

Q&A from Coffee with Council on 01/27/2024

We encourage you to listen to the recording from the 03-04-2024 work session if you wish to hear the entire discussion for each question. Below are summaries of the answers provided by the council and city staff.

gustavus-ak.gov/sites/default/files/audio/03-04-2024WorkSessionRecording.mp3

1. What does it mean to Annex a city into a borough? 1 minute and 40 seconds
 - a. Annexation would include a city's boundaries within a borough. The process can be done through a petition to the Local Boundary Commission or through the Legislature. In the petition process the proposed annexation would need to be approved by the annexing municipality and the area proposed to be annexed. In the Legislative option, the LBC presents the proposed boundary change to the Legislature, and it becomes effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session unless disapproved by a majority of both members of each house.
 - b. There are public hearings in both processes. No matter the size of the area being annexed both the original borough and the area being annexed both must agree and vote in favor as well as follow the long processes outlined by the local boundary commission. Thus, it is not an easy or fast process.
2. How will this affect our PILT Grant funds? And who could answer that? 5 minutes 58 seconds
 - a. PILT funds are allocated by a formula based on the Hoonah-Angoon Census area. We have contacted the state and federal PILT directors and the BLM and cannot get information on what acreage we must determine what impact borough incorporation would have on our PILT resources.
 - b. City representatives have reached out to several people with different state and federal entities, but they have not received an answer on how it will affect the City of Gustavus. The city will continue to try to get this question answered.
3. What are the Pros and Cons for the three main scenarios (We join the Hoonah Borough, we join the Haines Borough, we start our own Borough) There seemed to be consensus on pursuing options vs. declining to join the Hoonah Borough. Borough could be better than inevitable annexation. 7 minutes and 37seconds
 - a. Someone commented that the Haines taxes are higher than those proposed by Hoonah (1% seasonal). Another comment was that a reduction in boundary area might allow Gustavus the potential to form a borough with the other communities (Pelican, Efin Cove, Tenakee Springs).
4. Where are we currently regarding the TNC Land issue? Mostly strong opposition. There was generally strong opposition regarding a transfer. Many people agree that we should communicate and work directly with Hoonah. Consider land acknowledgement and working together. 9minutes
 - a. Many people agree that we should communicate and work directly with Hoonah, consider land acknowledgement. We are talking with TNC and a work group has gotten together to discuss formation of a lands committee to consider how we can share stewardship with TNC or another conservation trust.
5. Is there any cruise ship stake in TNC Land Transfer? 10 minutes and 35 seconds
 - a. Based on what we heard in the meeting with TNC it seems to be a non-issue or something that would take a long time for HIA to achieve. Even if the lands were transferred from TNC to HIA it seems as though the conservation easements would continue. TNC was very explicit about not just

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passing the lands on but wanting to ensure its conservation. Thus, it seems highly unlikely that there would be a cruise ship stake in the TNC land transfer.

6. Do we have an Attorney for these land issues? 11 minutes 55 seconds
 - a. Our city attorney Bob Blasco is very knowledgeable and experienced in these issues.

7. Where are we at with the TSA/Alaska Airlines issue? 12 minutes
 - a. City Administrator Leary spoke with Commissioner of Public Safety, DOT, and the South Coast Director when in Juneau. They are all working on the issue and should be meeting shortly. Alaska Airlines has a liaison who helps with these types of issues too. He alluded to the fact that he believes this situation would be resolved at the Alaska Airlines TSA level. The solution could also involve the Senator's office too, the City Administrator will continue to stay in touch with that office. Overall, the city is cautiously optimistic that the TSA/Alaska Airlines issue will be resolved. It appears they have expanded their service to Gustavus by at least a week, which is positive sign.

8. Community wants the City to have a strong stance in the current land issues and become more communicative with Hoonah itself on some of these matters. 14 minutes
 - a. We have personal and professional relationships with Hoonah residents which we treasure. What we seem to be seeing is the industrial tourism corporations are behind the proposal to seek additional lands for development and commercial uses of our waters.
 - b. The City of Hoonah has until April 1st to reply to the public comment LBC received about their proposed Borough petition. So, we might need to wait until after those responses have been received before continuing to go forward with communications. There is very strong support from the citizen in Gustavus for The City to continue to defend our lands. The council does see the value in working with Hoonah in areas of common interest. Potential issues such as fisheries, Tongass Forest, or subsistence.

9. Can we reach out to our state representative officials for support? 18minutes and 12 seconds
 - a. We have kept Rep. Kiehl & Sen. Storey informed.