

Mayor's Monthly Report

April 2025

Xunaa Borough Update: The City Council met twice in executive session with attorney Megan Costello to discuss litigation strategies to pursue legal options through Alaska Superior Court. Following the executive session, a motion was made to direct our attorney to join with other any other communities filing an appeal of the LBC decision to approve the Xunaa Borough petition to the Alaska Superior Court. The LBC met and adopted the final written decision, again voting 3-2 in favor of approval of the Xunaa Borough on March 20th. Following that, we had 30 days to file an appeal, therefore we expect to file on or before April 18. After that it is up to the Superior Court and the timeline is unknown. We have been advised that the process could take anywhere from six months to two years. Until the appeal has been filed with the Court, that is all the information I can share.

Budget: I've enjoyed being part of the process of developing the Draft FY26 operating budget; it gives me a much deeper understanding of not only the budget development process but also the nitty-gritty of our revenue and expenses and how our decisions affect our community and the services we provide. The Budget Town Hall set for April 16th will give the public a chance to make their thoughts and wishes known – I look forward to hearing from the community.

Thriving Communities Grant: A few community members have been working on an application for a Thriving Communities grant offered by Philanthropy Northwest. Tanner Horst and Kathy Streveler approached us in early March asking if we would want to partner with them and apply as the City of Gustavus. The \$250K grant, if awarded, would be used to fund planning for an area-wide non-motorized transportation plan, supporting bike and walking paths, expansion of and improvements to local hiking trails, and better access to these trail systems. With government funding in question at this time, it seemed like this could be a good way to augment the SS4A grant. Many thanks to Tanner and Kathy who, with help from Jim Mackovjak, worked diligently all month to meet the March 31st deadline. I would like to clarify that Tanner and Kathy are working on this as community members, and not in their role as CLAC committee members.

Flower Baskets: I'm working on organizing and planning the flower baskets for hanging around town this summer. The Girl Scouts are helping me with this project; we have started some seeds and will be filling the baskets with plants sometime in May.

Community Infrastructure Maps: Liesl and I have been working with Dewberry (an engineering firm) to update the community infrastructure maps; Dewberry is contracted by NOAA. These used to be maintained by DCRA but are no longer and the maps haven't been updated for over a decade. We expect to have this completed in the next few weeks. Dewberry provided the following information regarding how the information will be used:

- *Having a current, accurate understanding of infrastructure helps state and federal agencies predict the impact of a natural disaster or storm so that they can communicate meaningfully.*
- *Communities rely on these maps to help visitors get oriented, which decreases the number of questions community leaders get asked*
- *All the information we receive will be made public. You'll be able to access it on NOAA's Digital Coast platform, the State of Alaska GeoPortal, the AKDOT&PF Critical Infrastructure Dashboard, and from Esri's Living Atlas.*

Salmon River Boat Harbor Tract B2 and Tidelands purchase: I'm working with Mike Taylor to apply for the two parcels (one is submerged lands, and one is uplands) which comprise the central portion of the Salmon River Boat Harbor area. We currently own the surrounding tracts. A resolution and scoping document were approved by the Council last March, but no further action was taken. We have completed the application packets, and they are ready to submit. After reviewing the documents submitted, DNR staff will notify us of cost estimates and advise of further actions needed, such as surveys. No further action will be taken until we have that information, and the Council can consider if we wish to proceed. I very much appreciate Mike's assistance with this.

Thank you to: all the many community members who contribute their valuable time to the Gustavus Library, Community Chest, Fire and EMS departments!

Special thanks this month to Council Member Taylor and GVFD volunteers for cleaning up the Salmon River Park, and to Karen Taylor, Council Member Beck and Vice Mayor Owens for their work on the committee ordinance and related policy and procedure.

We appreciate you all!