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**Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Denali Borough Planning Commission  
June 16, 2021**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Presiding Officer Kesslyn TENCH called the regular meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Planning Commissioners present were: James WARD, Erik HAUGEN (arrived at 6:34 PM), Steve JONES, Susan BRAUN, Lee LIGHTFOOT, Baxter MERCER, and Kesslyn TENCH. Mayor Clay Walker was also present.

Planning Commissioners that were absent: Mark MENKE.

James WARD MOVED to excuse Commissioner MENKE. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE by show of hands to excuse PASSED unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Baxter MERCER MOVED to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA PASSED by show of hands.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Baxter MERCER MOVED to approve the May 19, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. The MOTION was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES PASSED by show of hands.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**PLATS AND CONDITIONAL USES**

There were no plats or conditional uses for consideration.

**REPORTS**

**MAYOR**

1 Mayor Clay Walker reviewed information in the attached written report.  
2 (ATTACHMENT A)

3  
4 **BOROUGH PLANNER**

5 Denali Borough Planner Marsha Lambert reported the following:

- 6 • The borough recently sold a parcel of land in the Panguingue Creek  
7 Subdivision
  - 8 • The Assembly approved the Land Management Annual Work Plan.
- 9

10 **PLANNING COMMISSIONER REPORT FROM THE ASSEMBLY MEETING**

11 Susan BRAUN reviewed agenda items discussed at the most recent assembly  
12 meeting.

13  
14 **COMMUNICATION AND APPEARANCE REQUEST**

15 There were no communication or appearance requests.

16  
17 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

18 **REVIEW OF DENALI BOROUGH CODE 9.12: STREET NAMING METHODS**

19 Steve JONES MOVED to approve the recommended changes to Denali Borough  
20 Code 9.12 Titled: Street Naming Methods. The motion was seconded.

21  
22 Steve JONES MOVED to change the reference in Section 9.12.040 #2. From “within  
23 the borough” to “within an ambulance coverage area according to the map below”.  
24 The motion was seconded.

25  
26 The motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY by roll call vote.

27  
28 Steve JONES MOVED to remove “that the exception complies with NENA  
29 standards” from Section 9.12.040 B. The motion was seconded.

30  
31 The MOTION FAILED by unanimous roll call vote.

32  
33 The MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO DENALI  
34 BOROUGH CODE 9.12 AS AMENDED PASSED by unanimous roll call vote.

35  
36 **NEW BUSINESS**

37 There was no new business to consider.

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39 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

40 There were no public comments.

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42 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

43 Commissioners voiced their appreciation for a productive meeting and stated their  
44 appreciation for the in-person option to attend the meeting.

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**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY**

Baxter MERCER offered to attend the Wednesday, July 14, 2021 Denali Borough Assembly meeting and provide the Planning Commission report.

**TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting time is Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Presiding Officer Kesslyn TENCH adjourned the meeting at 7:23 PM.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kesslyn TENCH, Presiding Officer

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amber Renshaw, Clerk

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

# DENALI BOROUGH

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*Clay Walker, Mayor*

## **June 2021 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly**

This report speaks primarily to non-agenda items. Agenda items will be discussed in meeting.

### **Alaska Tourism Restoration Act**

- The borough appreciates the hard work of our Congressional Delegation in helping to pass the above-named act, which allows for a temporary “work around” of the law that requires foreign-flagged ships to visit a foreign (Canadian) port. The criteria, however, includes a round trip voyage - so Gulf crossings, the bread and butter of the Denali cruise industry, will not be sailing this year.

### **Visitation Outlook and Industry Issues**

- Checking in with a cross section of Denali-area businesses, many operators of lodgings and activities are reporting strong bookings. Of the larger hotels, the Grande/Bluffs is reporting the highest occupancy levels, with a number of nights sold out.
- The borough worked with the National Park Service to best understand the local COVID-19 risk levels in order to make the most informed decisions regarding mitigation measures. We are pleased the Park Service increased the seating capacity on buses into the park, which offers additional capacity to visit the heart of the park.
- Many businesses are reporting difficulties finding employees and many are reducing offerings and/or hours of operation due to the labor shortage. Additionally, businesses are impacted by supply chain interruptions. For example, one activity provider reported they are limited in their growth potential because they cannot find a van for sale anywhere in Alaska.

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Update**

- Borough staff continue weekly meetings with FEMA and the State of Alaska regarding our application for Public Assistance to reimburse the borough for COVID-19 response and testing program expenses. The outlook is positive for reimbursement of these eligible expenses.

### **State of Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Updates**

- The State has “stood down” its Incident Command located at JBER and the functions of the IC have moved over to the DHSS Emergency Operations Center.
- The borough and the DHSS have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the provision of COVID testing and vaccination services going forward through March 2022. The expenses incurred within the Horizon Medical contract, who is providing testing and vaccination services this summer, will be reimbursed through this MOA.

### **June Vaccination Clinics**

- Horizon is hosting vaccination clinics located at the Tri-Valley Community Center. The next scheduled clinics are on June 11 and June 17.
- Currently all three authorized vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson) are being provided. Visit [horizonmedicalak.com](http://horizonmedicalak.com) for more information and to make your appointment today.
- The borough's vaccination rate for those 12 and older stands at 62%, the highest in the Railbelt. By comparison, the rate for the Southeast Fairbanks Area (which includes Delta Junction and Tok) sits at 31%. I encourage all eligible to consider the many personal and public benefits of vaccination.

### **Legislative Update**

- Not much has changed since last month's update. The current special session (number one of two scheduled) has born little fruit, with the Permanent Fund Dividend amount and an associated potential overdraw from the Earnings Reserve Account, serving as the main sticking point. We remain hopeful that a number of positive priorities (such as Community Assistance funding, Major School Maintenance funding, and federal ARPA relief funds allocations for trails funding and aid to revenue-impacted communities) will remain in the budget at the end of the day/month/fiscal year.
- The second special session, scheduled for August, will focus on Alaska's structural fiscal policy - including the PFD, potential new revenue in the form of a broad-based tax, the spending cap, questions of embedding components in the constitution, and requiring a vote of the people.

### **Staffing Update**

- Our solid waste hire, to replace the outgoing seasonal landfill gatekeeper Kevin Walker, is Travis Olson, who formerly served the Denali Borough as a Lead Equipment Operator. Welcome back, Travis. The operational flexibility of hiring an operator into what was the gatekeeper position frees our Operations Manager Scott Wright to get more office work done and to attend to needs at the transfer stations.
- With our Treasurer Wendi Planty moving to Montana and Finance Clerk Connie MacMaster training to serve as the next Treasurer, Administrative Aide Sherry Shorey is training to move into the Finance Clerk role. We are pleased to have such capable and flexible staff who are stepping into new roles – especially in this year when financial management has grown in importance and complexity. The Administrative Aide job opening is posted and interviews will be conducted shortly.

### **Other Meetings and such of note attended since last meeting:**

- May 13 National Assn of Counties Board of Directors Meeting
- May 19 Denali Borough Planning Commission Meeting
- May 19 Bison/Antler Project Update Meeting
- May 20 Denali Borough School Board Meeting
- May 24 Alaska Municipal League Board of Directors Meeting
- May 26 Tour of Clear AFS Long Range Discrimination Radar
- May 27 Meeting with three members of the Governor's Economic Development Team
- June 2 Denali Zero Landfill Initiative Meeting
- June 7 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Advisory Group Meeting
- June 7 Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony at Grand Opening of First National Bank Healy Branch. I was sorry to miss this notable event!

Happy June, happy peak of the light cycle. As always, feel free to contact me or staff with questions.

-Clay