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**Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Denali Borough Planning Commission  
Denali Borough Office  
October 16, 2024**

**REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Presiding Officer James Ward called the regular meeting to order at 6:11 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Planning Commissioners present were: Zack RUSSELL, James WARD, Steve JONES, and Susan BRAUN.

Mayor Chris Noel was also present.

Planning Commissioners absent were: Baxter MERCER and Mark MENKE.

Susan BRAUN MOVED TO EXCUSE THE ABSENT MEMBERS. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO EXCUSE PASSED by unanimous consent.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Denali Borough resident Paul Shearer provided the attached written comment and references (SEE ATTACHMENT A).

Denali Borough resident George Haskins encouraged the Commission to consider adjustments to the road categories and material requirements described in the Road Construction Standards.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Susan BRAUN MOVED to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA PASSED by unanimous consent.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Susan BRAUN MOVED to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2024 Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded.

The VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES PASSED by unanimous consent.

**COMMUNICATION AND APPEARANCE REQUEST**

There were no Communication and Appearance requests.

**REPORTS**

1 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT**

2 Community Development Director Stephanie Ford provided the attached written  
3 report (SEE ATTACHMENT B).

4  
5 **BOROUGH PLANNER**

6 Denali Borough Planner Marsha Lambert reported the following:

- 7 • There will be a Planning Commissioner training offered on October 27<sup>th</sup> with
- 8 the Planning Conference scheduled for the spring of 2025.
- 9 • The Denali Borough is now ready to accept lease applications for Denali
- 10 Borough lands.
- 11 • Work continues to develop a street sign maintenance and replacement plan.
- 12 • Reported that there will be a lease application preview for the Commission at
- 13 their November meeting.
- 14 • Work continues to share our addressing system with the emergency dispatch
- 15 facility in Fairbanks.

16  
17 **MAYOR**

18 Mayor Chris Noel highlighted information provided in the attached written report  
19 (SEE ATTACHMENT C).

20  
21 **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT FROM THE ASSEMBLY**

22 Planning Commissioner James Ward reported that the Assembly is considering a  
23 grant program for road maintenance and road improvement projects and relayed  
24 that the Assembly is interested in a joint work session with the Commission  
25 regarding road standards and the road grant programs.

26  
27 **PLATS AND CONDITIONAL USES**

28 There were no plats and conditional uses to consider.

29  
30 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

31 **ROAD CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS**

32 Steve JONES MOVED TO APPROVE the Denali Borough Road Construction  
33 Standards. The motion was seconded.

34  
35 Steve JONES MOVED TO AMEND the Denali Borough Road Construction  
36 Standards as follows:

- 37 • Change the word “permit” to “letter of non-objection” throughout the
- 38 document.
- 39 • Remove the word “certified” and “certification” throughout the document.
- 40 • Change the word “category” to “classification” and adjust the classification
- 41 chart to match the design standards described in Denali Borough Code
- 42 9.10.150.
- 43 • Remove the reference to “shotrock”.

1 The motion to amend was seconded. The VOTE TO AMEND PASSED by  
2 unanimous show of hands.

3  
4 Steve JONES MOVED TO POSTPONE ROAD CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS to  
5 the next meeting. The motion was seconded.

6  
7 The VOTE TO POSTPONE PASSED by unanimous show of hands.

8  
9 **NEW BUSINESS**

10 **CONCEPTUAL DESIGN – PANGUINGUE STAMPEDE SUBDIVISION**

11 The Commission reviewed the conceptual design and recommended the following  
12 adjustments to the design:

- 13 • Adjust the design orientation.
- 14 • Include a scale for reference.
- 15 • Adjust the color and patterns used to distinguish items specified in the legend  
16 to clarify the differences.

17  
18 **CONCEPTUAL DESIGN - YANERT SUBDIVISION**

19 The Commission reviewed the conceptual design and recommended the following  
20 adjustments to the design:

- 21 • Keep and modify Concept A by removing some of the lots located in wet  
22 terrain.
- 23 • Align the legend colors with the design colors
- 24 • Include a scale for reference.
- 25 • Adjust the color and patterns used to distinguish items specified in the legend  
26 to clarify the differences.

27  
28 The Commission requested that the adjustments be made by Design Alaska with a  
29 timeline for an updated design review at the February Planning Commission  
30 Meeting.

31  
32 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

33 Denali Borough residents Dorothy DeBlauw and George Haskins thanked the  
34 Commission for their work and expressed appreciation for the knowledge shared  
35 during the meeting discussion.

36  
37 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

38 Commissioners expressed appreciation for a productive meeting.

39  
40 **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY**

41 Commissioner WARD offered to provide the Planning Commission report at the  
42 Wednesday, November 13, 2024 Denali Borough Assembly meeting at the  
43 Anderson City Hall.

44  
45 **TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

1 The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 6:00pm at the Denali  
2 Borough Office.

3  
4 **ADJOURNMENT**

5 Presiding Officer James WARD adjourned the meeting at 9:32 PM.

6  
7  
8 APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
9 James WARD, Deputy Presiding Officer

10  
11  
12  
13 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
14 Amber Renshaw, Clerk Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Fw: Design standards for AKDOT&PF**

---

**From** Amber Renshaw <arenschow@denaliborough.com>

**Date** Wed 10/16/2024 4:42 PM

**To** Chris Noel <cnoel@denaliborough.com>

**Bcc** AKJames.Ward@gmail.com <AKJames.Ward@gmail.com>; Mark Menke <mmenke@denaliborough.com>; Mark Menke <rnrmenke@hotmail.com>; Baxter Mercer <bmercer@denaliborough.com>; Susan Braun <sbraun@denaliborough.com>; SUSAN BRAUN <susanb@mtaonline.net>; yanert <yanert@mtaonline.net>; zachery russell <zackrussell@denalishowcat.com>

Public Comment from Paul Shearer. I will have paper copies at the October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
~amber

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] This message was sent from outside the company. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Public Comment Denali Borough  
arenschow,

The purpose of this first email is to forward my initial public comment to reference the Alaska State DOT road classifications. This first email only forwards the initial references in an email from;

Nathan Stephan, P.E.  
Regional Traffic and Safety Engineer, Northern Region  
Alaska DOT

Note my request to Stephan Nathan was only for a reference to the (Low Volume) Rural Local Road.

Future emails will provide additional references of AK DOT docs and of Federal Highways docs.

Classifications:  
Local Road (urban or rural) (level, rolling, or mountainous)  
Collector Road (Major or Minor)  
Arterial Road

See forwarded email below for these initial road specifications for each road classification:

Alaska Highway Preconstruction Manual (AK DOT guidance document for developing and designing highway and road projects)  
<https://dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/dcsprecon/preconmanual.shtml>

Chapter 11 covers highway design.  
Starting on page 1130-7

See page 1130-17 to 1130-12.

For HEALY Rural Local Road that has Less than 400 ADT (Less than 400 Vehicles per Day in the year of design: Annual Daily Traffic (ADT) )

SEE additional document:  
NCHRP Report 362 ([https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp\\_rpt\\_362.pdf](https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_362.pdf))

SEE:

PDF page 14, Doc page 6:  
Figure 1. Elements of rural highway cross sections. **Page 5 of 10**

**ATTACHMENT A**

End of References

I will send a later email of Public Comment with more detail or better organized references.  
Hope this initial email helps.

Paul Shearer  
261 Diamond Place, PO Box 29, Healy AK 99743  
503-789-3534

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stephan, Nathan J (DOT)** <[nathan.stephan@alaska.gov](mailto:nathan.stephan@alaska.gov)>  
Date: Fri, Oct 4, 2024 at 11:27 AM  
Subject: Design standards for AKDOT&PF  
To: [paul.gregory.shearer@gmail.com](mailto:paul.gregory.shearer@gmail.com) <[paul.gregory.shearer@gmail.com](mailto:paul.gregory.shearer@gmail.com)>

Hi Paul,

Here's the link to the Alaska Highway Preconstruction Manual (our guidance document for developing and designing highway and road projects)

<https://dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/dcsprecon/preconmanual.shtml>

Chapter 11 covers highway design.

Starting on page 1130-7, you'll find the lane and shoulder widths for new construction and reconstruction (for design year ADT's 0-2000). These were the tables I was discussing with you on the phone. It looks like they're referencing Table 29(a-f) in the NCHRP Report 362 ([https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp\\_rpt\\_362.pdf](https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_362.pdf))

Hope this helps,



**Nathan Stephan, P.E.**

Regional Traffic and Safety Engineer, Northern Region

**Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**

Office: 907-451-5381

*Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure.*



# **DENALI BOROUGH**

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR UPDATE

October 9, 2024

### **Land Use**

- **Subdivision Draft Concept Designs for Stampede Panguingue and Yanert**
  - Borough staff have received final draft concept designs from Design Alaska contractors and plan to present to the Planning Commission on October 16.
- **Antler Ridge Area**
  - Vault toilet closed on September 16 and we plan to open it in May when conditions allow. Parking lot will not be plowed over the winter.
  - Next coordination meeting on 10/31 to discuss progress on environmental and historic compliance for Phase 2 (trail construction).
- **BLM Recreation Summit**
  - A member of our Community and Outdoor Recreation Committee (CORC) will be attending this summit on October 9 in Fairbanks. The summit goal is to solicit feedback on outdoor recreation challenges and opportunities on BLM-managed public lands in Alaska.
- **Community and Outdoor Recreation Plan**
  - Formatting took longer than anticipated and there is an adjusted timeline for presenting the plan to the Planning Commission and Assembly.
    - Oct 14 - CORC work session to review draft plan
    - Nov 1-30 – public comment period
    - December – CORC meeting to review public comments
    - January – present to Planning Commission
    - February – present to Assembly

### **Transportation**

- **Denali Area Airport Study**
  - Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting on September 24 and public meeting scheduled for the evening of October 10 at the Tri-Valley Community Center in Healy.
- **Separated Pathways**
  - Attending monthly coordination meeting with partners at the DOT&PF and NPS as projects move forward.
  - We did not receive requested CDS funding in FY25, but will meet with Murkowski's staffers in November to discuss future CDS funding applications.
  - Attended quarterly meeting for update on MOAs with DOT for separated pathways.
    - Antler to Suntrana – Preliminary engineering and field work being completed

- Healy Schools – are further behind on project schedule with plans to conduct a public engagement session this school year.
- **Railroad Realignment Project**
  - Borough did not move forward with applying for a Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant to realign the railroad and eliminate the at-grade highway crossing at MP 235 and separated crossing at MP237, but initial project planning will be funded through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) through a recently passed amendment. Borough efforts will turn to advocacy for an exclusive use easement exchange to facilitate the realignment.

## **Community Development**

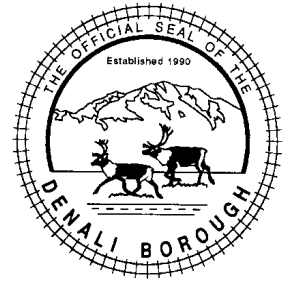
- **Fall Flu Vaccine Clinic**
  - Planning for a clinic from 3-6 pm on Thursday, November 7th at the Tri-Valley Community Center. We are working on securing potential funding for the clinic from the Department of Health.
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Grant**
  - We heard feedback from the EDA on our original application, made requested adjustments, and are waiting to hear back on the status.
- **Upcoming Grant Applications**
  - Community Change Grant (EPA) – working with Alaska Municipal League and School District on an application with school infrastructure improvements as the “heart” of the application. Now exploring wrapping improvements to the Tri-Valley Community Center and McKinley Village Community Center into the grant to create a network of 5 community resilience hubs in the Denali Borough.
  - Rural Professional Housing Grant Program – Decided not to apply for this grant cycle but gathered information from training to support potential future applications.
  - Recreation Economy for Rural Communities – exploring whether this grant program is a good fit for the Denali Borough.

Stephanie Ford  
Community Development Director



# DENALI BOROUGH

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Website: [www.denaliborough.org](http://www.denaliborough.org)



*Chris Noel, Mayor*

## October 2024 Mayor's Report

### Administrative

- Administrative Clerk Salena Mirasole and Finance Clerk Nicole Dalton enrolled in a three-month professional development academy hosted by the National Association of Counties (NACo). The borough once again received a scholarship to offset enrolment costs. Borough and other program alumni have found excellent value in the training received, and we are glad to support our staff on their ongoing professional development journey.
- Tax audits complete- The borough contracted with Alliance CPAs to complete code required tax audits. After selecting operators at random, the auditor worked with two overnight accommodations and one alcohol operator to complete audit requirements. We appreciate the cooperation of our operators in the audit process, concurrent with the end of another summer season.
- Career and Technical Education Meeting- I attended a meeting at the Tri-Valley school regarding the Perkins V career and technical education grant. Principal Gurley walked through the current program and solicited feedback from attendees.
- AML Winter Conference- The Alaska Municipal League Winter Conference is coming, December 9<sup>th</sup>- 13<sup>th</sup>. I encourage our elected and appointed officials to consider attending. Stay tuned for the agenda, and please contact Salena if you have any questions.

### Solid Waste

- NC machinery was able to diagnose and fix an issue preventing the loader from starting. They found a corroded circuit board which prevented the machine from starting. The 2012 loader has ~12,000 hours and we will need to eventually consider a replacement timeline for this key piece of equipment. After at least three trips to the landfill, NC was able to troubleshoot and repair the equipment. In the meantime, having the excavator on-site proved to be valuable, as we were able to keep up on daily cover requirements by loading the rock truck out of the back cover material development area.
- We completed the sale of the D8 Waste Handler through GovDeals. With a final sales price of \$100,000, we didn't receive as much as expected however the machine will stay in state, and hopefully provide many more years of operating life in the private sector. The D6 did not sell during the initial auction, and we subsequently listed and sold it via a live Ritchie Bro's auction in Wasilla, fetching \$25,000.
- Community Cleanup update: The City of Anderson removed 312,000 pounds of refuse from a condemned lot, improving the health and safety of the community. At their September meeting, the Assembly waived \$23,744 in tipping fees, in addition to the \$5,000 I initially waived.

### Land Planning and Community Development

- Working with Design Alaska, we took advantage of other imagery work taking place in the borough and collected aerial imagery of the three areas under consideration for a new borough residential subdivision. Additionally, on our behalf, Design Alaska submitted a request for a wetland determination from the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). This administrative determination helps guide the final lot, road, and utility layout. The determination can be a month's prolonged process.

- Panguingue Lignite- We just learned that a contract with Stantec was fruitful, and they were able to perform a wetland delineation on the northern half of Panguingue Lignite subdivision area. Stantec found no wetlands on the northern half of the parcel, providing needed certainty to move forward with a final design. Stantec prioritized the northern half of the site to focus on a potential Phase 1 of the subdivision development.

### **Items of Interest**

- The Antler Ridge trailhead toilet was cleaned, closed, and locked for the season. By all accounts, this was a successful inaugural year for the borough's first trailhead. Four years ago, this month, the Department of Transportation held an open house to collect feedback on the concept. Field surveys were conducted this year in preparation for the next phase of the project, including an ADA loop to the bluff overlooking Antler Creek, and picnic tables near the parking lot.
- Rural Professional Housing Training- Community Development Director Stephanie Ford and I attended this beneficial training about the Rural Professional Housing Grant Program. Administered by Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, this is a promising opportunity to help construct 1-4 unit housing for healthcare workers, teachers, or first responders including law enforcement and EMS. We'll work with the school district, clinic, and fire department to target this opportunity in future grant cycles. A 15% match is required.
- Parks Highway MP 235 at-grade crossing elimination- We were very pleased to learn that the realignment project was included in the STIP Amendment 1, recently partially accepted by the Federal Highway Administration. Of note, the \$64 million dollar project is included, with estimated construction to occur after 2030. The borough will continue to advocate for this project, including the necessary easement exchange between Denali National Park and Alaska Railroad.
- Emergency Manager Forest Shreeve and I met with Lions Club members at the Otto Lake park to discuss the vaulted toilet project. The club continues to work with Golden Valley Electric Association to drop power, and it will be helpful to coordinate the toilet project in conjunction with other identified improvements.
- Denali Area Airport Planning Study- There is a public meeting to present information about the planning process, and collect feedback and input, October 10<sup>th</sup> at the Tri-Valley Community from 5-7 PM.

### **Denali Borough School District**

- Congratulations to Superintendent Dan Polta, Alaska Superintendent of the Year 2025. Dan has served as Superintendent since 2015 and has been a tireless advocate for Denali students and staff. He is a dedicated partner in administration, regularly attending Denali Borough Assembly meetings to provide updates on the facilities, staffing, and share out bits of the excellent work happening across the district. Dan represents the Interior Region B on the Alaska Superintendents Association Board and is a trusted resource for other rural districts. Go Dan!
- Work continues to get a second basketball goal installed at the Tri-Valley school outdoor court, before winter sets in. This project is the last piece of the improvements started with a resurfacing the borough took on last year.

### **AMLJIA/APEI Merger**

- The borough utilizes the Alaska Municipal League Joint Insurance Association (AMLJIA), a shared risk pool of Alaska municipalities and school districts, for insurance coverage and training. The alternative coverage option, Alaska Public Entity Insurance (APEI), and AMLJIA have been working towards a merger for many years. The combined organization will offer expanded services, keeping the staff of the two organizations, but offering the specialties of each to the entire Alaska public entity pool.

Happy Fall. Feel free to call or email me or staff if you have any questions.

- Chris