

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on September 2, 2008, at the Talkeetna Elementary School, 13798 E. Veterans Way, Talkeetna, Alaska (*Teleconferenced to MSB Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer*). The meeting was called to order at 4:13 p.m. by Mayor Curtis D. Menard for the purpose of discussions with the Boy Scouts of America.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*)
Mr. Pete Houston, Assembly District No. 2 (*arrived at 4:49 p.m.*)
Ms. Michelle R. Church, Assembly District No. 3 (*via teleconference*)
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4 (*via teleconference*)
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5 (*arrived at 4:24 p.m.*)
Mr. Tom Kluberton, Assembly District No. 7

Assemblymember absent and excused were:

Mr. Robert Wells, Assembly District No. 6

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Cheryl D. Marino, Deputy Borough Clerk
Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Director
Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director
Ms. Nancy Cameron, Land Management Agent

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Menard inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Dave Johnston, Past Board President for the Great Alaska Council.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Mr. Dennis LeBlanc, Past Board President for the Great Alaska Council:

- spoke regarding the merger of the Great Alaska Council;
- addressed the purchase of 2,200 acres of Borough land in May of 2001;
- advised on the development surrounding the current Boy Scout of America camps and the issues therein;
- remarked that the boy scouts want to experience the “wilderness;”
- informed the Assembly on the monies that had been left to the Boy Scouts of America;
- spoke regarding issues with land access to the Denali High Adventure Scout Base located within the 2,200 acres;
- introduced other members of the Boy Scouts of America who have been integral in moving the project forward;
- recounted provisions within the purchase of the 2,200 acres, which in part stated that the Boy Scouts of America could not use the property for profit purposes;
- noted the avenues available for accessing the property from land and water and the issues with each option;
- noted that the first alternative involved building a bridge over a gorge, which would cost \$1.2 to \$1.8 million;
- spoke to another alternative which would be to build a bridge over the Chulitna River, which would cost approximately \$1.6 million;
- covered the complications in building a bridge due to the increase in the Alaska State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities standards;
- spoke to the problems involved with trying to access their property across private property;
- addressed the possibility of buying a strip of property along the southern end of Blair Lake which would allow for an access to their property;
- referred to a road access which if built would run from the eastern boarder of Princess Properties and to the southern end of Blair Lake;
- stated that they would not be continuing the road to the Susitna River;
- reported that they were able to enter into agreements with SON-GLO Vista and the Alaska Hotel Properties for easements on their private roads;
- spoke to the cost of moving the existing infrastructure and to the other costs associated with building the road;
- advised that this road was the safest and most practical way to access the property;
- noted that Princess Properties wanted to exchange land for the land that was being taken to build the access to the Boy Scout of America’s property;
- advised that the Princess Properties would like to acquire the 20 acres owned by the Boy Scouts of America, in exchange for the acreage that the Boy Scouts of America would be using to build their road;
- commented on the availability of partnering with local vendors;
- stated that the Boy Scouts of America would like to lease ten acres of their property to a local horse riding vendor who currently is leasing land from Princess Properties;

- stated this cannot be done unless the Assembly lifts the restriction of no commercial business on the 2,200 acres;
- stated that the Boy Scouts of America have been working for 7.5 years to come up with a safe and practical property access solution; and
- noted that if the Assembly lifted the provision, the Boy Scouts of America could have youth on the property, in the Denali High Adventure Scout Base, as early as the summer of 2009.

Assemblymember Woods queried the fair market value of the 20 acres of land.

Mr. LeBlanc:

- stated that he did not know the value of the land;
- noted that there was no road access to the land; and
- advised that they had paid \$495,000 in 2001 for the 2,200 acres.

Assemblymember Kluberton asked if there were any additional infrastructure costs that were not mentioned.

Mr. LeBlanc:

- stated that it was necessary to move the existing infrastructure due to the density in the area;
- advised that Princess Properties recognized that this is the only practical access; and
- noted that engineers from the involved parties have inspected the lands and have created a list of things that need to be done.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- queried the cash portion of the transaction; and
- asked how the costs of the projects would be offset.

Mr. LeBlanc:

- explained the distribution of the monies as it pertains to the construction of the road; and
- further elaborated on the exchange of land.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- noted that there are multiple uses for the property;
- stated that one use is the High Adventure Scout Base; and
- queried what the rest of the property would be used for.

Mr. LeBlanc:

- provided an explanation of what “High Adventure Scout Base;”
- noted that once the youth leave the base they go on a 6 to 10 day trek;
- stated that the treks are on restricted routes; and
- provided an explanation of what the camps would entail.

Assemblymember Kluberton noted that the current program is seasonal in nature.

Assemblymember Bettine asked when the provision was written that stated that there could not be any commercial development.

Mr. Duffy stated that it was written into the condition of sale.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- requirements of the original ordinance;
- access to the property; and
- alternatives access routes to the property.

(Mayor Menard exited the meeting at 5:08 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Woods assumed the duties of the Chair.)

Discussion continued regarding:

- issues with alternative access routes; and
- maps of the subject area provided by the Borough and by the Boy Scouts of America.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke regarding his opposition to trading the land and queried the reason land would be sold that did not have access: Mr. J. Okonek.

The following person spoke regarding his support for trading lands with the Boy Scouts of America and to preserving the land in between rivers by making them recreational lands: Mr. Jok Bondurant.

The following person spoke regarding the Boy Scouts of America having knowledge that there was no access to the property prior to purchasing the property: Ms. Sandy Kogl.

The following person spoke regarding his support for the proposed access route to the Boy Scouts of America's property: Mr. Robert Coleman.

The following person spoke regarding responsible development of property: Mr. John Wilber, Park Ranger II, Alaska State Department of Natural Resources.

The following person spoke regarding her support for the Boy Scouts of America's base camp: Ms. Patti Coleman.

The following person spoke regarding his support for the chosen access route to the Boy Scouts of America's property and his support for wood heat at Borough schools: Mr. Arthur Mannix.

The following person spoke regarding his appreciation for the work that the Boy Scouts of America are doing for the park and spoke regarding alternative options for accessing their property: Mr. Dave Johnston.

The following person spoke regarding the difference in value of the property that the Boy Scouts of America want to trade, regarding the shoreline damage that was done to the Chulitna River by the Boy Scouts of America during their research, and regarding the vacation of easements across State land: Mr. Rodney Norwood Marsh.

The following person spoke regarding the public process as it pertains to choosing an access route to the Boy Scouts of America's property: Ms. Ruth Wood.

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Church asked if the access road to SON-GLO Vista Subdivision was along the property line.

Ms. Cameron:

- stated that the easement does not go to the section line;
- noted that the private easement may not exist in the future;
- stated that if a public use easement went across tract A to access the north boundary of the Boy Scout of America's property it would involve Princess McKinley Lodge and the SON-GLO Vista Subdivision; and
- added that the involved parties do not want the general public to use the access road.

Assemblymember Kvalheim stated that she would like to move forward with choosing the access route and therefore continuing the public participation process.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- expressed her appreciation for the public's comments on the issue;
- spoke to concerns with Pioneer Road;
- stated that she did not have any qualms with the 20 acre land swap; and
- remarked that there are other important issues to hear on this topic.

Assemblymember Houston:

- reiterated Assemblymember Kvalheim's comments regarding moving forward with the public process;
- queried if there was another way to access the property;
- suggested having an independent company look at possible access routes;
- stated that the land trade seemed to be a good transaction, which would be in character with the original land sale; and
- spoke to his experiences when he was a Boy Scout.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- provided information on the access road that Princess Properties uses;
- spoke regarding his preference for building a road to access the Boy Scouts of America's property;
- noted the possibility of leasing the property instead of trading it and the availability to set terms of use for that 20 acres;

- asked Administration to move forward with an ordinance that laid out the terms of the agreement as stated in the handout by the Boy Scouts of America;
- asked the Boy Scouts of America to repair the road to the bridge test site;
- opined that it should be returned to a vegetative state;
- stated that he wanted it clear in the agreement that there would not be a “for-profit” access provided to the river through the Boy Scout of America’s property;
- opined his desire to keep the Boy Scout of America’s camp as pure as possible; and
- encouraged moving forward with the ordinance to continue the public process.

Assemblymember Woods:

- stated that she understood that Princess Properties needed more room;
- noted that the Boy Scouts of America purchased the land at \$223 per acre;
- remarked that the value of the land had increased; and
- asked if there was a way to obtain the current value of the land.

Mr. Duffy stated that he would have staff look into it.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

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 LYNNE WOODS, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

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 LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 09/16/08