



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 24, 2024
TO: Mayor and Assembly
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

U.S. Rep. Peltola Staff Meeting: On Friday, July 19, Rep. Peltola's Chief of Staff Anton McParland and Special Assistant Garrett Mueller met with the Borough Mayor and the Borough Manager to discuss Borough issues.

Marijuana Establishments Within the Vicinity Schools – Improvements: At the June 17th Planning Commission (PC) Meeting, a PC member stated that the proposed marijuana retail facility scheduled to be heard was located near a new school. The original recommendation was to approve the establishment. The meeting was ultimately rescheduled so staff could investigate further. The new meeting was held on July 15, and staff recommended denial because it was determined that the school was within the 1,000-foot buffer zone of a school, against Borough code.

Staff conducted another site visit and found that Knik Charter School had no signage. Although Knik Charter School was in the mailing vicinity, no comments were received. Additionally, most other charter schools in the district show the Borough as the property owner. Knik Charter School property lists Knik Tribe as the owner.

As a result of this, the following procedures/changes will be implemented:

- Staff contacted GIS to ensure the appropriate and most up-to-date layers are being used within our mapping systems when researching the local area subject to applications of this type. Staff will also expand the sources of maps referenced in these applications to include borough and non-borough-generated maps.
- Staff have discussed updating the CUP application to require the applicant to contact the school district. It is proposed that the applicant verify school locations with the school district and initial the application for completion before submission. The department requires similar confirmations on other application types, such as material extraction.

- We will expand the public notice to include the schools identified in the application and target district officials for comment, even though the code does not specifically require this. The code requires notice to property owners within 600 feet of the subject property, and the school separation distance requirement is 1,000 feet. So, sending notices to known schools and school district officials will exceed the code's requirements.
- Staff will update the marijuana-related CUP checklist and expand the radius of our site visits to identify potential K-12 educational sites.

Port MacKenzie Quarter Report, April - June 2024: The following information is provided to keep the Assembly apprised of ongoing operations, maintenance, and business development at the Port during April, May, and June 2024.

Vessel Traffic: May and June had vessel traffic at the deep-draft and barge docks.

- In May, the port docked the M/V African Weaver, a bulk carrier owned by an Australian shipping company measuring 180 meters long by 30 meters wide. The ship was contracted by Quality Asphalt and Paving (QAP) to bring in 32,000 tons of cement from Vietnam. The ship was in port for 7 days, and the off-load consisted of hoisting 1.5-ton super sacks of cement onto flatbed trailers and then transporting the bags to warehouses up the road for storage.
- In May, two barge load-outs utilized the bow ramp on the barge dock. Cruz Construction owns the barges, and the cargo was transported to construction projects in western Alaska.

Maintenance:

- In May, a hydrographic survey of the barge and deep-draft docks to the north and south was completed by R&M Consultants as part of the barge dock condition and assessment survey. Bathymetry mapping is done regularly so we can compare the data from previous years' bathymetry and monitor the seafloor near our facility for any changes. We still do not require any dredging at Port MacKenzie.
- A barge dock condition and assessment survey and report were completed in June. The assessment provides the Borough with information on the barge dock's estimated life, its current conditions, and recommendations for repair and replacement.
- Western Marine Construction, the contractor hired to install the pile sleeve on the deep-draft dock piles, began mobilizing equipment and supplies in early June. They also began installing sacrificial anodes on the face of the sheet pile barge dock.
- In June, MSB staff from O&M began installing and retrofitting the terminal building with wiring for a new security camera system.

Conveyor:

- In April, Northern Gravel and Trucking removed a conveyor section from the trestle, which was placed there temporarily to allow the upcoming cement ship full access to the deep-draft dock.
- We continue exploring options to remove the A-frame from the trestle, allowing for more diversified shipments at the deep-draft dock.

Grants:

- The EDA-funded Pile Sleeve project was awarded to Western Construction on March 4, 2024, to install pile sleeves on 32 piles of the deep-draft dock and place anodes on the deep-draft dock and barge dock bulkhead to provide cathodic protection.

- In May, we submitted a grant application to the USDOT Maritime Administration, Port Infrastructure Development Program, seeking funds for a barge haul-out ramp.
- In June, we submitted a grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for a Port Security Grant. If successful, the grant funds will help the port electrify the upper gate, add fencing, and enhance cybersecurity. We also submitted a US Marine Highway Program grant for a telehandler forklift.
- In May, the Alaska Railroad Corporation submitted an application for the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension (PMRE) project under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program. The CRISI submission requests ~\$279 million to complete the PMRE and is this project's first federal grant application. Previous funding totaling \$184 million was provided through State Legislative grants.

Port Commission: The Port Commission has a new member, Christopher Gerteisen, from Nova Minerals.

Barge Haul Out Ramp: Work is underway on the design, engineering, and permitting of the proposed barge haul-out ramp; the work is being done by Moffat & Nichol.

Business Development and Marketing:

- The Borough is working on the following prospects:
 - Contractor Use of Port MacKenzie Docks
 - The Port received interest from contractors seeking information, pricing, and agreement for long-term use of the port as a staging and laydown area for an upcoming construction project.
 - Hydrogen Fuel
 - Applications received from five different companies seeking land use authorizations to perform due diligence activities for hydrogen-based fuel production and fuel storage – DG Fuels, Knik Energy LLC, Pacific H2, HIF Global, and BAC Global.
 - US Department of Defense
 - The Department of Defense continues to visit Port MacKenzie to assess whether the port could be used for training and off-loading ammunition and explosive ordinances. We received military visits twice in the month of March.
 - FEMA
 - Port MacKenzie is being evaluated for its geographically strategic role in emergency planning and supply chain redundancy in the event that the Port of Alaska or Glenn Highway bridges suffer a catastrophic disaster.
 - MARAD
 - In the fall of 2023, Port MacKenzie was awarded a \$1M grant from the US Marine Highway Program for the purchase of a 75-ton rough terrain crane that will be used to improve freight and cargo handling activities at the port. The funds have not yet been released to the Borough by the granting agency.
 - Website Update
 - The Port MacKenzie website has been updated, including the domain name. The new address is: <https://portmackenzie.matsugov.us>. Our GIS Division is working to add pictures to the website soon.

Wetland Mitigation Bank 2nd Quarter Report: We had no sales in the Second Quarter of 2024.

Public Affairs Media Flyover:

Fisheries

- [Salmon return to Mat-Su streams](#)
Frontiersman
- [Ways to stay safe while fishing, dipnetting](#)
KDLL

Natural Resources

- [Alaska regulators back Enstar's plan to build \\$57 Million pipeline for Natural Gas](#)
ADN

State

- [2024 Legislative Session Roundup](#)
KTNA
- [West Susitna Access Road Funding Approved](#)
KTNA

Elections

- [Mat-Su Borough announces notice of vacancies and candidate filing period](#)
Frontiersman

Outdoors

- [Reflections Lake to get major updates, new memorial honoring families of fallen troops](#)
Mat-Su Sentinel

Assembly

- [Borough Assembly asks for public comment on new bonds for roads and schools](#)
Frontiersman
- [Proposed ballot measure would cut property taxes for some residents](#)
Mat-Su Sentinel

Community

- [24 years of Mat-Su Service: John Moosey reflects](#)
Frontiersman
- [Mat-Su Central School, Fish Creek Park and Best-Looking Cruiser](#)
Your Alaska Link

Economy

- [Alaska demographers predict population drop](#)
James Brooks