

Introduced by: Mayor
Date: 07/02/19
Action: Adopted
Vote: 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2019-042**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE KENAI RIVER
FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES FROM THE FUNNY RIVER ROAD AND
COLLECTOR ROAD NETWORK SYSTEM**

- WHEREAS,** the Funny River Community is continuing to prosper with the number of improved parcels steadily increasing over the last few years; and,
- WHEREAS,** the ongoing development of this satellite community is expected to continue to be enhanced with the availability of natural gas to many of the residents and business interest; and,
- WHEREAS,** according to the Geographical Information System division there are over 2100 platted residential lots and a variety of businesses defining this element of the borough; and,
- WHEREAS,** in 2003 the State of Alaska funded the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Inc. to provide a Long Range Development Plan ("Plan") to outline the long term goals and development needs of the Funny River Community; and,
- WHEREAS,** in April 2004 public scoping meetings were held to identify the essential needs impacting on the long term economic related issues of the Funny River Community; and,
- WHEREAS,** in September 2004 the Funny River Chamber of Commerce and Community Center accepted and endorsed the findings provided in the Funny River Community Plan dated June 2004; and
- WHEREAS,** the goals and objectives in the Plan addressed essential public facilities and infrastructure elements needed to advance the community's development needs for the community to expand and attract new residential property owners, provide support to new business interest and development of the Funny River community; and,
- WHEREAS,** one of the identified community goals, objectives and action items this report specifically addressed for promoting recreational and tourism related to economic development was to develop river access areas for day use activities such as fishing and a boat launch; and,

WHEREAS, the report also acknowledged that the community and visitors to the area have very limited to almost no public access to recreational activities and facilities traditionally associated with the Kenai River, including river access areas, public bathrooms, picnicking areas, overnight campgrounds, travel trailer sewage dump stations and other amenities; and,

WHEREAS, although the economic development plan addressed these needs some fifteen years ago, little to no improvements to accommodate public access to the Kenai River from this traffic corridor have occurred; and,

WHEREAS, during this 15-year period the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks acquired the Hanson Ranch Property using Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) funding and immediately closed the property to all bank fishing; although, some Funny River residents state that prior to, and during the acquisition process, DNR representatives assured them orally the continued public access for bank fishing to the Kenai River along this 4480 river running feet of river frontage; and,

WHEREAS, as of the date of this resolution the Hanson Ranch Property consisting of 146 acres of public property has remained closed to all traditional recreational use; and,

WHEREAS, collectively the DNR's, Division of Parks and Recreation has managed and has had oversight of over 15, 068 river running feet of public property (329.27 acres) along the Funny River Road collector road system, however DNR does not allow any public bank access for sockeye fishing accessible from the Funny River Road and collector road infrastructure to any of these areas except for the five to seven fishing positions at the Funny River Recreational Area; and,

WHEREAS, as DNR is statutorily responsible for the oversight of Kenai River Special Management Area, the Commissioner of the DNR has developed, supports and has permitted over 16 public boat launch ramps along the west side, or downstream right side of the Kenai River, while the community of Funny River has no public access to fishing activities of this recreational element of the Kenai River except for a very small element (bank locations for approximately 5 to 7 anglers) at the Funny River State Recreational area; and,

WHEREAS, over the past 15 years the public access to the Kenai River sports fishery continues to be improved throughout its estuary with the construction of numerous elevated fishing platforms and improvements for day use and recreational needs, the 36 Kenai River road miles paralleling this fishery have not been improved and in some instances have regressed in access to residents along the Funny River Road corridor; and,

WHEREAS, this lack of public facilities has caused significant problems with people using a section line easement at the terminus of Mykiss Street to launch and recover their boats, resulting overcrowded parking, trespassing on private property, and public

safety issues along an unmaintained section line easement running from the Kenai River to the intersection of King Salmon Avenue and Mykiss Street, and continuing for about 1,500 feet parallel to the river along King Salmon Avenue and perpendicular to the river for about 1,000 feet along Mykiss Street; and

WHEREAS, the draft revised Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehension Plan 2018 update contains an objective of supporting opportunities for sportfishing, including personal use fishing, while protecting the resource, and specifically identifies the need for a public boat launch at Funny River Road; and,

WHEREAS, members of the Funny River Community have tried unsuccessfully for 15 years to gain public access to the Kenai River to advance safety and recreational needs of this community with absolutely no success; and,

WHEREAS, the Kenai River Sportfishing Association has advocated for public access to the Kenai River along this 36 road mile element; and,

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Association of Realtors has formally stated that access to the river is on most of their potential buyers' wish list and has a major influence on the property's value and desirability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. The assembly supports the recommendations contained in the draft Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehension Plan, 2018 update, addressing the needs of the Funny River Community; the above recommendations of the Kenai River Sportfishing Association; the understanding that property values will be impacted by denying public access to the Kenai River along the 36 road miles constituting the Funny River road corridor and the basic public economic infrastructure needs of the Funny River Community.

SECTION 2. The assembly supports the Funny River community's efforts to design and construct public access to the Kenai River including a public boat launch, adequate parking spaces and related amenities with the understanding that any enhancements to the current infrastructure to improve the recreational activities identified herein cannot negatively detract from the existing traffic flow patterns, cause an increase to these traffic flow patterns, cause an increase in suspended road dust, or increase noise levels to established residential subdivisions.

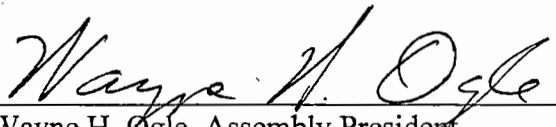
SECTION 3. The assembly strongly encourages collaboration between the State of Alaska's Departments of Natural Resources, Fish and Game, and Transportation and Public Facilities, and the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, to address the issues of property value impacts and the recommendations addressed and outlined in the draft Kenai Peninsula Boroughs' Comprehension Plan 2018 update in identifying a public process for the design, location and build-out to construct a public boat

launch ramp and other yet to be identified supporting infrastructure that meets the needs of the Funny River Community and visitors to that element of the Kenai Peninsula.


SECTION 4. That a copy of this resolution shall be provided to Governor Mike Dunleavy, Lieutenant Governor Kevin Meyer, Corri A. Feige, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Commissioner, Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner Alaska Department of Fish and Game, John MacKinnon, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Fred Braun, President of the Kenai Peninsula Association of Realtors, and Ben Mohr, Executive Director, Kenai River Sportfishing Association.

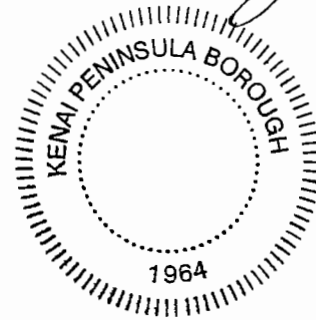
SECTION 5. That this resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 2ND DAY OF JULY, 2019.


Wayne H. Ogle, Assembly President

ATTEST:


John Blankenship, MMC, Borough Clerk



Yes: Bagley, Blakeley, Carpenter, Cooper, Dunne, Fischer, Hibbert, Smalley, Ogle
No: None
Absent: None