

DENALI BOROUGH

PO Box 480 – Healy AK 99743
Phone (907) 683-1330 – Fax (907) 683-1340
dbgovt@mtaonline.net
www.denaliborough.org



DENALI BOROUGH, ALASKA RESOLUTION NO. 20-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE DENALI BOROUGH ASSEMBLY REGARDING THE TEKLANIKA FOOTBRIDGE PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING THE REMOVAL OF DERELICT FAIRBANKS CITY BUS 142 (THE BUS).

WHEREAS, with support of the three families of those who lost their lives in association with the bus, the engineering firm WSJ presented a proposal of project feasibility, preliminary engineering analysis, and conceptual level design of a footbridge spanning the Teklanika River to the Denali Borough Assembly on February 12th; and

WHEREAS, the request of the borough was not to fund the study, or bridge construction, but to serve as a project sponsor, applying for the necessary permits and easements and potentially taking ownership responsibility and long-term maintenance of the footbridge; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough Assembly did not take action upon this request, but did express sympathy to the families, a desire to help reduce emergencies along the trail, and concerns about a borough role and potential liabilities and maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, at the same meeting, it was noted that the most likely location for placing a footbridge across the Teklanika River is actually not on state land, but to the north within Denali National Park; and

WHEREAS, derelict Fairbanks City Bus 142 the bus, an abandoned 1946 International Harvester K-5, was hauled into its current location near the Sushana River on the Stampede Trail around 1960; and

WHEREAS, the bus is now in such a state of disrepair, with broken windows, that it does not effectively serve as shelter for travelers; and

WHEREAS, the bus has become a popular destination for travelers with an interest in the stories, books, and movies about Christopher McCandless, who died there; and

WHEREAS, Claire Ackermann, in 2010, and Veranika Nikanava, in 2019, both drowned while crossing the Teklanika River enroute to or from the bus; and

WHEREAS, numerous rescues provided by National Park Service, Alaska State Troopers, the Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department and local residents have utilized valuable federal, state, and local resources; and

WHEREAS, the borough recognizes the hazards inherent in travel across Alaska's wild lands and understands that adventure seekers will continue to pursue their personal goals; and

WHEREAS, the borough believes that moving the bus will result in fewer dangerous river crossings, thus making the borough a safer place with fewer burdens upon local volunteer emergency responders and state public safety officers.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Denali Borough Assembly respectfully declines the offer to sponsor a footbridge across the Teklanika River on state land.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Denali Borough Assembly supports the State of Alaska working with state and federal agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, toward a plan to remove the bus from its current location.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Denali Borough supports the State of Alaska placing safety messaging signage at the Stampede Trail and near the Teklanika River crossing.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Denali Borough Assembly this 11th day of March, 2020.



Mayor Clay Walker

ATTEST: 

Connie MacMaster, Deputy Clerk

