

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting  
Wednesday, May 12, 2021 6:30pm  
REGULAR MEETING  
Zoom Virtual Meeting  
MEETING MINUTES – Approved October 13, 2021

Call to order at 6:33pm by David W. Schade.

Quorum was established.

Federation webpage: [Federation of Community Councils](#)

**Introductions and Announcements:** none

**Meeting Minutes Approval:** Draft meeting minutes from April 14, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve by Tom Freeman; seconded by Pete Panarese. Approved by unanimous vote.

**New Business:**

**Luke Waack, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)**

Mr. Waack introduced himself and provided the following update:

- JBER is hiring for 150 jobs in Non-Appropriated Funds (NAF) positions. NAF employees work in retail, childcare, and recreation programs. Part-time and full-time positions with benefits are available. Jobseekers can visit <https://jberlife.com/jobs>
- The JBER Pharmacy Facebook page is: JBER Pharmacy Facebook @JBERPharmacy
- *Exercise Northern Edge* ends May 14. This was a large exercise with air, land and sea operations from north of Fairbanks to Gulf of Alaska to Cold Bay involving four branches of the military. Thank you for your patience with the increased aircraft traffic/noise and approximately 2,500 additional people on-base/in town for this event.
- Gate closings are scheduled:
  - Post Rd gate will be closed until July 2
  - Boniface gate will be closed July 3 to mid-August
- Eielson Air Show (near Fairbanks) will be held July 31 - August 1, 2021.
- The next JBER Open House & Air Show will be July 30-31, 2022.
- 9th Army Band has Anchorage concerts during May. See their Facebook! JBER.PA@us.af.mil for information.
- Check out the JBER Facebook page for additional information <https://m.facebook.com/JBERAK/>

**The Alaska Center, Solarize Anchorage**

Anchorage Solarize Program, EVER (Eklutna Valley to Eagle River)

Susan Densmore, Community Lead for EVER, email: [solarizeeagleriver@gmail.com](mailto:solarizeeagleriver@gmail.com)

Shanelle Afcan, Anchorage Community Manager, email: [shanelle@akcenter.org](mailto:shanelle@akcenter.org)

Ms. Densmore and Ms. Afcan introduced themselves and provided the following update:

- The Alaska Center is facilitating a community-wide effort to adopt solar energy. The more participants, the greater the savings for solar panels and installation. Federal tax credits reduce costs as well.
- <https://akcenter.org/climate-clean-energy/solarize/solarize-ever/>
- To view the first Solar Informational about the Anchorage Solarize Program, EVER see: <https://fb.watch/5sfzVD4LjD/>
- To arrange a complimentary site assessment at your home or business, sign up at: <https://secure.everyaction.com/UcQLTVMFh0GUIHVtrErQVQ2>
- Sign up to participate in the program by August 20.
- Volunteers are also needed to help publicize this opportunity. If interested, respond to email addresses above.

Comments and questions included:

- Ms. Julie Jessen shared her experience with the complimentary installation estimate and decision to enroll.
- How do you deal with snow? The snow tends to slide off the dark panels. Ms. Densmore uses a foam brush to lightly push against snow and it tends to come off all the panels at once.

### **Application for Marijuana Establishment License**

Alice's at 12111 Horseshoe Drive, Eagle River

- An application to establish a marijuana shop in Eagle River has been partially submitted to the state Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office. Once the application is complete, it will move to "Queue to be Reviewed."
- Location is near Trustworthy Hardware in a warehouse building.
- Eagle River's restrictions on the location of such shops may apply since there is a religious organization housed above Trustworthy Hardware building.
- Community members agreed to postpone action on this matter until the application is complete and more information about the plans is available.

### **Eagle River Valley Community Council Elections**

Open positions on our Council board include:

- Education
- Platting & Zoning
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Eagle River/Chugiak Parks & Rec - alternate
- Federation of Community Councils - alternate
- After some discussion, Pete Panarese nominated Julie Jessen, Ruth Armstrong, and Joy Webb to remain on the Board. Tom Freeman seconded the motion.
- By unanimous vote, Julie Jessen was chosen as President, Ruth Armstrong will remain as Treasurer and serve as alternate for Pete Panarese on the Parks & Recreation Board, and Joy Webb will remain as Secretary.
- Open positions are Vice-President, Education and Federation of Community Councils alternate.
- David W. Schade was recognized by the group for serving as President for many years. He was thanked for his leadership and for his contributions to our community.

### **Old Business:**

**Crystal Kennedy or Jamie Allard - Anchorage Assembly** – No report

[Crystal.Kennedy@anchorageak.gov](mailto:Crystal.Kennedy@anchorageak.gov), 907-351-1430

### **School Board Report – Pat Higgins, Anchorage School Board**

Mr. Higgins provided the following update:

- School board members are assigned to visit community councils and share information about Anchorage School District and the Board activities. Mr. Higgins is our assigned representative.
- Mr. Higgins was elected in the April elections. He served previously on the school board from 2008-2017. There are four new members on the board.
- Some federal funds are available to support summer school. It has been difficult to find teachers. If interested, see ASD website for more information and to register.
- On May 3, the superintendent reported on low third grade reading scores. The focus will be on phonics going forward. The phonics approach is shown to be effective in teaching reading skills.
- There is a retreat scheduled in June for the school board. Topics will include
  - the role of the board,
  - how to manage the issues faced by ASD, and
  - replacement of the superintendent as her contract is ending and will not be renewed.
- The financial situation for ASD is very challenging. We lost 6000 students this year and don't know how many will return to public schools in the fall.
- Mr. Higgins reiterated that his focus is on the students and that the board is accountable to the residents.

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Questions for Mr. Higgins included:

- What is the status of Gruening Middle School repairs? Did a contractor hit a water main? The water main had a valve that required replacement. Bond funding can be redirected for this repair if this was an unforeseen problem. If contractor caused damage, they will be liable for repairs. Both Greuning and Eagle River Elementary are scheduled to re-open in fall, 2021.
- We no longer have a school board member from Eagle River. Will you represent our interests? The school board switched some time ago so that all school board members represent all students and families. There is no geographic alignment to the school board positions.
- Recently parents were told they cannot volunteer at school unless they have been vaccinated. Why are teachers allowed without vaccination if parents are not? It is an employment issue for the teachers. The board has not discussed this topic yet. The primary focus is on the safety of the children, using the best recommendations from CDC.
- Superintendent said that masks are no longer required while students are outside, but some school principals are overruling this and requiring masks. The school year is almost over so there isn't time to adequately address this now. Schools should be consistent.

### **Eagle River Community Patrol – Cliff Cook**

Mr. Cook provided the following update:

- Patrols were conducted for 70.5 hours covering 621 miles.
- Mail theft is an issue. If you don't have a locked box, consider getting one.
- We are experiencing the usual spring/summer increase in transients between Eagle River and the valley. Check that your garage doors and vehicles are locked each evening.
- Trailheads are a target area for smash and grab. Never leave valuables in sight. Keep your valuables with you or at home.
- Bears are out so be 'bear aware' when you are outside. Keep trash secure.
- We have an increase in lynx in the area. Cats and small dogs are a target.
- There is an updated list of APD liaisons but they have not started attending the community council meetings yet.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **CBERRRSA (Road Board): James McCurtain/ Arlene Rasic**

[James.mccurtain@hotmail.com](mailto:James.mccurtain@hotmail.com), 907-301-4042

Mr. McCurtain provided the following update:

- Street sweeping is underway and expected to complete by the end of May.
- Contact Mr. McCurtain or call Streets & Maintenance directly if you think your street has been missed.
- Some of this year's planned projects include Hillcrest Rd near Chugiak and the road leading to Fred Meyer.
- Repairs on Eagle River Lane are expected to begin in June or July. Budgeted amount is \$900,000 for this work.
- Send CIP suggestions to Mr. McCurtain. They probably won't be addressed this year but can be added to proposed work for next year.

#### **Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board – Julie Jessen**

- A public meeting is scheduled to present findings of the Preliminary Site Selection Study for Chugiak/Eagle River Community Cemetery. The public will also have an opportunity to provide comments and input. Please join us: Wednesday, May 19, 7:00pm via Zoom. <https://Zoom.us>  
Meeting ID: 988 1467 8091, Passcode: 740675

**Education:** See Mr. Higgins' report from Anchorage School Board.

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### **Federation of Community Councils – Tom Freeman**

Mr. Freeman's update included:

- Susan from the Federation office is retiring. This is her last week.
- Jane Sauget is a new staff member at the Federation office.
- There are four new school board members.
- 87% of the ASD staff has been vaccinated.
- Community councils may use school buildings for meetings again.

### **Parks and Rec: Pete Panarese**

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- The board has been very busy recently with 3 meetings and 2 workshops.
- There are two primary issues the board is dealing with: Mirror Lake mountain bike area and the proposed dog park near Peters Creek.
- Five community councils are represented in the Eagle River-Chugiak Parks and Recreation Board. These are South Fork, Birchwood, Chugiak, Eagle River and Eagle River Valley. Representatives from each council participate on the board. Some councils have many facilities while others, such as ours and South Fork, have few.
- The board walked the proposed dog park site. A face-to-face meeting is scheduled May 27, 7:00pm, at Town Center to solicit feedback on the proposed site. All are welcome.
- What is the process to onboard Ruth Armstrong as Mr. Panarese's alternate? Ms. Armstrong should submit an electronic board application via the Mayor's office under boards and commissions link. Provide an official letter of appointment by the council identifying Ms. Armstrong as the alternate, her resume and a copy of the application submittal verification to Karen Richards, Manager, ER/C Parks & Recreation.

### **Planning and Zoning: Pete Panarese**

#### **Shepherd home construction - Fire safety requirements**

#### **Donabelle Shepherd**

Ms. Shepherd provided an update regarding Note #6 on plat for the Shepherd family, discussed at our last two meetings. This is Case S12610, MOA Platting Board.

- The staff report regarding removal of Note #6 has been released. It recommends approval.
- Public comment is not anticipated at the public hearing on May 19.
- Ms. Shepherd thanked the members of the council for supporting her in having this issue resolved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.

Next meeting is on September 8, 6:30pm, Zoom or In-person - TBD.

Reminder: We do not hold meetings from June-August unless a topic warrants a special meeting.

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: David Schade (2021); Vice President: Julie Jessen(2022); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2021); Education: open; Parks & Rec: Pete Panarese (2023); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2022); Planning & Zoning: Pete Panarese (2021); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2023); Road Board: James McCurtain(2022)/Arlene Rasic – Alt (2022); Secretary: Joy Webb (2021)