

___ x ___ President: Bill Gamble
___ x ___ Vice President: Terry Gorlick
___ x ___ Secretary: Lisa Behrens
___ x ___ Treasurer: Dave Malo
___ x ___ Member at Large: Ben Tew
___ x ___ Member at Large: David Haggard
_____ Member at Large: Jodi Riddell



PO Box 520931
Big Lake, AK 99652-0931

**General Membership Meeting – August 8, 2023, 7:00 PM
Big Lake Lions Recreation Center**

MINUTES

1.) Call to Order/ Determination of Quorum

By: Bill Gamble Time: 7:05pm
Quorum: Yes
Attendees: 16 voting members, 18 non-voting attendees

2.) Pledge of Allegiance

3.) Agenda Approval

Motion: Terry Gorlick Second: Dave Malo

4.) Previous Meeting Minutes Approval (July 11, 2023)

Motion: Terry Gorlick Second: Ben Tew Copy signed: Bill Gamble

5.) Presentation(s)

1. Terry Gorlick re: Beaver Meadows Land Sale proposal (7:10pm to 7:32)
(Terry Hess from DNR also present, as well as Fred Wagner from MSB Platting Department)
Terry provided map and handouts of the proposed land sale area, with explanation of the proposed project. Introduced two resolutions: one by the BLCC Executive Board, and one from the Rocky Lake neighborhood residents' group.

Audience Comments/Questions:

Terry Hess – DNR: We are in the public comment period now. On August 22 there will be a public meeting from 5:00-7:00pm here at Big Lake Lions Club. All concerned residents are welcome to attend and ask questions, provide comment. The MSB will be involved in the process when active subdivision processes begin. All action will have to go through the MSB Platting process. May take up to 5 years before development would begin.

Bill Gamble: (to Terry Hess) Has there ever been a similar land sale in an area as populated as the Big Lake area is?

6.) Treasurer's Report

Checking: \$ 39,138.11 Savings: \$ 1918.77 Petty Cash: \$100 Dividends: \$1.70

7.) Membership Report

Ben Tew: 59 total paid members for 2023 (including 5 new/renewal applications received this meeting)

8.) Reports

1. Legislative (State House & Senate)

Senator Shower: No report available

Representative McCabe: West Lakes Boulevard, “100% my fault.” Based on commentary from local residents, it seemed logical to ask SOA to sell state property along West Lakes, to generate property tax revenue. That is the reason DNR is involved now in the (Beaver Meadows) proposed land sale. State of Alaska and DNR have done all applicable studies and are willing to extend the public comment period. Willing to take questions from concerned residents at this time, and pivot on the matter, if necessary.

John Rodda: I’m baffled that our legislator pushed this without prior communication with this community council. Isn’t this the forum where that would usually have been introduced? John requests that the BLCC resolution goes forward as written, to ensure that a thoughtful, transparent public-participation process is followed. This comes as a surprise to the community and seems to have skipped appropriate notification to those who would be affected.

Representative McCabe: State of Alaska / DNR are offering this for public comment and are willing to abandon the project in light of significant public opposition. People in the community came to me and indicated that this could be a good idea. Mr. McCabe approached SOA and DNR and asked for a project to be proposed in the area. This project has been proposed. If the community doesn’t want it, that will be respected, and the project may be shelved.

Terry Gorlick: I was one of the community members who approached Rep. McCabe with some ideas for use of the state-owned property in the area. Terry had ideas for youth hunting area, etc.

Fred Wagner: Verified that MSB has platting authority over SOA/DNR projects in every organized borough. There has been miscommunication that this subdivision project would not involve MSB.

Norm Lawler: Would like to verify that the individuals who approached Rep. McCabe indicated that a 5-mile section of West Lake Boulevard has no tax-revenue producing properties on it. I don’t understand the impetus for requesting a state land sale in this area. Who are the people who want this and requested action from our state legislator? What is their impetus for asking for this? It sounds like the benefit of this process is to have more property tax revenue in this RSA? Why does it appear that so much of this land is not “high ground” and not developable? Please verify that ALL applicable studies have been done, as you said earlier. The earlier statement that “those types of studies are not normally shared or made available to the public” is not correct. That requirement is a part of Alaska legislative code. It cannot be kept from the public. It sounds like the primary impetus for this is to generate additional tax revenue and provide better road maintenance funding, but it does not seem to be following normal process.

Jonn Rodda: Has the project area changed since the initial release of information to the public? This seems like a much larger area is mapped out than the amount of land that can actually be developed.

Rep. McCabe: I am here to speak for this community. I will bring your opinion and commentary to DNR, and if the community does not want this, or wants it to be done differently, that is what I will take forward from this meeting. I will speak with the voice of this community, to ensure that if this is done, it must be done right.

Rep. McCabe: Legislative report – legislation proposed to update a 1970s regulation that will make it less complicated to qualify for a CDL, given the current shortage of commercial truck drivers in Alaska. DOT STIP program will be heard on August 22 – has to do with roads in Mat Su & Big Lake area.

John Rodda: I appreciate our legislative support that resulted in the 2024 Arctic Winter Games being held here in Mat Su.

2. Assembly (District 5)

Member Tew: (no report available)

3. Fire Service (West Lakes Fire Department)

Chief Hightower: For month of July, 89 emergency calls. 91 calls is our maximum capacity. We need more fire responders. 9 of those 89 calls were structure fires, that is also an unprecedented number. A bit of public information here: some structure fires are caused by cigarettes being extinguished in flowerpots. In reality, the planting medium in flowerpots is not regular soil. It is flammable material.

Thank you to Ben Tew on behalf of Lois Parker for mowing in front of the Big Lake mall.

4. Road Service (all boards reporting)

Bill Haller: Several projects have been completed this year. Tolson & Pond Lily non-passable roads have been improved and should now be year-round passable. First two miles of Twin Papoose is going out for bid, to be repaired and see improvement prior to winter this year. West Lakes Boulevard project is waiting for DNR response prior to moving forward. Bond packages affecting Big Lake this fall are more generous than they have been in many years. Burma Road will be a drivable road for its entire length. Other projects will benefit Big Lake as well. This \$74 million bond package will be on the ballot this November. No firm date for improving Big Lake Road at this time. There is still indecision over Hollywood Road improvement vs Big Lake Road upgrade. Calcium chloride application was deferred this year due to the extreme amount of rain. The calcium chloride that was purchased will be saved for next winter season.

Al Bolea: Ice road damage due to fishermen drilling holes in the ice road. What can be done in the future to resolve this? Bill Haller: Contact Alaska Fish & Game and request "Ice Road Etiquette" be added to the Alaska Fishing Guidebook that is distributed with all fishing licenses. Rep. McCabe: Working on funding for ice road plowing this next season. Money is available.

5. Valley Recycling: September period for open dump use for Big Lake residents. Contact Assemblymember Tew for more specific information.

9.) Correspondence

1. Marijuana cultivation facility application: Rollin J's

10.) Unfinished Business

1. Committee Updates:

Bylaws: Will meet in the fall

Grants: Handout provided by Terry Gorlick

Motion to approve current grant applications: Terry Gorlick Second: Ben Tew

Vote of the members present: No objections or questions – applications approve

Capital Improvements: (no update)

2. Lake setback ordinance: Assembly consideration was deferred, and the matter sent to work group.

11.) New Business

- 1. Beaver Meadows – proposed BLCC resolution to extend public comment until September 2024.

Bill Haller: recommends resolution language change to extend the public comment period to 90 days after the all applicable reports and studies have been released for public review and comment.

Cindy Bettine: Opposes Haller proposal, and supports the resolution to extend the comment period until September 2024. This is a complex issue and deserves that amount of time to review available information.

Phil Hemmers: Does not agree with Terry Gorlick’s proposed changes to the DNR land sale map and does not think his proposal should become a part of the BLCC resolution on the matter.

John Rodda: A reminder that the State of Alaska and DNR are not in a hurry. It is reasonable, and leads to transparency, public engagement, and public process to move the 2024 extension resolution forward to DNR.

Mike Butcher: Just received the DNR notification today. Why have the results of the studies that have been done not been released to the public? DNR Rep. Tim Shilling: there has been a miscommunication. All non-confidential studies have been released and are available to the public.

Only the Cultural Heritage study is a confidential report, and it is underway at this time. Bill Gamble:

What will be the intent of the August meeting on this land sale proposal, and what information will be available? Tim Shilling: The August 22 meeting will be a “listening and question/answer” meeting.

Terry Gorlick: can DNR make and distribute a list of links to the studies referenced in the document that was sent out to residents? Terry looked for those items on the DNR site and was unable to locate them.

Proposed amendment to Resolution 23-02 to include language (paragraph #3) from the Rocky Lake residents resolution: Terry Gorlick Second: Dave Haggard
Membership vote: Passed without opposition

Motion to accept Resolution 23-02 as written by BLCC Executive Board and amended with language from the Rocky Lake residents resolution: Terry Gorlick Second: Dave Malo
Membership vote: Passed, with two persons in opposition

12.) Persons to be Heard (3 Minute Maximum time per person)

3 persons on sign-up list, comments made during reports and new business.

13.) Announcements (None)

14.) Board Member Closing Comments

Bill Gamble: August 22 meeting at Big Lake Lions re: continued discussion of Beaver Meadows land sale

Dave Malo: Drilling holes in ice road; stealing public-funded flowers intended for Big Lake beautification is extremely bothersome. This needs to be addressed

Dave Haggard: Agrees that drilling fishing holes in ice roads signals disrespect for Big Lake residents, and needs to be addressed.

15.) Adjournment

Motion: Terry Gorlick Second: Ben Tew Time: 9:48pm

(Note: There may be a quorum of RSA / FSA members in attendance at the meeting)

Signature – Bill Gamble, President – Big Lake Community Council

Date