Roll Carts Get Dumped On as Bear Bait

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Bears continue to be a hot button issue in Kodiak, as evident by the hour long discussion Kodiak Island Borough Assembly members had about them during last night’s work session. The assembly heard from various community members that have dealt with the problem over the last few weeks including police officers, local residents and Alaska Department of Fish and Game wildlife biologist Larry Van Daele. Van Daele said he and other members of a bear safety group have tried to address the bear problem in four phases. The first phase was education and making sure residents are being bear aware.

-- (Borough Work Session 1 :43 “The second phase was to …bears much more wary.”)

Roll carts have received much of the blame for increased bear activity this fall and many community members have asked why Alaska Waste hasn’t provided bear resistant roll carts to combat the problem. Assemblyman Dave Kaplan said he isn’t sure that is the answer.

-- (Borough Work Session 2 :47 “I didn’t even think …I’ve always felt that way.”)

Mayor Jerome Selby said in looking ahead to next fall, better preparation before the bears arrive is going to be necessary. He said more outreach and education, in addition to switching dumpsters in September are vital steps that may help solve the problem before it arrives.

-- (Borough Work Session 3 :45 “So if we can have that stuff in … any bears show up ”)

Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said he remembers promises being made by Alaska Waste before the roll carts came into play and wonders if a reevaluation of the contract between them and the borough is needed. He said the issue shouldn’t die after the work session and more conversations are needed.

-- (Borough Work Session 4 :29 “I just think there’s a bigger … as an assembly about it. ”)

During the work session the assembly handed out trick-or-treating safety tips. Next Wednesday is Halloween and there is much concern about children being out in the dark with these bears around. In general the tips said not to go out past 8 p.m., make sure adults are always with children, travel in large groups and making noise, carrysome sort of noisemaker or flashlight and avoid wooded areas or dumpsters. Police will be making an effort to monitor bear activity during Halloween and as always ask that any and all bear sightings be reported to them.

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