

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

June 2022 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

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

Street Sign Grant Application

- Great news from the USDA Rural Economic Development Grant Program! Our grant application for \$91,820 to assist with the street sign installation project was accepted. Award documents will be processed in the coming weeks. The borough does have a match on this of about \$22,000. Acceptance of the grant and allocation of the match will be via Assembly Ordinance.

Denali Borough Redistricting Committee

- At their May 23rd meeting, the Committee passed a resolution supporting changing the Planning Commission composition from a Charter-mandated nine members to: "to be defined by the Denali Borough Assembly Ordinance". One reason for dealing separately with the Planning Commission composition is that the PC is not an elected body and the apportionment mandate does not apply to the Commission.
- The Committee will consider different new apportionment plans for election districts within the borough at their next meeting on June 14th.

Legislative/Admin Update

- We are currently awaiting the Governor's action regarding the annual State budgets (Operating and Capital). He has 30 days from legislative passage to veto line items or to sign as-is. I have communicated our hope that the Alaska Long Trail funding, which includes \$3.7 million for a Carlo Creek to Crabbie's Crossing trail connector, remains intact.

Solid Waste Updates

- The Denali Borough Landfill bought an old but functional two-wheel drive Brush Truck from Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department. Our Landfill is required to have fire suppression capability in the event of a fire in the pit. This truck runs well and will serve that purpose well. It can also serve other water needs at the facility such as dust suppression.
- New D8 Update:
 - Those on the Assembly in spring of 2020 will remember that the planned purchase a replacement D8 Dozer (the primary workhorse at the landfill) was the first casualty of COVID crisis management. With more fiscal certainty and comfort, we are renewing the pursuit. Two years ago, the cost was \$850,000 and now it is around \$1million with delivery time around 10 months out. We have over \$700,000 in our Equipment Reserve Fund. At their June 23rd meeting, the Finance Committee will consider different purchase

and financing plans. Final approval will require an allocation ordinance to be approved by the Assembly.

- Thanks to those who participated, or will participate in, Community Clean-Up activities. The borough does accept yellow bagged roadside litter for free at all three sites. Let's keep our borough clean and beautiful!

New Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Canyon Clinic for COVID services

- Utilizing remaining State of Alaska Department of Health and Human Services MOA funding, the borough is working with Canyon Clinic to offer COVID testing for those locals who are underinsured and to provide additional vaccination opportunities.

Antler Ridge Project Update

- On June 4, Sarah and I participated in the National Trails Day Volunteer workday at Antler Ridge with the NPS Trail Crew and local volunteers. We punched in a new connector trail from the new parking area to the existing social trail. Thanks to Denali National Park and the many volunteers! One can now park at the new trailhead and hike the old trail, with more improvements to come.

National Association of Counties (NACo) Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference May 18-20

- This conference, which rotates between western states, was held in Anchorage. About 400 County Commissioners or other officials attended. Many of Alaska's boroughs were represented. I attended for the Denali Borough and I serve on the NACo Board of Directors.
- Conference workshop topics included rural development, partnering with federal agencies, tourism economies, and more. I was a speaker for a workshop titled "Coal Communities: Investing in the Intergovernmental Partnership".

Staffing

- The borough hired Forest Shreeve into the Emergency Manager/Project Coordinator role. Forest has significant municipal experience gained at the City of Nenana, where he crafted grant applicants, managed finances, developed projects and more. He starts June 20.
- We are currently accepting application for the Administrative Assistant position and will be scheduling interviews soon.

Other Meetings of note this past month:

- May 16 - Attended the GVEA Meeting in Healy regarding Healy Unit One. I provided comment in support of the plant and the necessary investment in additional emissions controls.
- May 17 - Participated in an Alaska Municipal League Board of Directors meeting in Anchorage.
- May 17 - Met with new National Park Service Regional Director Sarah Creachbaum in NPS Anchorage office.
- May 24 - Met with Nolan Klouda and others working on the Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to provide input regarding Denali Borough priorities.
- May 29 - Met with Senator Murkowski who was visiting the area.
- June 2 - Met with the Board of the Denali Citizens Council to provide updates and answer questions.

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

- Clay