

Birchwood Community Council

19213 Sprucecrest Drive
Chugiak, Alaska 99567

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Because we won't meet again until September 28, the following issues/action have to be addressed now.

CHUGIAK-EAGLE RIVER COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE

The citizen advisory committee is halfway through the update. This document provides the vision and direction for our area regarding future growth & development. The MOA Planning Dept calculated that in 2025, our population will be 52,695, with 6,200 local jobs, and we will need about 7,900 more dwelling units than we have now. We have available a draft of the Guidelines for Growth. This covers the following broad topics; Economic Development, Natural Environment, Land Use, & Public Facilities & Service.

Birchwood residents need to review & comment on this 25 page draft, so we have placed a copy in the Birchwood Council box, located in the Eagle River library. We hope to also place it online in the Birchwood section on the Council Center website at <http://communitycouncils.org> so check there first before you make a trip to the library. We still have to do the Land Use Map sections which will show where the low, medium, & high residential density will be, along with the new commercial and industrial areas that will be needed. We want you to review what we have so far and bring your comments to the September council meeting. If you won't be able to attend, e-mail your comments to me at barb@mtaonline.net or call me at 688-4321. We need your feedback.

TITLE 21 DRAFT OF THE COMPLETE RE-WRITE OF THE LAND USE CODE

All citizens have until September 15th to make online comment on the Title 21 re-write. You can review and comment, at <http://www.muni.org/planning/index.cfm>, click on Draft Title 21 to read all 573 pages of it. Areas of concern, other than the design & development sections, that will impact our area heavily will be found in the following pages that lays out Use-Specific Standards. These standards apply regardless of whether the use is permitted by matter of right, site plan review, or conditional use. If you want to know what will be permitted in your zoning district, they have a table listing that at page 272. The format chosen by the muni is not user-friendly, so I will be giving you page numbers for areas of concern I found.

Page 230. (Animal husbandry is defined as the care and management of animals. Code enforcement sees the boarding of a single animal as a commercial use requiring a conditional use permit in a residential district) Under Animal Husbandry, Commercial, the minimum acreage allowed is 15 acres.

Page 231. (remember that commercial means boarding an animal that isn't yours) Dog kennels (dog lots?) and paddocks/stables require a minimum acreage of 2 acres.

Page 285 says any accessory building for the storage of vehicles with motors (typically cars but could be RV's, ATV's, snowmobiles, trailers, motorcycles) whether attached or detached to your dwelling CANNOT be larger than 50% of the part of your home you actually live in. If you have an attached garage & want to build another accessory building to put cars or your motorized toys in, factor in the percentage of your existing garage storage to determine the limit on your new "garage".

Page 285. You cannot sell anything you grow in your garden or greenhouse.

Page 294. Prohibits any Connex container use on your residential property

Page 294.. Limits hobby/collector car restoration to 1 vehicle stored outdoors on your residential property. (see item on page 285 note above if you were thinking about building indoor storage)

Page 295. Prohibits automotive repair/painting of a motor vehicle for others on your residential property.

Page 296. Prohibits frame-supported fabric structures, like cloth/canvas/tarp garages,

On R-9 zoned property, this re-write will NOT carry forward the exemption you are currently allowed (under conditional use permit) for a home-based business that exceeds the home occupation limitations.

You should also note that if the current Title 21 permitted you a certain use, and it's carried forward in the re-write as a conditional use, you will not be "grandfathered in".

I'm sure there are many other areas we should be concerned about and if you find one please point it out to me so I can notify the rest of Birchwood.

LARGE DOMESTIC ANIMAL ORDINANCE (MOSTLY HORSES)

This LDA proposed ordinance written by Community Planning Dept will be coming up before the Assembly for public hearing sometime in September. Anyone that has livestock or llamas (over 4) will be affected. If you have a neighbor who has horses, cows, etc please tell them about this ordinance. If you would like to read the Staff report and comments made so far, go to <http://munimaps.muni.org/planning/home3.htm> and type in Case Number 2004-137. I heard that a work session between the Assembly and the Planning Dept will be held Sept 23rd, room 155 in City Hall, from 1-2 PM. I suspect the public hearing before the Assembly will be held Sept 27th, but that is just a guess right now. My understanding is that the horse people living on the Hillside in Anchorage will be offering a substitute ordinance. We have several property owners in Birchwood who breed, board, or provide a service using horses that will be severely impacted by this LDA Ordinance, as well as many operations upon the Anchorage Hillside. Can another ordinance governing dog lots/kennels be far behind?

ANCHORAGE LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This document is now available for comment and lists about 3 billion dollars worth of AMATS projects to guide long-term transportation improvements taking into account the new direction provided by the Anchorage 2020 (Bowl area) Plan. A copy is in the reference section of the Eagle River library for review. If you have to travel into Anchorage on the Glenn Hwy, you need to review and comment.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Although nothing is finalized, a trade for full recreational access to Mt Baldy is being worked out with Eklutna, Inc, who owns the other piece of property blocking trail/parking lot access. Rumor has it that it involves a trade. They give us access, and maybe a better school site and MOA will give property in either Edmunds Lake park or the NW quarter of Section 25 park.

The Ski Chalet has a new expanded parking lot now but they still can't open because we have another problem with the water well that hasn't been resolved. Will we go through TWO ski seasons with a completed building and still be waiting to use it?

The update to the Chugiak-Eagle River Long Range Transportation Plan is not underway yet but members to serve on the citizens' advisory committee have been nominated. Birchwood still needs to fill one of those seats. Any volunteers?