A-1 Timber Will Make Case For Logging Borough Land

Tuesday, 29 October 2013

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Borough Assembly doesn’t typically meet on Tuesday nights, but tonight it will hold a work session and hear a presentation from A-1 Timber Consultants, Inc., about potential logging in the Chiniak area.

A-1 Timber would like to purchase and log 800 acres of borough land. The company expressed interest in the land a while back, but the borough decided to see what interest Leisnoi, Inc., might have in a land swap. Earlier in the year the borough met with Leisnoi representatives and discussed trading the 800 acres for lands along road system beaches, rivers, lakes and other recreational areas frequented by the general public. Permits from Leisnoi are currently required to access those lands. But in August, Leisnoi’s board of directors notified the borough that they weren’t interested in a land exchange and the discussion turned back toward A-1 Timber.

Tonight the borough assembly will hear a presentation on A-1 Timber’s plan for the area’s wood, and how it might be harvested. While no decisions will be made during the work session, Borough Manager Bud Cassidy said the assembly will ultimately decide whether or not to pursue the sale further, knowing that many more steps would need to be taken before any sale or logging could be done.

“Staff is looking for direction from the assembly on how to proceed. Because if we are in fact to proceed there’s a number of things that we would probably have to do, like get a third party value determination to see what kind of value we’re talking about in trees. There’s some survey work that needs to be done. There’s a lot of up front costs associated with any kind of disposal of timber.”

While many questions will be answered during tonight’s meeting, a few Chiniak residents have already expressed their feelings about more logging in their community.

Virginia Adams has been a resident of Chiniak for more than three decades and lived through the recent Leisnoi/A-1 Timber partnership that logged a significant portion of area, including right up to her own property line. She said the community didn’t have a say in that operation because it was Leisnoi Native-owned land. This time, however, she said she intends to put up a fight if the assembly decides to proceed with a land sale.

“Our area has almost been completely logged, with the exception of this stand of old growth trees of 800 acres. That will be the only remaining habitat for what wildlife, birds that we have left.”

Scott Bonney is also a long time Chiniak resident and watched the recent logging surrounding his home.

“As the logging progressed and we looked around, we said, what is there for us.”

He said the 800 acres is especially important to the community because it is the only accessible public land left in the area. Because of that, Adams said she, Bonney and many other Chiniak dwellers will be at tonight’s meeting to have their voice heard in the land sale discussion.

“Many of us that have gotten together in Chiniak and talked about this, there’s little bits that come out. I’ve heard it’s the last nail in the coffin, the straw that broke the camel’s back. It is what it is for the community. It will cripple us.”

Tonight’s work session starts at 7:30 p.m. in the borough conference room.