

☒ President: Jodi Riddell
☒ Vice President: Margaret Billinger
☒ Secretary: Lisa Behrens
☒ Treasurer: Irene Crowley
☐ Director at Large: Ben Tew
☒ Director at Large: David Haggard
☒ Director at Large: Lindy Moss



PO Box 520931

Big Lake, AK 99652-0931

General Membership Meeting – August 13, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Big Lake Lions Recreation Center

MINUTES

1.) Call to Order/ Determination of Quorum

By: Jodi Riddell Time: 7:03pm

Quorum: Yes Attendees: **31** persons signed in / in attendance, **6** board members present

2.) Pledge of Allegiance

3.) Agenda Approval

Motion: Margaret Billinger Second: Yes

4.) Previous Meeting Minutes Approval (July 9, 2024)

Motion: Margaret Billinger Second: Yes Copy signed: Jodi Riddell

5.) Treasurer's Report

Checking: \$36,000.44 Savings: \$2,950.62

6.) Membership Report

Voting Members renewed for 2024: **94**

Associates (non-voting) renewed for 2024: **5**

7.) Presentation(s)

1. Shannon McCarthy and team associates, DOT & PF – West Susitna Access
The project is just kicking off and this is a good time to hear from community members. We really do want your comments. This Thursday (August 15) at Wasilla Library there will be a public open house from 3:00-6:00pm. Team member #1, Sean: There are Big Lake Road projects coming up next year. These are planned to address drainage issues. However, due to complaints & concerns received from the Big Lake area, consideration is being given to doing an earlier overlay to improve conditions until the main project can begin. Team member #2: The West Susitna project is open for public comment until August 23. Follow this link: <https://westsuaccess.com/> and click the "Leave a Comment" button to provide your input (*Note: the graphic above is a screen shot of the web page, not a working comment button – The link under the screenshot here will take you to the right place*). This project is intended to provide access from this area to the West Susitna / Alexander Creek area. We are looking for ways to support economic development and tourism. There is a lot of history connected to this project, starting in 2014. This project IS NOT for 100 miles of road and overloaded commercial trucks. What it IS – a public road designed to accommodate regular traffic, recreational traffic, etc. Environmental assessment is in progress. Monthly meetings are in progress. We want to take community input from this meeting tonight to add to the plans for this project. In addition to roadways, there will be bridges and boat launches included in the project. We need your input.

Leave A Comment!

Visit the **comment page** or
click the link below to share
your ideas about WestSu
Access!

Leave a Comment

Possible routes we looked at – 5 alternatives: Point Mackenzie Rd / Ayrshire Rd, the Refuge Route (avoided), West Susitna Pkwy / Big Lake Route, two routes that would have gone through private property, and the “No Change” option. Question: The preferred/planned route is no longer intended for Ayrshire Rd? Answer: Correct, that was one of the routes that involved private property and was not a good option. Question: Where does this preferred route tie into the original proposed route? Answer: At about Mile 5 [not clear which road]. Question: Boat launches on the Big Su are planned? Answer: Yes, based on public input. Question: Are there any other plans for recreational activities such as camping? Answer: Yes, dependent on community input. Question: The route beginning is coming from W Susitna Parkway? Answer: Yes. Andrew Traxler: Build it. Question: Was money reappropriated from the Cooper Landing Bypass project? Answer: This is funded by a different, STBG statewide project. Instead of launching everything at once, it will be introduced in phases.

2. Jason, Adult & Teen Challenge Coordinator – New facility update. A brief history of Teen Challenge and what we do as a region. Started by David Wilkerson, in 1954. In 1960 the first Teen Challenge program was started. To date, in 2024, there are 2000+ centers in multiple countries. People are brought out of addiction. In the US, we have centers in Hawaii, Montana, and Alaska. This is a long-term 365-day commitment for program participants. This is accomplished by partnering with community members and organizations. This is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Curt McFee is the Maintenance manager for the Pacific Northwest region. With a focus on thrift stores, Adult & Teen Challenge is currently preparing to launch a new super-thrift store in the old 4-Seasons clothing store in Wasilla. Teen Challenge will be hiring local persons to staff this store.

8.) Reports

1. Legislative (State House & Senate)

Senator Shower: I’m here to answer questions re: DOT as needed. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) is an important concern at this time. To move forward economically requires taking some risk. We need to consider impacts to the local community where roads are concerned, and also consider the ability to make use of our resources. We have started receiving money for area roads. We understand the difficulties encountered by our local road users, in light of bad road conditions. Big shout-out to Rep. McCabe for doing a fantastic job in taking care of us by making sure capital money came our way for these projects. I’m hopeful for the coming election cycle and legislative year.

Representative McCabe: We met with the West Susitna Access team a couple of weeks ago. We notified the team that commercial trucks potentially traveling through the Big Lake community is not feasible or acceptable to community members. Those trucks would use the Point Mackenzie / Ayrshire Road route. The West Susitna team assured us that a major part of planning this project hinges on community input. Buy-in from the community is essential, and Rep. McCabe says he is “on top of this.” Rep. McCabe is available for questions after this meeting. On a different topic there is concern about a group that wants to shut down the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, because it was built on Federal land – this is an ongoing matter, and Rep. McCabe will keep the community apprised.

Question: Where do the commercial trucks come from – the nearest gravel pit? Answer: Communications are in progress with AHTNA re: commercial gravel trucks using the same roads with local traffic. Question: You spoke about Big Lake Road becoming a high priority. Isn’t Hollywood Road scheduled for improvement soon too? Answer: We advocating to have both done at the same time. Question: Hollywood is scheduled for bid in May 2025, yes? Answer: Perfect, that’s correct.

2. Assembly (District 5)

Assembly Representative Gamble: I had a discussion with Sen. Shower and Rep. McCabe, then met with Ms. McDonald about the West Susitna Access Road. The Mat Su Borough administration position is that if it becomes a commercial road, it is not to come into the community of Big Lake. A resolution to this effect will be considered by the assembly next month. On a separate matter, there was a controversial repeal of mobile home regulations proposed by Rep. Yundt. People were concerned,

thinking this would make it easier to develop mobile home parks. In fact, it makes it more difficult. There will be more information to come on this topic. Next topic – The following Big Lake road bond projects are being moved forward: Echo Lake Road and Burma Road improvement. Next year there is expected to be a major influx of federal money for road projects. Jolly Creek: Was supposed to start this year, however the East Lake Mall businesses and property owners objected due to concerns about water from Jolly Creek draining into the area behind the mall, which already collects water and encourages mosquito infestation in the resulting wet area. Further detail clarification for the project is ongoing. Question: What happened to our calcium chloride? Answer: A decision was made to wait until the new fiscal year. By that time, it had started to rain, and the application was further postponed. There was a delay in making Rep. Gamble aware of the change in plans. Our RSA board members have committed to keep our assembly representative more promptly informed.

3. Fire Service (West Lakes Fire Department)

Chief Hightower: We depend on community volunteers. There were 71 emergency calls in July, including several structure fires, mutual fire calls and numerous medical call assists. To date, there have been over 460 calls for 2024. This month we are focusing on ATV safety, as 4 of the calls in July were for ATV incidents. If there any questions from the community, please let me know. Question: Are the local bike trails approved for use by motor vehicles (ATVs and motorcycles). Answer: Most are NOT, but there are exceptions. A lack of clear signage indicating use restrictions has been an issue. There are 6 new signs on our local pathways indicating “NO Motor Vehicles” thanks to John Bitney and Rep. McCabe.

4. Road Service Area: Nothing to report

9.) **Correspondence**

1. Regulatory Commission of AK – Notice of Utility Application
2. Becky Long – West Susitna Access Road – August 23 Public Comment deadline reminder
(See project info, public open house info, and public comment button at westsuaccess.com)

10.) **Unfinished Business**

1. Committee Updates:
 - a. Capital Improvements & Big Lake Comprehensive Plan: Ben Tew, Lindy Moss, Margaret Billinger, Cindy Bettine, Dan Mayfield, Jim Faiks – Update: The 6 nominated projects were entered and accepted by MSB by the August 1 due date.
 - b. Community Revenue Sharing Grants: Irene Crowley, Jodi Riddell, Lindy Moss, Margaret Billinger, Janet Henry – Update: Grant awards have been entered.
2. Lake Setback Ordinance & Waterbody Setback Advisory Board: Bill Haller – Big Lake Rep.
<https://matsugov.us/boards/waterbody-setback-advisory-board>
 - a. Update: none available

11.) **New Business** n/a

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

Jim Faiks: There is finally a plan to address the Jolly Creek drainage problem. A pipe will be placed from Klwane to Big Lake Road. There is an opportunity to work with the Jolly Creek project, to accept material removed in the course of the Jolly Creek project, to use for improvements to Jordan Lake Park. Jordan Lake Park improvement is part of both the Big Lake and Mat Su Borough comprehensive plans. The plan would be to take material removed from the Jolly Creek drainage to build up the area for a greenbelt in the Jordan Lake Park area. We could do this work via private funding and effort, with cooperation and private funding. (Handouts provided).

Bill Noyes: Neighborhood Watch update. We have been having meetings, and things are progressing. As long as we can work together, we can cut down on crime. We could possibly address the problem of motorcycles on the bike and pedestrian pathways. Neighborhood watch could possibly utilize volunteers to monitor activity and provide community education regarding appropriate pathway usage.

13.) Announcements

Jodi Riddell: Groundbreaking tomorrow for Fish Creek / Jay Nolfi Park improvements at 2:00pm

Keith Lipse: All for improving West Susitna Access project, but Goldstreak Subdivision road issues need to be addressed first. This is a problem that has lingered for many years.

Kevin McCabe: August 21 is the primary election. This is a regular primary, not a ranked-choice vote. Big Lake Lions is no longer the Big Lake district polling place. Faith Bible Fellowship is the current location, and notification cards have been mailed to area voters. Please vote for me.

14.) Board Member Closing Comments

Happy Birthday today, to President Jodi!!

Jodi Riddell:

Margaret Billinger:

Lisa Behrens:

Irene Crowley:

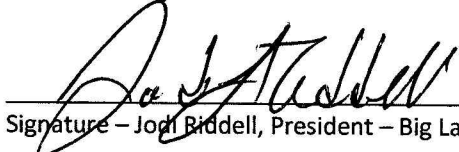
Dave Haggard:

Ben Tew:


Lindy Moss:

15.) Adjournment

Motion: Lindy Moss Second: Yes Time: 8:13pm


Signature – Jodi Riddell, President – Big Lake Community Council

9-10-2024
Date


Attestation – Lisa Behrens, Secretary – Big Lake Community Council

9/10/24
Date