

Minutes March 8, 2023

Meadow Lakes Community Council Inc.

Minutes of March 8, 2023

◆ 3 Officers required for quorum: TOTAL = YES ◆

Pres: Camden Yehle Y; Vice Pres: Steve Edwards
N; Treasurer: Trish Jacob Y; Sec: Patricia Fisher
Y; Council Coordinator: Tim Swezey Y

◆ 13 Members of the Meadow Lakes Community required for quorum: YES ◆

Meeting Quorum = Yes

Meeting conducted at the on Zoom and in Person at Meadow Lake Seniors
Recorded live and posted on Facebook after the meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Camden Yehle.

Quorum: The Membership Committee determined that there was a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited.

Consent Agenda: President Camden Yehle asked to add to the Consent Agenda consideration of a letter to the Borough regarding the pending gravel ordinance. The Consent includes the current agenda and the minutes dated February 8th, 2022. The Consent Agenda was approved with no objections.

Board Reports:

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP): Chair Kim Kalmbach gave an update on the Bald Mountain Trailhead Project. She reported reaching out to the Department of Natural Resources, Mental Health and Fish and Game for their comments on the CIP nomination of the Bald Mountain Trailhead parking lot project. DNR commented that the process should go through the Mat-Su Borough for approval. Mental Health Trust feels that an easement would be looked on favorably. Fish and Game remarked that money from the Pitman/Robertson federal grant cannot be used to purchase the land, but could be used to develop a trail. They were positive about acquiring the property, and suggested we have preliminary work completed before the Mental Health Trust got involved. Kim further reported that two prime pieces of property along the trail sold recently. Funding from the Borough to acquire the property would need to cover purchase and a survey. The project is number one on the Borough's CIP list.

Membership: Membership is positive.

ByLaws: No report.

Gaming: Chair Ariel Cannon reported on the gaming Split the Pot event at the Palmer Depot on February 20th, with \$330 in split-the-pot tickets sold. The next event will be held on March 24th in Palmer. Volunteers were requested for the event. Thanks to Sherri and Trish for serving as volunteers.

Safety: Chad Scott expressed support for West Lake Fire and the Troopers. He reported that Captain Tony April was promoted to Major.

Parks and Trails: No report.

Education: No report.

Council Coordinator: Tim Swezey reported that reservations for the sports field were already being received. Linda's new reservation system works very well.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Trish Jacob gave a report of the highlights of the financial report.

Secretary: No report. Patti Fisher commented on an item on the Borough agenda regarding land being transferred from the Borough to the Settlers Bay Coastal Park. She spoke at the Assembly in favor of the transfer, and Camden commented that she had also spoke in favor of the transfer.

President: The vote on the new Gravel ordinance was postponed by the Assembly until March 21st.

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Business:

Appointment of Nomination Committee: President Yehle appointed Sherri Rusher, Terry Boyle and Ariel Cannon to the Nominations committee. The officer positions and board chairs that are up for vote in May are President, Secretary, Board Chairs: Gaming, Education, CIP and Safety. The committee will present a list of nominees at the April meeting.

Discussion of charity to receive gaming funds: Ariel asked for a recommendation of a charity to receive our Gaming revenue. He suggested a charity that supports veterans. No objections were made to donating to a veterans' group. Wounded Warriors, Soldiers Angels were mentioned as receiving donations in the past. Dewey Bitler recommended donating to a group which serves the homeless.

Property on the Little Su: Camden reported on a property at Sykes Road Bridge on the Little Su that was for sale. The property had previously been on the CIP list but was removed upon objections by neighbors. We would need to advise the Borough of our interest in acquiring the property. The property is totally within the 100-year wetland zone. Camden showed a map of the location of the property. Dewey Bitler spoke in support of acquisition. The area is heavily used. He reported that it is a good point at which to put into the river with a canoe or kayak. Sherri Rusher also spoke in favor of supporting the acquisition. Ariel suggested that we reach out to Great Land Trust for support of acquisition. Camden report the listing for the property is 38 acres for \$160,000, and showed the MSB property record. Sherri made a motion to send a letter to the Borough in support of the acquisition and contacting Great Land Trust. The motion was seconded by Ariel. A voice vote was taken with the motion passing unanimously.

Trooper Body Camera Policy: Chad Scott presented a a draft letter commenting on the Trooper's Body Camera policy. The letter was read aloud. Patti made a motion to approve and send the letter, seconded by Terry Boyle. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Water Body Setback Ordinance: President Yehle presented a draft letter to the Borough regarding MSB 17.55 and MSB 17.80 allowing buildings to be built within 75 feet of a water body. She read through the legislation and opened up discussion. The proposed ordinance 1) allows buildings that are in existence or have commenced construction within 75 feet of a waterbody prior to April 1, 2023 are granted pre-existing legal nonconforming status in accordance with MSB 17.80.020(A). 2) It provides for building to be built "closer than 75 feet if the plans are approved by a professional structural engineer and prior to construction, the engineered plans and specifications are submitted to the MSB Planning Department for an engineering review by a public works engineer as part of a mandatory land use permit, in accordance with MSB 17.02. Dewey Bitler commented that there was no excuse for buildings to be in the wrong location and is opposed to existing buildings "being given a get out of jail free card". Patti commented that she felt that it was a welfare act for engineers. She checked the sponsorship of the ordinance and reported that it is sponsored by Assembly persons Yundt and Tew. Terry Boyle asked for a clarification of the type of structure to which the changes apply. Camden gave the list of structure normally next to the lake shore to which this change does not apply. Kendra asked for a link to the ordinance. A comment was made that it would encourage other nonconforming activity. Kim Kalmbach stated previous building had to obey the code and that new applications will probably never be reviewed. It allows people with money to pay for an engineering report in order to build closer to the water. Al Leonard commented that there are already provisions for shorter set-backs. He feels there is no reason to alter what we already have in code.

Linda Conover feels we should not tell someone that they cannot build within 75 feet.

Allison Brandenburg said that Rainbow Lake had a Lake Management Plan which described that wildlife (loons in particular) could be harmed by building closer to the lake.

Terry Boyle made motion to approve and send the letter, seconded by Elsie Tipton. A voice vote was taken with unanimous approval.

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Gravel Ordinance: President Yehle open the discussion of the Ordinance 22-131 regarding changes to the current code regarding gravel mining. The ordinance proposed by Assembly member Tew increases the limit by 5 times from 2,000 cubic yards to 10,000 cubic yard the amount of gravel which can be mined without a permit. Camden stated her belief that the main concern was the lack of public process. She read the draft letter.

Comments: Patti Fisher reported on the Assembly meeting on Tuesday, March 7th. She Feels that assembly members are not recognizing the concerns of the public. Her main concern it that it cuts the public out of the process. Sherri Rusher commented that she hoped that our Assembly person Bernier recognizes that the majority of residents are in opposition to this change, and hope that he will vote in accordance with our wishes. Camden responded to a question by Joan Tovsen that this applies to the whole Borough. Dewey commented on the large number of intelligent comments at the Assembly meeting and that he would be appalled if Mr. Bernier voted to take away our rights. Terry Boyle stated that community councils commented at the meeting on the 7th that they were in opposition. He questioned that this was not communicated to the public in adequate time for our consideration. Camden stated that it had been on the Borough agenda an adequate time. The amendments were posted at the last minute, however.

Assembly Person Ron Bernier said he did listen to the comments at the meeting. He then stated that "a lot of people are under the mistaken impression that this is for gravel pits. This is literally just to knock down hills, take it over to low spots and fill it in." His argument is that this would provide buildable lots on which houses could be built and taxes collected.

Link Fanin, a resident of Meadow Lakes, asked to addressed some of the issues. He said he could be considered a small-time developer. His comments centered on the difference in a small extraction operation and a large operation, and he expanded on Ron's claim that this was about leveling lots, not about gravel pits.

Ariel Cannon made the comment that minimum standard must be applied to these extraction operations. If we continue to lower the bar we will end up with chaos and anarchy.

Chad Scott commented that the 10,000 cubic yards does not come close to the volumes of the Sylvan or Vine pits. He is not in opposition to the change. There should be a corresponding in improve code enforcement to cover the publics concerns. It would increase property values.

Ron commented that the Assembly and the Planning Commission would be meeting on March 14 to consider the amendments. He wants to do the right thing, and would consider sunset clauses and 10,000 yards per year. He asked that you please email him your comments.

Linda thanked Link Fanin for coming to the meeting and giving his opposing comments.

Camden suggested that everyone send in their own person comments to the Borough.

A motion was made by Ariel to Cannon to send the letter of opposition to the Borough, seconded by Terry Boyle. The motion carried with 3 "No" votes.

Correspondence: None

Ariel Cannon moved to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, seconded by Patti Fisher. There were no objections to the motion.

Presentation: Spring Garden Planning by Joan Tovsen.

Patti moved to extend the meeting by an additional 7-1/2 minutes, seconded by Sherri Rusher. There were no objections to the motion.

Agency Reports:

Senator David Wilson: The Senator said that he was in Juneau working on the session. He reported that there was lots of debate going on with regard to education and retirement benefits funding.

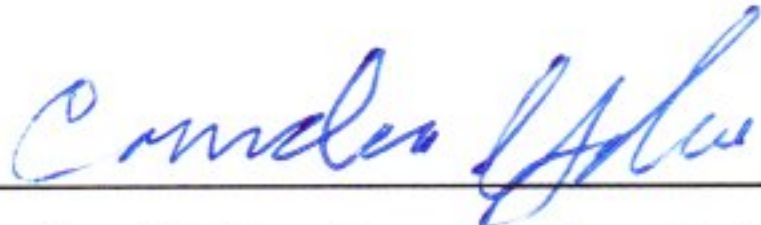
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Assemblyman Ron Bernier: There is a Borough strategic planning session on Saturday, and the Assembly meeting on Tuesday, March 21. He related that consideration is being given to removal of 10,000 cy per a project, not annually. There will be additional changes to the gravel ordinance. Please email him any suggestions. Bernier is introducing legislation that sex offenders cannot move to within 1,000 feet of a day care center. Money from the CARES Act will go to fund water and sewer facilities in Wasilla and Palmer.

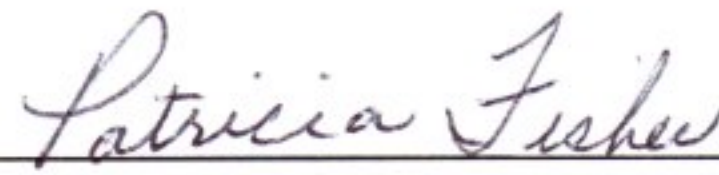
No persons asked to be heard.

Next Council Meeting: Wednesday, April 12th at 7 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 pm.



Camden Yehle, President Date 4/21/23



4/26/23

Patricia Fisher, Secretary Date