oil companies to take Alaska's oil).

Questions from the attendees included:

- What about projected loss of 6300 jobs? In past years, there were 15,000 oil company employees. We are currently at 9,000 employees, the lowest since the '70s. This is due to low demand. Oil company projects are on hold due to low demand, not the threat of this measure.

Mike Risinger, Independent Candidate for Alaska House District 14

See <https://www.mikerisinger.com> for more information.

Mr. Risinger introduced himself. He is a member of the AK National Guard and former Service High School teacher. He is currently involved in education through Fabrication Lab.

Questions from the attendees included:

- What solutions are available for the budget deficit? We need to look at new tax sources and if done correctly, cuts to the budget.

Jim Canitz, Democratic Candidate for Alaska State House District 13

See <https://www.canitzforalaska.com/> or his Facebook page for more information.

Mr. Canitz introduced himself. He is not a 'tax and spend' Democrat. He wants to protect the PFD, supports Ballot Measure 1 and wants new ideas on the budget.

Meeting Minutes Approval: Draft meeting minutes from May 13, 2020 and September 9, 2020 meetings were reviewed. Motion to approve by Pete Panarese; seconded by Julie Jessen. Both approved by a vote of 17 yea, 0 nay and 0 abstain.

Treasurers Report: Ruth Armstrong

Checking account balance is \$436.50. Outstanding bills include PO Box repayment \$316.00 for last year and 6 month fee this year, resulting in balance of \$112.50. Checking account fee is \$10/month.

We currently have funds to pay for PO Box for an additional 6 months. If we wait 6 months to pay PO Box, the account will have been depleted by monthly bank fees. Motion by Joy Webb, seconded by Pete Panarese to pay an additional 6 months on PO Box now. Approved by a vote of 17 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain. We will then be out of cash. We can obtain \$75/year from Federation office for outreach but will need an alternative source of funds in the future.

New Business:

2021 Recreational Trails Program – Proposal for the Eagle River Nature Center, Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following:

- The Eagle River Nature Center building has been closed due to coronavirus. However, the Nature Center has been a very popular recreation facility, particularly with families.
- A new, lower parking lot has been opened which provides lower access to trails. A newly paved road provides access to the parking lot.

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- There are more funding options available than ever before, including CARES Act and others. The roof to the building will be replaced and the salmon viewing deck will be repaired.
- Requesting support for a grant application for \$49,200 to add a walkway from the new parking lot to the Nature Center building, and for gravel and boardwalk to maintain trails near the building.
- Thanks to Ms. Crystal Kennedy (Anchorage Assembly representative) for her support in lining up sources of funding for the ER Nature Center.

Questions from attendees included:

- Could this grant go to a small business in need instead? Are we using CARES Act money that could support a business? The funding will ultimately go to local businesses who will perform the work. We had to be very competitive to receive this funding. We've had triple the use of outdoor recreational facilities with the pandemic and this helps support residents' use of the Center.
- The CARES Act funding should go to impacted businesses, not recreational facilities. The program providing this funding is from the state parks (i.e. taxes from our recreational trails). The funding source is not the federal CARES Act program.
- The Lions Club recently had the tennis courts resurfaced. All of this work was done with volunteers rather than funding. Can these improvements be made by volunteers/in-kind donations instead? The recent Lions Club improvements have taken many years of efforts to reach fruition and the CER Streets Dept. has been involved.

Motion by Julie Jessen to support Resolution No. 2020-2 providing ERVCC input on the 2021 Recreational Trails Program Proposal funding of \$49,200 for the Eagle River Nature Center, seconded by Ruth Armstrong. The Resolution was approved by a vote of 16 yea, 0 nay, and 1 abstain.

Cemetery Site Selection: Pete Panarese (ER Parks & Rec)

Mr. Panarese provided the Cemetery Site Selection committee update:

- Board of Supervisors disapproved several proposed sites due to them being unsuitable.
- One potential site is across from ER High School on Yosemite.
- The Committee is pleased with their progress. However, considerable work remains to confirm suitability of various locations.
- The Boutet Company is doing the site investigation.
- Public input will be sought in the future.

MOA Traffic Calming Projects

It is difficult to have streets approved for "traffic calming." No Eagle River Valley roads are included on the current project list. More information is available on links below.

[CLICK HERE](#) for MOA cover letter regarding Traffic Calming streets within each community council.

[CLICK HERE](#) for MOA list of Traffic Calming qualified streets within each community council.

[CLICK HERE](#) for MOA list of Traffic Calming qualified streets within each community council.

AO 2020-85 - AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 23 TO ADOPT THE (FOLLOWING) CODES AND LOCAL AMENDMENTS (Re: Sprinkler systems in homes) – Crystal Kennedy, Anchorage Assembly

Ms. Kennedy provided the following update on the proposed ordinance:

- The proposed changes to Title 23 include many changes. The residential sprinkler requirement is one of the more controversial items.
- The Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board will meet again this week (October 17) to provide review and suggestions. We need a representative at this meeting (*Note: Steve Skipper is no longer able to attend. David Schade or Julie Jessen will fill in until a new representative is chosen.*)
- Another Assembly work session will be held as well. There is considerable pushback on this ordinance.
- Also included is a requirement for electrical rough-in in garages for electric vehicles.

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Questions from meeting participants included:

- In Response Letter 092220 (*See agenda for link*), will the four options be an amendment to the ordinance? Another version of the ordinance may be proposed. There are other options to the sprinklers, but they are either unavailable or would be too expensive. The sprinkler requirement is for new construction or remodels and will not be retroactive.
- The new sprinkler requirement is driven nationally by fire marshals.

Eagle River Valley Community Council Elections

- Education position is now open. Michael Tavoriero resigned effective immediately due to other commitments.
- CER Consortium/Advisory Board position is also available. Steve Skipper's term has ended.

Old Business:

Crystal Kennedy - Anchorage Assembly

Ms. Kennedy provided the following update about CARES Act funding:

- CARES Act funding has been allocated. Municipality took the largest approved expenditure in the budget and applied funds to it (e.g. first responder pay, \$61M) to work around CARES' requirements. Then moved the funds already allocated to these items into the General Fund budget.
- \$156M funding has been allocated to building clinic in Girdwood, trails, business, rent/mortgage relief and childcare, \$10M for small businesses including franchises.
- See MOA website COVID/CARES Act for more information and to apply for funds.
- The funding is allocated to different industries.

Other updates from Ms. Kennedy included:

- Budget will be proposed in November 4 session.
- Upon resignation by the mayor, there is a process the Assembly follows to choose the interim mayor. Usually the chair of the Assembly becomes the mayor, but a different member may be chosen. The Assembly will talk about re-organizing and choosing the interim mayor on October 23. A mayoral election can be held no sooner than 90 days after resignation. Hope election of a new mayor will be on the April ballot.
- Chris Constant (Assembly) warned me that he is working on forcing Girdwood and Chugiak-Eagle River into building regulation inspection requirements that currently apply only to Anchorage. The current plan is to put a measure on the ballot to dissolve the current Building Safety Service Area. Then the Assembly can redefine the service area to include Girdwood, Chugiak and Eagle River and make these changes without input from the public. I am trying to avoid this by introducing legislation that would establish an ER Planning & Zoning Commission, similar to ER Parks & Rec and CER Road Board. There is no Eagle River representative on the current Planning & Zoning Commission. Goal is to have this legislation drafted by December 1.

School Board Report – Deena Mitchell, Anchorage School Board

Ms. Mitchell provided the following update on ASD.

- School board reviews coronavirus metrics on the 1st and 15th of each month, to determine possible return to in-school learning. See ASD website for more information on the metrics.
- Current proposal is for in-school learning for pre-K through 2nd grade on volunteer basis, after required coronavirus metrics have been met.
- See Atlantic Monthly article mentioned here: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/10/schools-arent-superspreaders/616669/>
- Some sports programs are returning.
- Free meals will continue to be served through the end of the year. See ASD website for more information.
- Free flu shots are available. See ASD website for details.
- The school board will determine which facility will be named after late Senator Betty Davis.

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- Goals development is planned. Public input will be gathered.
- Great AK Shakeout – see ASD website for details.
- October 16 is end of quarter.
- It is Principal Appreciation month. Consider thanking your children's principal.
- Tuesday, October 20 is the next school board meeting.
- On October 21-22, virtual parent-teacher conferences will be held.

Questions from meeting participants included:

- What is the status of rebuilding Eagle River Elementary and Gruenig Middle Schools? Will send an email update or will address at next month's meeting.
- Mat-Su Valley is holding in-person classes. Why can they do it and we cannot? We're a larger urban center. We have different demographics that must be considered.
- How soon after metrics are met will students return to school? Possibly within a few weeks. Will look into this further.
- Teachers are working at school now. Has there been coronavirus spread at the schools? Yes, there have been some cases and school(s) impacted were closed a few days.

Senator Lora Reinbold, Alaska State Legislature

Update provided by Kelli Toth from Senator Reinbold's staff:

- The focus going into session will be on reducing the budget and working on constituent issues.
- Please call the office with COVID impacts on individuals.
- Support for in-person learning in schools,
- Development of a disaster recovery plan.
- Hiland Rd. guardrail
- Additional \$300 in unemployment insurance.

Eagle River Community Patrol – Cliff Cook

Mr. Cook provided the following update:

- In September, patrols were conducted for 37 hours covering 430 miles.
- APD is restarting community policing and will join community council meetings again.
- It's time to confirm you have winter safety equipment in your vehicle.
- Light bulb bandit has been stealing outdoor lightbulbs. No confirmation but this could be someone trying to determine if house is uninhabited and could be a future target for robbery. If your neighbor is out-of-town and their lights are stolen, consider replacing them.
- Bears are still out. Watch your trashcans.
- Report all crime to APD on 911, 311 or online.
- No increases in crime in our area. Many people are at home due to COVID closures.

Committee Reports:

CBERRRSA (Road Board): James McCurtain

An update on summer activities will be provided at the November meeting.

Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Steve Skipper – No report.

Education: No report.

Federation of Community Councils – Tom Freeman – No report.

Parks and Rec: Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

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- The Mac Center is under new management. They received an \$80,000 donation. A new Zamboni has been purchased. Earthquake repairs are still underway.
- There have been many improvements in the Beach Lake area for hiking and fishing.
- Gradual improvements are underway in the Chugach area including development of trails.

Platting and Zoning: Pete Panarese

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- Overlook Estates development is underway near MP 8 on Eagle River Rd. On the other side of the road is additional development including twenty-eight 1+ acre lots. These are well/septic lots. The plan includes public access easements. This was formerly a vehicle salvage yard with over 100 vehicles. I have inquired if clean-up has been done for this area.
- A new approach on Eagle River Rd. has been included as part of Overlook Estates II providing access for up to 3 more driveways. Overlook Estates III has only one access point.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Next meeting is on November 11, 6:30pm, Virtual using Zoom.

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: David Schade (2021); Vice President: Julie Jessen(2022); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2021); Education: open; Parks & Rec: Pete Panarese (2021); C/ER Consortium: open; Platting & Zoning: Pete Panarese (2021); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2020); Road Board: James McCurtain(2022)/Arlene Rasic – Alt (2022); Secretary: Joy Webb (2021)