

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting  
Wednesday, November 10, 2021 6:30pm  
REGULAR MEETING  
Zoom Virtual Meeting  
MEETING MINUTES – Approved December 8, 2021

Call to order at 6:32pm by Julie Jessen.

Quorum was established: 18 members; 17 guests in attendance.

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

**Introductions and Announcements:** none

**Meeting Minutes Approval:** Draft meeting minutes from October 13 meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve by Tom Freeman; seconded by Pete Panarese. Approved by a vote of 18 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain.

**New Business:**

**Kris A. Langley**

**kristen.langley@anchorageak.gov 907-343-8479**

**Municipality of Anchorage, Traffic Engineering Dept.**

Ms. Langley introduced herself and shared the following information:

- The Traffic Engineering Dept is currently short-staffed and under a hiring freeze.
- Eagle River Ln traffic calming request was not performed late summer 2021 due to short staffing situation. Hope to perform this in early spring, 2022. Ms. Langley is familiar with ER Lane traffic. It would probably meet criteria for some type of improvements however funding is not available from Anchorage bonds. Permanent radar signs are likely an appropriate solution at \$100,000-\$120,000 cost.
- 100% of funding for remediation (\$500,000) comes from Anchorage bowl Roads & Services area bonds so Eagle River is excluded from this funding. The bond package would require amendment to include Eagle River.
- Four way stop signs are strongly discouraged for traffic calming. Radar speed signs, speed cushion/humps are more effective.
- Traffic calming data can be collected area wide but if an issue is found, we don't have bond funds to fix ER issues.
- Traffic Dept. accepts community council input on priorities.
- Annual process includes:
  - Spring-September – data collection
  - November-December – evaluate and score all projects
  - Early spring – send list of qualified (and excluded) projects to elected officials and community councils. Community councils can ask that priorities be adjusted.
  - Engineers work on plans for following year. Typically there is 1.5 year lag until approved projects start.
- It's very helpful if community members provide specific locations (on a street) where there is an issue.

Questions for Ms. Langley included:

- Send specific locations where there is speeding directly to Ms. Langley or to Julie/Joy.
- What are funding options for Eagle River? Change the current Anchorage bowl bonds to area-wide bonds through the Assembly or pay with CBERRRSA (Chugiak/Eagle River Rural Road Service Area) funds or new local funding.

**Vertical Bridge S3 Assets, LLC & WindRunners**

**Gary R. Brekke, WindRunners® - Owner. 907-331-8311**

Mr. Brekke introduced himself and provided the following information:

- Vertical Bridge is an infrastructure provider that owns towers and other structures. In July 2016, it acquired GCI towers including the wooden tower located at P&M Garden Center. Windrunners is a service provider to Vertical Bridge.

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- There is interest from phone companies to replace the 20-year-old 70-foot wooden tower (GCI only) with a 125-foot steel monopole (plus 5-ft lightning pole) that would accommodate GCI, AT&T, Verizon plus 1 more carrier. This is the only B3 zone property in Eagle River Valley on a high point area.
- Municipal code requires presentation to community council and then approval request goes through municipal zoning and permitting processes. Zoning requires a height variance-this has already been approved by nearby residents.
- P&M Garden Center is supportive of this and has already prepared for the change by moving nearby water tanks.
- Construction would begin late summer after P&M Garden Center's busy season.

Questions for Mr. Brekke included:

- Will tower include 5G EMF? This is a question for the carriers that would use the tower.
- Will new tower withstand winds in the valley and earthquake? Towers are designed to withstand wind and earthquake loading.
- Is a (tree-shaped) stealth tower a possibility? This is not required by municipal code. P&M Garden Center does not want a 'fake-tree' tower on Garden Center property. These towers are also very maintenance intensive.
- Will there be public hearings on this? There will be a public hearing at the Assembly that will include rezoning from B3 with special limitation (height restriction) to B3, and then conditional use permitting process.
- What is impact in times of emergency? This will increase number of carriers and improve up-valley cell coverage. Having multiple carriers helps with call-carrying capacity.
- What do you need from our community council? Letter to Paul Hatcher that presentation was given today and that in concept, council members support the new tower.

#### **Draft Resolution 2021-02**

**Resolution to re-assert area, neighborhood and district self-determination and the insistence that the Assembly follow the requirements of current Title 21 and the Comprehensive Plan**

- See draft on our Federation webpage under *Resolutions*.  
<http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=8108>
- Motion by Ruth Armstrong, seconded by Pete Panarese to approve draft Resolution 2012-02. Approved by a vote of 17 yea, 0 nay, 1 abstain.

Comments:

- Chapter 10 is also very important. We want to maintain our input to both the Assembly and the mayor's office.

#### **Overlook Estates 3 - Eagle River Rd intersections (mile 8/9, river side) - Traffic safety concerns**

- Ms. Jessen was contacted by residents with concerns about the driveway access and lighting for this new development.
- Developer went through the municipal process and DoT approval process. The sightline distance is 600 ft. Driveway access is approved. Guardrails have been reinstalled. Only the new up-valley access is open.
- Municipality will have a hearing on lighting on December 21. See  
<http://www.muni.org/PublicNotice/Pages/NOTICE-OF-MUNICIPAL-ASSEMBLY-PUBLIC-HEARINGS-Ordinance-No.-AO-2021-111.aspx>
- Contact Ms. Jessen with further questions at [juliekjessen@gmail.com](mailto:juliekjessen@gmail.com).

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

**Alice's at 12111 Horseshoe Drive, Eagle River**

Update was provided by Joy Webb:

- Alice's application to open an Eagle River location is 15<sup>th</sup> in the queue for the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Board consideration.

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- Our council has not issued any resolutions regarding Eagle River marijuana establishments in recent years. There was a presentation to our council by Good Cannabis (Fairbanks). At that meeting, members shared that we were NOT interested in a marijuana establishment in our community. No resolution was written as they had not filed.
- Past resolutions include:
  - On our Federation webpage under Resolutions Archive, see 2016-01, establishes a special marijuana review committee in our council. <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=14415>
  - On our Federation webpage under *Other ERVCC Documents* see 2021.11-CER Advisory Board Resolution 2016-01 establishes setback distances between marijuana establishments and protected uses are measured lot line to lot line in the Chugiak-Eagle River area <http://communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=4549>.

Questions from attendees included:

- Can they set up cultivation at this site?
- Is there a restriction for marijuana establishments near a gun shop? Yes
- A variance would be required for Alice's to set up at the proposed site. Who has authority to grant this variance?
- Comment in 'chat' from Heath McAnally, "I'm a board-certified pain physician also board-certified in addiction medicine I would have loved to have heard and weighed in on the marijuana issue, but my time ran out. If they would like my input and that of Dr. Paula Colescott (former director of Providence Breakthrough) and Dr. Ryan Wallace (current director) I would be happy to provide rigorous data and arguments against marijuana in our community."

### **Representative Kelly Merrick (by Jayme Jones, staff member)**

#### **Alaska House of Representatives**

Representative Merrick provided the following update:

- Redistricting board has adopted map that splits Eagle River into two Senate districts, K and L. Lawsuits against map can be filed until December 10. Litigation is expected. Nineteen of the Senate districts will be up for re-vote.
- Link to finalized map adopted by the redistricting board: [www.akredistrict.org](http://www.akredistrict.org)
- The infrastructure bill will bring funding to Alaska for robust capital projects and local economy boost.
- A bill has been drafted regarding Lions Park property exchange for Chugach State Park. (See Parks & Rec). It is currently in legal review.

Questions for Ms. Merrick included:

- Comment by Pete Panarese that Lions Park issue is very complex and Representative Merrick's efforts are to be commended. DNR has been contacted about this topic.
- When would new district map go into effect? Before the spring election.
- How/when can trail be improved from Genora Street to Fire House Lane? This is a DoT right of way and would be reconstructed by DoT. Ms. Jessen will follow up on timeline.

#### **Old Business:**

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

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

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

Mr. Cook provided the following update:

- October patrols were conducted for 26.5 hours covering 287.3 miles.
- The Community Patrol will support Thanksgiving Blessing at Joy Lutheran Church on November 22, sponsored by AK Food Bank. This is drive-through service with no questions asked. Clients just provide number of family members. Volunteer opportunities exist – see AK Food Bank website to sign up.

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- The Patrol will also support the Special Olympics Pola Plunge on December 18 at Goose Lake, near UAA. Over 200 participants are expected. You can also participate virtually – be creative! See Special Olympics website. <https://specialolympicsalaska.org/events/polar-plunge/>
- Be aware of providing opportunities for petty theft. If possible, use a remote car starter instead of leaving keys in a running car on cold days. There has been an uptick in vehicle theft.
- Be mindful of leaving garage doors open both as an opportunity for theft and for risk of frozen pipes.
- Be aware of ‘porch pirates’ with the upcoming holiday season.
- The Community Patrol has lost some members due to moves out of the area.

**Committee Reports:**

**CBERRRSA (Road Board): James McCurtain/ Arlene Rasic** – No report

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

**Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board – Julie Jessen** – Nothing to report.

**School Board Report - Pat Higgins, Anchorage School Board**

[Higgins\\_Pat@asdk12.org](mailto:Higgins_Pat@asdk12.org), 907-952-5871

Mr. Higgins provided the following update:

- Deena Bishop, superintendent, has announced her resignation. Her contract ends on June 30, 2022. Search for replacement will be conducted nationwide by a professional search firm. Input from the public is welcome. The final list of applicants will be made public
- Budget formulation is underway. The school district has been ‘flat-funded’ since 2017 with no increases. State and federal governments provided some additional funding due to COVID.
- Capital improvement bonds are voted upon in alternating years and will be considered in 2022. The bond contents will be reviewed at the November 16 board meeting.
- School busing has been a problem due to short staffing. Food services is also short-staffed.
- There have been no school closures.
- ASD will offer COVID vaccines for school-age children.
- Academic and reading scores are low. Looking at how to improve curriculum.
- Board and committee meetings are open to the public. See ASD website for schedule.
- Mr. Higgins encouraged individuals to contact him with questions or concerns.

Questions posed to Mr. Higgins included:

- What is school board’s position on children who cannot wear masks? Children who cannot wear mask due to medical issues are not required to wear a mask.
- The board tries to follow CDC guidelines and to incorporate multiple viewpoints in discussions about mask requirements for students.
- A copy of an abstract by Dr Shiva Ayyurdai regarding impact of masks on microbiome was forwarded to Mr. Higgins. He shared this information with other members of the administration.

**Education: Open position** – See School Board report.

**Federation of Community Councils – Tom Freeman**

Mr. Freeman provided the following update:

- The mayor is working with the Homeless Coalition.
- The municipal budget process is underway. Contact Clare Ross, Anchorage Assembly, Legislative Liaison, [clare.ross@anchorageak.gov](mailto:clare.ross@anchorageak.gov), 907-538-2259 for information.

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- Title 1 and Special Education school buses are maintaining routes and schedules though some other ASD school bus routes have been cancelled due to bus driver shortage.
- See ASD website, <https://www.asdk12.org> for information on COVID counts in schools.

**Parks and Rec: Pete Panarese**

Mr. Panarese provided the following update:

- The Lions Club is located on Chugach State Park land. How can this property be transferred to Lions Club and other land be added to Chugach State Park to replace it? The grounds need repairs; fireworks and sale of alcohol is allowed – this isn't appropriate for a state park. This is a very complicated and difficult issue to resolve.
- The Park & Rec Board is learning more about the budget process, the operating and comprehensive improvement plan budgets and how process works.
- Chugiak/Eagle River Parks & Recreation has \$4.1M operating or continuation budget to fund 51 employees and 16 facilities.
- Mayor's Boards and Commissions director resigned recently. Most people on various boards have never been formally approved. The municipality is not following code and not approving new members. Boards and Commissions is responsible and it is not following municipal code.
- Participated in a tour of Edmunds Lake Park adjacent to Eklutna Lake.

**Platting: Pete Panarese** – nothing to report

Meeting adjourned at 8:39pm.

Next meeting is on December 8, 6:30pm via Zoom.

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