

Big Lake Community Council
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Lakeshore Studio, South Side, East Lake Mall
3261 S Big Lake Road

General Membership Meeting Minutes 1/8/14

7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

President, Bill Kramer, called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. A quorum was established with the following Board Members present: Bill Kramer, Carol Kane, Ina Mueller, Jim Faiks, Jim Hutton, and Dan Mayfield. Absent excused Margaret Billinger.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda

The agenda was approved as printed with the addition by Board Member Jim Faiks - Item 22 New Business – Article 12 – Meetings: B add by-law change.

4. Minutes 12/11/13

A motion by Jim Faiks and seconded by Dan Mayfield passed by unanimous consent to accept the 12/11/13 minutes to be amended to read... Absent excused Jim Hutton.

5. Nomination Committee

President Kramer indicated Chairperson Margaret Billinger had presented the following names for the BLCC four open seats: Bill Kramer, Dan Mayfield, Ina Mueller and Jim Hutton. Additionally Margaret had posted a notice seeking nominations at the IGA Store, Big Lake Post Office, and during BLCC meetings. If elected, each nominated candidate indicated a willingness to serve the next terms. A motion by Jim Faiks and seconded by Carol Kane passed by unanimous consent to approve the candidates for the BLCC four open seats as presented – Bill Kramer, Dan Mayfield, Ina Mueller and Jim Hutton.

President Kramer encouraged others to become candidates to serve on the BLCC Board, which include three vacancies for a two-year term, followed by four vacancies in two years.

6. Persons to be heard: 3 min max

Jo Welch provided an update about recycling efforts which included: a) paper work is in progress to develop a business plan, b) the City of Houston has donated a flat bed trailer with a cover being done, and c) the Susitna Rotary Club has donated a card board trailer. A \$100 monthly fee for the trailer continues for January. Jo noted donations would be welcome; and added the Big Lake Community Council has given \$300 and another member gave \$100. The grant revenue sharing application was not funded this year. On-going needs include funding to rent containers and finding volunteers to drive every 2 weeks to the Mat Su Borough Valley Center for Recycling. Board Member Jim Hutton noted the recycling efforts are interesting and very successful. Volunteers can meet at 10:00 A.M. at the transfer site to help with the recycling efforts.

7. Borough Assembly Report

None

8. Road Service Area Report Ken Welch

Ken noted an on going struggle to get a different standard for low volume roads. RSA 21 – Big Lake will fund three additional test sites using the low volume road standards, which Ken advocates is a good idea. The three roads involved would be Puriton Road, Call of the Wild and Spruce Court. Additionally Ken noted there are another dozen roads during break-up needing upgrades to include but not limited to north of Big Lake Road going out the Parks Highway one half mile north close to Kenlar Road.

Ken stated the Borough is adamant these upgrades will not happen, which is driven by other RSA Boards. Big Lake - RSA is the only one to give support. An extensive report has been done, but nothing has come back indicating it is not a good idea. At this time, it is impossible to make any forward action. Mayor DeVilbiss has spoken favorable about this standard for low volume roads, stating in the affirmative how great the work on the road has been. Ken went on to say, it appears there is indication some other assembly members are lending some support. Through the Federal Highway Commission, a recommendation supports this process for low volume roads, and states have supported the process over 20 years in the lower 48. Joe Parson, new RSA Board member, has indicated 700 miles are currently not being maintained in the borough off the grid, which doesn't meet the borough standards. Additionally, of 600 miles estimated 50% or more are substandard.

Pictures are available to validate the need. If the low volume road standard proposal were utilized, there would be significant cost savings estimated at \$250,000 to \$300,000. Three new projects being funded by RSA budget include upgrades to be less than \$10,000. Roads currently being maintained include incorporation of the national fire standards.

Ken stated, RSA boards show proof the national fire standards concept hold up to demonstrate the value is there. He continued saying currently there are 100 miles of gravel roads, of which, most are all substandard. A question to be asked and answered, is the borough being asked to take on a project to add to maintenance department? He concluded saying the RSA Boards do not want to add any more roads because not enough funding at this time

9. Fire Service Area Report Bill Gamble

Bill Gamble shared current annexation surveying is being considered. The Mat Su Borough code restricts requesting solicitation to assist with the process. There is a need for individuals from the west end of Big Lake to ask for support of the annexation. There is a high need to upgrade in the West Lakes area. The criteria/standards are borough standards, not national fire standards. The real issue for annexation is a health and safety issue, and should not be, not having enough money. Currently areas not being served by providing safe access for emergency vehicles must be worked into the proposals. Bill stated services couldn't go outside the fire service area unless authorized by Fire Chief. Additionally, there are several certified roads but access for fire equipment is restricted by turn around areas, etc. To process a request for annexation, only one person needs to make a request. Already maps have been done and owners identified.

Chief Gamble provided an update on the financial issues regarding how Fire Department employees had been paid from 1989, since then over a period of time borough fire employees were paid with stipend based on a pay scale range. PERS was not factored in. Until recently, based on the bargaining unit, on call employee were able to work 1800 hrs/yr. and responders could work as unlimited hours. Effective January 1, 2014, work hours are limited, which means employees will now have to go out and find other jobs. The outcome of the current regulation is still pending. Additional reviews include using training time. He stated he is not sure how it will affect the overall operation of the fire department. An option being considered would be full time employees but the funding is limited.

He continued saying, currently there are 65 volunteers, but each will be restricted in the amount of work that can be done. The PERS issue is still statutory regulations and is very confusing for everyone. Several resulting issues may include: Borough being liable for millions of dollars for back pay, the Anchorage 96 or 97 class action suit pending, and respondent time could impact insurance rating.

Concluding his report, Chief Gamble noted positive responders are not about the money, but rather service. If there is a large-scale fire, the Chief does have the authority to call out more assistance. Bill extended his appreciation and willingness to hear information on how to help mobilize individuals to get annexation conversation started to include: 1) Year around service is a criteria, 2) \$2.7 million is needed from Charlie Huggins for the second half of the funding and 3) there are matching funds are available.

Additionally closing comments included ambulance and rescue vehicles would be at the Big lake Winter Fest and the BLCC did make a request from legislators to fund Spring Street Station thorough the CIP process.

In general discussion that followed, it was recommended the BLCC write a letter of support to support the annexation-funding request as outlined. Additionally, it was suggested calls be made to our legislators Representative Newman and Senator Huggins. A motion passed unanimous consent to support the request BLCC write a letter of support for the annexation funding request as outlined as well as make calls to the Representative Newman and Senator Huggins.

10. Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Ina Mueller

\$32,172 in checking noting many of the grant checks have not cleared.
\$255 savings

11. Membership report, Chairperson, Ina Mueller

35 paid members as of 1/8/14

12. Chamber of Commerce Report

Nancy Linley reported a variety of Winter Fest activities have been planned to include but not limited to helicopter rides, bunny boot bling contest, frozen t-shirt contest, Beer Garden in partnership with Floaters, sled dog races by the Aurora Dog Musers, and a pancake feed. Volunteers are needed to help with the Winter Fest so please contact the Chamber office or any Chamber Board Member.

Nancy closed her comments noting there are Board vacancies, which would be voted on at the Chamber Board annual meeting, 1/20/14.

13. Parks and Trails, Chairperson, Margaret Billinger

Dan Mayfield reported they are keeping up on the trail-grooming schedule. He also noted Willow is not on grooming schedule. There are lots trees down so individuals are out on the trails take a chain saw to help cut out fallen trees off the trails.

Dan thanked the BLCC for the grant funding for replacement of the track cleats. Additionally he noted there is a new Big Lake Trails web site, which is now being administered by Deb Kirk. Thanks also for the Big Lake Chamber links to the Big Lake Trail web site. A calendar reminder, the Big Lake Trails Committee meets the 2nd Friday of every month at Aardvark Pizza Thyme. The next meeting is Friday, January 10, 2014.

14. School Report, Chairperson, Jim Hutton

Jim Hutton indicated he recently spoke with Big Lake Elementary Principal, John Simon who said the construction was now 98 % completed. Some school furniture is still pending delivery, the Administrative offices will be completed at the end of the month, and the canopies are almost finished. Lighting left in old corridor is on a pending a change order.

15. Transportation, Interim report by Bill Kramer

Bill Kramer stated nothing has changed except everything is at the Borough. Lauren Driscoll, Mat Su Borough Chief of Planning said the final draft would be read over the break and the FINAL DRAFT is to be released soon. The public comment will be no shorter than 30 days. Before the next BLCC meeting, an expectation is to have received all information related to the Transportation Report.

16. Incorporation, Chairperson, Jim Faiks

Jim Faiks, Petitioner - Big Lake 2nd City indicated a renewed enthusiasm for the efforts to submit updated/current petition signers to the Local Boundary Commission by the end of January, 2014. A concerted effort is being made to make sure signers are within the Big Lake 2nd Class City proposed boundary. Jim requested individuals who have not signed the petition or who signed prior to December 2012 must re-sign to have current signature on file. Petition signature forms are available from Big Lake 2nd-Class Committee members. Once signatures are collected, please return the petition signature forms to Ina Mueller or Carol Kane.

17. **Community Grants, Chairperson, Jim Faiks**

Jim Faiks reported the Community Grants awarded have been processed for funding with the exception of the Jordan Lake parking lot - \$15,000, which has not been completed. Jim noted the Big Lake Lions sent a thank you note of appreciation for the grant award of \$15,000 to fund kitchen equipment. Additionally, expressed was appreciation for the financial support from the Rasmunson Foundation. It is expected the second floor banquet facility will be completed this winter. A Community Grants awarded summary report is due to Mat Su Borough on 1/20/14.

18. **Correspondence**

- a. President Kramer presented information received for a proposal to combine three lots into two lots for a gas line extension. Any fees incurred are to be paid by the owner of the lot. Past practice, has been the BLCC has never opposed making larger lots. Additionally, President Kramer did submit as requested support for Aurora Dog Musers to purchase 40 acres. Included in the letter, were referenced issues regarding snow machines crossing over the parcel. Still to be resolved would be where the state and borough dedicated trails interface within the 40 - acre parcel. Only formal action by the Borough could resolve any issues that may arise.
- b. Ina Mueller would like to request a meeting be scheduled to address current and future snow machine trails. More specifically on the agenda would be Trail 15, which goes through the proposed Aurora Dog Musers property.
- c. Roxanne Dayton inquired if there is a right to close the trail. There was nothing to reduce neither speed nor close snow machine trails in the requested proposal. Ken Welch briefly discussed future of conflicts between snow machine trails, walking trails, and dog trails will be additional conversations to be resolved. These issues would need to be resolved through master planning multi use process. Roxanne Dayton did indicate she does attend the master planning meetings from time to time. Concluding remarks noted, was Big Lake Trails Committee should lead a forum.

19. **Land Use/ Platting**

Presented as received.

20. **Unfinished Business/Action Items**

a. Following general discussion for BLCC to submit a resolution for reducing the speed limit along Big Lake Road from 45 mph to 35mph within the downtown Big Lake corridor between Beaver Lake Road and South Big Lake campground, Bill Haller agreed to draft a proposed resolution.

b. Representative Newman has requested \$250,000 for the DOT Commissioner to initiate a study to make improvement on the Big Lake Road to include but not limited to lights, signage, and a crosswalk.

21. **New Business**

a. President Kramer led the discussion regarding the need to form a new committee to oversee addressing issues related to Big Lake as an Impaired Body of Water. This has been an on-going issue needing to be resolved for an extensive amount of time. A public forum should be held to address Alaska's and more specifically Big Lake issues. Ken Walsh concluded, indicating this matter is to be addressed

b. President Kramer requested consideration to have BLCC letterhead and cards with a professional image and logo. A motion by Jim Faiks and seconded by Ina Mueller passed by unanimous consent to allocate up to \$200 for BLCC business cards and letterhead.

c. Continued dialogue/awareness needs to occur regarding the Big Lake road issues to include but not limited to speed limit, intersection upgrades, lighting, etc. in the 2014 Governor's budget. Jim Hutton stated the 2011 bond was not approved until 2012 when dialogue between the borough and state occurred resulting in a study being done.

d. Because there are so many conflicting meetings being held on Wednesday, such as Borough, Church, and other community meetings, Jim Faiks introduced a proposal to make a BLCC By-Laws amendment change to the BLCC meeting dates from the second Wednesday of the month to the second Tuesday of the month. The process would be to present the information for a vote at the next BLCC meeting stating page 5, BLCC By-Laws. Article 12 Meetings: B the only change would be to strike the word ~~Wednesday~~ changing to **Tuesday** of the month. A motion by Jim Faiks and seconded by Carol Kane passed by unanimous consent to present to the membership at the

BLCC meeting on Wednesday 2/12/14, the BLCC By-Laws Article 12 Meetings to the second Tuesday of the month.

Mayor DeVilbiss indicated changing the meeting date would not be a conflict to enable Borough officials to attend the meetings on Tuesdays. He requested agendas be sent to the borough 10 days prior to the scheduled BLCC meetings.

22. Announcements

a. Jim Faiks announced there would be a visitation by the Group Christian Missions Church - Aging and Ability Center coming to Big Lake. Jim has application forms for individuals /church groups who might be interested in participating. Additionally there is a need for four to five volunteers to help with this visitation.

b. Board Member Comments:

Bill Kramer stated he had attended a Crime Forum meeting in Wasilla hosted by Representative Mark Newman and Captain Hans Brinke of the Alaska State Troopers on December 14, 2013. A variety of agencies, which included mayors, prosecutors, correction/parole officers, and community leaders were in attendance. Included in the presentation was information about the web site introduced by Vicki Wallner's Facebook group "Stop Valley Thieves and Mat Valley Crime Watch" which is making an impact in recovering and posting information about stolen items, illegal practices, and prosecuting the perpetrators.

c. President Kramer announced there would be a BLCC Executive Board meeting immediately following the meeting to elect the 2014 board positions. The public was invited to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol G Kane, Secretary

Big Lake Community Council Purpose:

To provide a direct and continuing means of citizen participation in government and local affairs; to provide a method by which they can work together for expression and discussion of their opinions, needs and desires in a manner that will have an impact on our community's development and service; to provide to governmental agencies a method for receiving opinions, needs, desires and recommendations of residents and groups, and to give local governing bodies an improved basis for decision-making and assignment of priorities for all capital improvements and governmental programs affecting community development and individual well-being.