

Assembly OKs Lease Extension With Brechan

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Erik Wander/KMXT

In a special meeting held before the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly's work session last night, the assembly unanimously approved a resolution renewing a short-term lease with Brechan Enterprises to provide gravel extraction services in the Bells Flats area. The new lease will be for one year, and the borough will continue to negotiate with Brechan on a longer-term lease.

Prior to the assembly's vote, numerous citizens and residents of the area expressed their concerns, frustrations and even anger over a range of issues related to the matter of gravel extraction work in the area. Those concerns ranged from excessive dust along the road, to safety concerns for families with small children, to whether alternate sources of gravel or sites for extraction had been explored. While assembly members acknowledged residents' concerns, at issue was extension of the short-term lease, which was set to expire June 30th.

Borough manager Rick Gifford said the short-term lease was necessary because the borough was not able to work out all of the details of a long-term lease before the expiration date.

-- (Lease 1 46 sec. "Unfortunately this lease ... with the long-term lease.")

At the assembly's regular meeting last week, Brechan president Michael Martin brought up the issue of the soon-to-expire lease, prompting the special meeting. Martin did not attend last night's meeting, but at the time of his initial plea, many assembly members were taken off guard, saying they believed the process of a lease renewal was already in progress. Assemblywoman Pat Branson echoed several residents' concerns regarding whether or not Brechan is meeting the present conditions of the existing lease. She also talked about the her own frustrations with the process of the lease renewal.

-- (Lease 2 54 sec. "Well I would hope that ... again with a short time frame.")

Assemblywoman Chris Lynch, who is also a resident of the area, said she understands many of the concerns expressed, but that the short-term lease solution was the only viable option at this point.

-- (Lease 3 48 sec. "The reality is ... that they say they will do.")

Speaking from the perspective of a resident, Lynch said that maintenance of Bells Flats Road is the responsibility of the service district. She said people who feel the road is not being maintained should call their service district chair.

-- (Lease 4 28 sec. "I call on a regular ... just doesn't work that way.")

The original lease was authorized by the borough in June 2007. Gifford said the short-term lease extension solution, first proposed by the assembly last week, allows the borough to continue to negotiate a long-term lease with Brechan, possibly for as many as 10 years. He also said part of the negotiations would involve addressing some of the concerns expressed by residents.

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