



**Municipality of Anchorage**  
**10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries Project**  
**Boundary Advisory Committee**

**(DRAFT) MINUTES**

Monday, February 27, 2023  
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

**Meeting #1**

Hybrid Meeting Held In-person and Virtually in Microsoft Teams

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**A. Roll Call**

A quorum was present.

*Present:* Matt Burkholder  
Mark Butler  
Care Clift\*  
Melinda Gant, *Chair*  
Darrel Hess\*  
Karl von Lührte  
Al Milspaugh  
Stan Moll  
Michael Packard  
Carmela Warfield\*  
Emily Weiser\*  
Charlie Welch\*

*Excused:* Carolyn Ramsey

*Absent:* none

*Staff:* Tom Davis, Senior Planner, Planning Department  
Craig H. Lyon, Director, Planning Department\*

*Guests:* Lyn Franks, Treasurer, Northeast Community Council

**B. Review of Agenda**

The agenda was approved without changes.

\*Virtual attendee

## 2. Introductions

Chair *Melinda Gant* facilitated a round of self-introductions by the meeting attendees, including staff. The Committee members and guest introduced themselves:

- *Matt Burkholder*, member at-large of this Committee, chaired Spenard Community Council in the 2000s, chaired Huffman/O'Malley Community Council around 2015, and more recently served as the president of the Federation of Community Councils (FCC), and was also president of HALO.
- *Michael Packard* is president of Turnagain Arm Community Council.
- *Al Milspaugh* is vice-president of University Area Community Council and is also its delegate to the FCC and on one of its committees.
- *Stan Moll* is a member and former treasurer of Old Seward/Oceanview Community Council.
- *Melinda Gant*, chair of this Committee, is a member of Government Hill Community Council and has served on its leadership as treasurer, vice-president, secretary, and president. She also regularly attends Midtown Community Council meetings for work projects and attends Downtown Community Council meetings as a business representative.
- *Karl von Lührte* is a 15-year member of South Fork Community Council and has served on its leadership as vice-chair and chair. He is also formerly with the U.S. Air Force.
- *Mark Butler* is vice-president of North Star Community Council, and serves as manager of the Community Councils Center.
- *Charlie Welch* is a member and longtime resident of Mountain View Community Council.
- *Carmela Warfield* is president of Hillside Community Council, a member of the municipal Budget Advisory Commission and Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission, serves as a board member of HALO, and is an FCC delegate.
- *Emily Weiser*, member at-large of this Committee, is also member at-large of Airport Heights Community Council.
- *Darrel Hess*, ex officio member of this Committee (i.e., a non-voting member), has been involved with community councils for many years and served as president of Fairview Community Council for 5 years. As the municipal Ombudsman, he reviews community council bylaws and is responsible for reminding the Municipality to carry out its 10-year reviews of community council boundaries.
- *Care Clift* is treasurer for Scenic Foothills Community Council.
- *Lyn Franks*, meeting guest, is treasurer of Northeast Community Council.

### **3. Role of the Committee; Meeting Format**

*Tom Davis* referenced the 2-21-23 introduction letter to the Boundary Advisory Committee, in the meeting packet, that provides information about the role of the Committee in this project.

*Chair Melinda Gant* directed the attendees' attention to the three bullet points on the first page of the introduction letter, as the areas of advice and feedback that the Committee should focus on. She believed that if the Committee sticks to the format of what its role is, it can quickly get through the process and review the draft reports from staff.

*Chair Gant* explained that the Committee meeting format will be public meetings, recorded, and minutes provided. The Committee process will include providing the Committee's recommendations regarding the Boundary Study Areas to Planning staff, who will compile the package and submit that to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), through a public review process. Once the PZC has completed its review, the recommendations will go to the Assembly for final approval.

*Mark Butler* urged that any recommendations should first go to the Community Councils and Federation. Community councils should get an opportunity to provide feedback to the Planning Department and the Boundary Advisory Committee before any formal recommendations are submitted to the PZC, since the boundary issues pertain to community councils. *Mr. Davis* clarified there will be several points of involvement by community councils. Where a boundary issue has been identified, staff will reach out to the community councils. Later, after formal recommendations are made, there will be at least two months of public review when staff will request community councils to provide written comments in formal resolutions. *Chair Gant* added that there have been several notifications that have gone out to community councils requesting their comments, and that there will be a second pass through the community councils. (*Note: This topic was discussed further under agenda item 6 below.*)

*Tom Davis* discussed "field teams." He referenced page 2 of the introduction letter to the Committee. If staff or Committee members determine that a field visit with interested members of the affected community council would be helpful for understanding the boundary area in question, staff can organize these "field teams" that can walk the area and then report back to the whole Committee.

### **4. Overall Project Requirements and Boundary Review Criteria**

*Chair Gant* requested staff to go over the overall project requirements and boundary review criteria with the Committee. *Tom Davis* summarized White Paper No. 1, as provided in the meeting packet. White Paper No. 1 contains the public process requirements for 10-year community council boundary reviews. *Mr. Davis* explained that, although a Boundary Advisory Committee is not required by code, the Planning Department appreciates being able to call up this Boundary Advisory Committee for its advice because of the number of Boundary Study Areas the public has identified.

*Mark Butler* asked for assurance that the public comment period would not be during the summer, when many community councils are not in session to be able to respond. *Mr. Davis* confirmed that the two-month review period would not occur during June-July-August, since getting feedback from community councils is the purpose of the review. He explained that it will be important for

community councils to provide their comments to PZC in the form of a resolution adopted by the community council. Planning staff can provide technical assistance in preparing resolutions.

*Mr. Davis* explained that the Boundary Advisory Committee is providing advice to staff in preparing the Planning Department's recommendations to PZC. However, the Committee is also welcome to submit its own resolution of recommendations to PZC. The Committee may find it disagrees with some of the Planning Department's boundary recommendations.

*Mr. Davis* summarized the boundary review criteria provided in White Paper No. 1, beginning on page 3, going through the guiding principles numbered 1 through 7 in that document. Those seven guiding principles are derived from the specific code standards and provide more specific criteria that are easier to use. *Chair Gant* responded that it was her understanding that we will apply the 7 guiding principles to each of the Boundary Study Areas. *Mr. Davis* confirmed.

In discussing guiding principle no. 6, "optimal size," *Mr. Davis* explained that small community council districts are legitimate as community councils if they are active and engaged in representing their neighborhood. *Stan Moll* asked if there is an enumeration of the number of residents in the community councils available. *Mr. Davis* responded he would seek updated population numbers for the Committee, if census block group population data has been released from the 2020 Census.

*Mr. Davis* reported that staff has received questions regarding whether the recently reapportioned Anchorage Assembly districts are used as criteria for changing boundaries. He explained that although 10-year boundary reviews occur after the decennial U.S. Census and Assembly reapportionment, the fundamental boundary criteria come down to "natural communities" and community desires as to boundaries. Political districts are not in the code criteria for defining neighborhoods or community councils. If all other factors are equal, political district or service district boundaries are a secondary consideration, however they do not override the main criteria.

Committee members further discussed if state and local political districts should be a consideration. *Care Clift* asked if there is consideration for using the updated State House of Representative district boundaries? Sometimes there are multiple state senators, representatives, and Assembly members reporting at community council meetings. It can be onerous for the elected representatives to have so many community council meetings to attend. Her observation was that it seems strange to have one community council in multiple political districts without coordinating. *Darrel Hess* responded that although staff could provide a map that overlays political boundaries as information or a secondary factor for consideration, it would be problematic for the Committee to use political boundaries as a major factor. *Mr. Hess* explained that there are 38 community councils and only 6 Assembly districts. Legislative boundaries frequently run through the middle of neighborhoods because legislative boundaries are not neighborhood oriented. *Karl von Luhrte* added that White Paper No. 1 on page 3 reads, "Community council districts are not determined by legislative districts." *Mr. Luhrte* did not support spending time on legislative boundaries as a boundary criteria. *Al Milspaugh* added that legislative boundaries change more often, so it would not make much sense to follow them. *Mark Butler* agreed. He stated that community councils are a neighborhood-focused organization, as established in the Municipal Charter, and should remain neighborhood-focused to allow neighborhood members being able to participate in their neighborhood.

*Mr. Butler* added that guiding principle no. 1 from White Paper No. 1, to preserve existing boundaries unless there is a reason to change, is important when considering proposals for changes.

## 5. Questionnaire Responses and List of Boundary Study Areas

*Tom Davis* presented the initial draft of White Paper No. 2, including a main document and three 11x17 tables as Appendices A, B, and C, that were emailed to Committee members earlier this evening and provided as hardcopies at the meeting. *Mr. Davis* summarized the public survey questionnaire responses and the list of Boundary Study Areas as provided in the initial draft of White Paper No. 2.

*Mr. Davis* explained that the Boundary Study Areas identified in the initial draft White Paper No. 2 arose from the survey questionnaire responses and other public comments. There are 38 Boundary Study Areas listed. Many community councils will find that some part of their district is included in at least one of the Boundary Study Areas. A Boundary Study Area does not necessarily mean any changes to a community council district will be recommended. A “Boundary Study Area” means that a community council boundary has been identified for further evaluation as part of this project, based on public comments. To consider the public comments, White Paper No. 2 will apply the *boundary review criteria* from White Paper No. 1 to assess each Boundary Study Area. After assessing a Boundary Study Area, the recommendation could be “no change.” The Boundary Advisory Committee may find that it does not need to spend much time on some Boundary Study Areas.

*Mr. Davis* explained that the initial draft White Paper No. 2 will be revised and expanded to:

- Summarize how Planning staff solicited public comments to identify Boundary Study Areas.
- Document the email comments received in addition to the survey questionnaire responses.
- Provide information about each Boundary Study Area and the community councils affected.
- Summarize all questionnaire responses from members of the affected councils.
- Apply the boundary review criteria to assess the Boundary Study Area and identify options.

*Chair Melinda Gant* recommended also providing an easier way for people to be able to look up their community council in White Paper No. 2, so people can quickly find which Boundary Study Areas affect their own community council, and the public comments on which the study area is based. If the Committee recommends a boundary change, there should be an easy way for the public and the community councils to track if their community council districts are affected by a potential change in boundaries. *Al Milsbaugh* agreed and suggested including a list of all the community councils that provides a cross-reference to any Boundary Study Areas and public comments about that council. If there are no comments affecting a council, it could indicate such. *Mr. Davis* agreed to provide that.

*Stan Moll* suggested the maps that will be used to illustrate proposed boundaries could also identify the affected community councils using map symbols. *Mr. Moll* suggested including citywide maps that show all the study areas, in addition to area-specific maps for individual study areas. *Mr. Davis* agreed.

## 6. Schedule and Next Steps

*Mr. Davis* indicated that the next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 13. (*Note: The meeting was later rescheduled to April 3.*)

*Marc Butler* commented that this 10-year review process is magnitudes larger and more procedural than the previous process 10 years ago. This time we have essentially requested comments from individuals, rather than just asking the community council boards. Some of the Boundary Study Areas

come from only one or a few individuals. It raises the question of whether such comments reflect the general will of the rest of the community council members, and whether the Boundary Study Area is valid just because one or a few individuals suggested it? There must be some logic in the comments. *Mr. Butler* is aware only 3 or 4 community council district boundary areas that are absolutely a hot issue, according to the boundary review criteria in White Paper No. 1, that we should be talking about extensively in this process. In other cases, the issue is more of a question, and he would need to study a map before responding. If we are going to take the comments of only a few people proposing to make changes, the community council broader membership may respond by expressing they like their boundaries just as they are. The Boundary Advisory Committee should hear from the community councils in evaluating the merits of proposed changes. Getting comments from individuals to identify Boundary Study Areas as has been done is great, but now we should hear from the community councils and get their input.

*Stan Moll* responded that he has visited 4 different community council meetings in the past two months and reported that those community councils are aware of this process. He believes they are waiting for a signal that “now” is the time to discuss it. Based on the Committee’s discussion this evening about the process it seems to him like the community councils will have until September or October to weigh in, and that this process is on the right track.

*Chair Gant* added that it is important for this public process to value and consider each comment from the public who responded to the questionnaire, that staff should put the analysis together, and in the public process the community councils will have the opportunity to prepare their resolutions and weight in. The public process as it is laid out will bring out their positions. *Al Milspaugh* commented that sometimes it is a conundrum when only a few people express their views for the community, but the broader community does not get involved or comment.

*Darrell Hess* agreed it is important to value and consider each public comment, as community councils are about maximum participation. However, it also happens that there may be just one or two people that have an issue with a boundary in a community council district of 10,000 people. It is great to have the community evaluate their comment. But this process needs the community councils to weigh in before the recommendations are submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) or Assembly. It is important to know what the position of the community council is before this moves to PZC. It will otherwise be difficult to convince the Assembly to approve a boundary change that is opposed by the community council that currently represents the area proposed for change.

## **7. Public Comments**

*Lyn Franks* expressed that the meeting has been very informative, because it gives her a sense of how the process will work and what the expectations are going forward, for preparing a resolution with the members of Northeast Community Council. She is looking forward to working with everyone.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.