

Mayor's Report February 20, 2024

Conversations. Council members Rachel Patrick and Kyle Bishop met with 20-25 community members at the Fireweed on Feb. 27th for the first Coffee with Council listening session. It was a dynamic event, and we look forward to community conversations in upcoming months.

The Nature Conservancy Lands. Email correspondence between TNC and the City came to light revealing a proposal from TNC to transfer its lands to the City, and creation of a City committee once Hank Lenford returned to Alaska. The momentum was lost, however, due to the urgency of the City's response to the emerging health crisis of the Covid 19 pandemic and the inability to hold in-person Council meetings. On Jan. 29th I forwarded the emails to TNC Director Ivy Sponholz expressing hope to restore TNC's vision that "...TNC led this project for the benefit of the community of Gustavus, and we feel that transferring ownership of the TNC parcels to the City of Gustavus can empower the community to set the vision for these preserves and have direct involvement in their stewardship." At the suggestion of a community member, the Council work session on Feb. 6th began a discussion about creating a Lands Advisory Committee and will proceed with consideration of the scope of work and potential economic costs.

The Xunaa Borough Petition. On Thursday, Jan. 25th the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) held a public meeting to describe the petition review process and answer questions. The Council has prepared a resolution disputing the qualifications of the petition, which will be submitted to the LBC with detailed comments on the petition and the impact on the community and region. On Feb. 26th, the Gustavus Visitors Assn. held a Zoom meeting to discuss the petition, and, in addition to the City, it is important for businesses and other interests to submit their comments as well to the LBC. The deadline is Feb. 29th.

Public Access on the Hydro Road. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) held a meeting on Feb. 2nd to discuss licensing issues as part of the ongoing dispute resolution process between the Olneys and AP&T regarding public access on the Hydro Road.

What Else is Happening. We discussed the Capital Improvement Plan at a Jan. 29th work session and we are moving into developing the budget.

The end of the month brought rapid and heavy snow accumulation and closure of the City and School on Jan 23rd-24th, but undaunted by winter conditions, on Jan. 20th there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new playground equipment at Salmon River Park with a bonfire and hot cocoa. It is believed to be the first ribbon cutting event in Gustavus history.



Shelley