



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

MINUTES

Monday, April 3, 2023
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Meeting #2

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*
Carolyn Ramsey*
Emily Weiser
Charlie Welch

Excused: Carmela Warfield

Absent: none

Staff: Tom Davis, Senior Planner, Planning Department
Kristine Bunnell, Long-Range Planning Manager Planning Department*

B. Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved without changes.

C. Approval of February 27, 2023 Minutes

*Virtual attendee

The February 27 minutes were approved without changes.

3. Briefing and Review of Information Materials

A. Project Update

Tom Davis gave an update regarding the outreach to the Federation Board of Delegates and to individual community councils.

B. Project Update

Tom Davis summarized the March 31 revised draft White Paper No., 2, as provided in the meeting packet. White Paper No. 2 contains the analysis of the nearly 40 study areas. There is a table of contents inside the front cover which provides the page numbers of each study area. There is also an index to community councils, on page 8, the provides a list of boundary study areas for each community council in the Municipality. Some community councils have no boundary study area, others are potentially affected by as many as six study areas.

Mr. Davis described the format of each boundary study area, and the accompanying map set referenced by the study areas. Most study areas do not show a staff recommendation yet. *Mr. Davis* also introduced an online community councils web map app that he shared onscreen during the meeting.

Responding to questions, *Mr. Davis* explained that the draft White Paper No. 2 and accompanying map set provide content for the boundary study areas to be covered on the agenda this evening. Future drafts will provide more complete information. If the Committee finds it needs more information about a study area on tonight's agenda, the Committee may request the information and table such study area for this evening.

3. Boundary Study Areas Recommended for Immediate Action: #1, #20, #26, #29, #30, and #39 (Proposed Recommendation: "No change. Retain Existing Boundaries.")

Chair Melinda Gant requested *Mr. Davis* to introduce each of the boundary study areas for discussion and point the participants to the page number in White Paper No. 2, and asked him to walk the Committee through the individual boundary review criteria in the first several study areas.

Boundary Study Area #1: Chugiak Community Council

Committee members discussed that the Chugiak Community Council may look large extending north to south on Maps #1 and #2, but its area has low density and a relatively small population for its size. *Karl von Lührte* reported that longtime community council members in Chugiak he has spoken with indicate there would not be support for splitting Chugiak Community Council.

Karl von Lührte moved to keep Chugiak Community Council’s existing boundaries in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #1. *Mark Butler* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #20: Fairview East and West of Gambell-Ingra Corridor

The Committee reviewed the proposal to divide Fairview east and west in Boundary Study Area #20, and staff’s recommendation. *Darrel Hess* commented that Fairview community council is a very active community council and a cohesive neighborhood despite the Gambell-Ingra corridor.

Care Clift moved to keep Fairview Community Council’s existing boundaries in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #20. *Karl von Lührte* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #26: North Star Community Council District

The Committee reviewed the proposal to merge North Star Community Council with adjoining community council districts in Boundary Study Area #26, and staff’s recommendation. *Tom Davis* summarized the analysis using the boundary review criteria and reported that North Star has adopted a resolution requesting it retain its existing boundaries. *Al Milspaugh* commented that there is no basis for determining North Star is too small. *Mark Butler* explained that there is no logical partner to merge with in any of the neighboring community councils; it does not fit with the other community councils. *Mr. Butler* also expressed that North Star is an active, functional community council that has been getting work done for its area.

Karl von Lührte moved to retain North Star Community Council district in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #26. *Al Milspaugh* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #29: Spenard Community Council District

The Committee reviewed the proposal to realign Spenard Community Council to follow legislative district boundaries. *Tom Davis* explained that Assembly district boundaries do not align with natural communities. *Mark Butler* added that legislative districts change over time, but the neighborhoods remain the same. *Chair Melinda Gant* referred to the Committee’s previous discussion about avoiding the use of legislative boundaries to define community council districts.

Emily Weiser moved to retain Spenard Community Council boundaries in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #29. *Charlie Welch* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #30: Turnagain Council District

The Committee reviewed the proposal to merge Turnagain and Spenard Community Councils. *Tom Davis* walked through the evaluation of this proposal by the boundary study area.

Stan Moll asked if the Anchorage International Airport, the biggest industrial business member of these community councils, has been engaged in these community councils and should be consulted. *Tom Davis* and *Mark Butler* responded that the Airport representatives regularly visit Turnagain, Spenard, and Sand Lake Community Councils, and all three community councils find themselves affected by the Airport and communicate regularly with the Airport. *Karl von Lührte* would be concerned if there Turnagain Community Council were not an active community council to advocate for its residents, but that does not seem to be a problem. *Mark Butler* explained that Turnagain provides the Airport with opportunities to speak and vote as a member of the Community Council, although the Airport does not choose to vote.

Charlie Welch moved to retain Turnagain Community Council district with its existing boundaries in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #30. *Michael Packard* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #39: Undetermined Boundary Study Areas

Tom Davis explained that this study area comprises miscellaneous questionnaire responses received that expressed dissatisfaction with their district boundaries but did not provide enough information for staff to determine what or where the concern is to identify a specific boundary study area. These comments are documented in Appendix A and staff recommends setting them aside.

Karl von Lührte moved to recommend that no changes be made, in agreement with the staff recommendation (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #39. *Charlie Welch* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Boundary Study Areas for Evaluation and Recommendation

Tom Davis explained that there is enough information for the Boundary Study Areas in this next group to identify a preferred option for each, and so brings them to the Committee for a recommendation.

Boundary Study Area #3: North of Eagle River Loop Road to Eagle River

The Committee reviewed the proposal to transfer the area northwest of Eagle River Loop Road from South Fork Community Council. *Karl von Lührte* reported that South Fork Community Council is preparing to vote on a resolution stating that there is no desire based on any input that has been brought to the Community Council or its board for this proposed change. *Mr. von Lührte* explained that although the study area in question does have different, more urban characteristics from the Hiland Road neighborhood, parts of the lower Hiland Road neighborhood has similar housing densities as the area northwest of Eagle River Loop Road.

Mark Butler observed that South Fork is an active community council. *Darrel Hess* commented that Eagle River (the waterbody) is a strong existing boundary. *Mr. von Lührte* in response to a question reported that Eagle River Community Council has never approached South Fork about this area. *Mr. von Lührte* pointed out that most of the questionnaire responses from South Fork members supported the existing boundaries. *Chair Melinda Gant* commented there were only 2 questionnaire responses that proposed this change.

Mark Butler moved to retain South Fork Community Council existing boundaries in agreement with the staff preferred alternative of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #3. *Michael Packard* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #14: West of Reeve Boulevard

Tom Davis walked through the evaluation of this proposal and the geography of this part of Ship Creek basin relative to the adjoining community councils and reported that the area in question is somewhat peripheral to all the adjoining councils, but it is somewhat closer to the core of Mountain View than to the core of Downtown, Government Hill, or even Fairview. There are no available strong, identifiable boundaries within this study area that would facilitate dividing it up. *Mark Butler* observed that Mountain View is a functional community council and that the study area is not harmed being within Mountain View. Business owners and land owners in that area have made successful petitions and proposals getting Mountain View’s support. The Committee discussed the major land users in the area.

Michael Packard asked if there was consideration for creating an industrial community council for all the Ship Creek basin industrial area. *Mark Butler* responded that he has not seen industrial businesses interested in maintaining a business-focused community council. They just want to be able to have a community council to go to when they have an issue. Midtown is the only example of business interests starting a community council. *Darrel Hess* concurred that he has not seen industrial businesses interested in creating a community council.

Mark Butler moved to retain existing boundaries in the west end of Mountain View, in agreement with the staff preferred alternative of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #21. *Al Milspaugh* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #21: Sitka Street Park

Mark Butler explained this study area is a clear zone for Merrill Field. He said he is not aware of any issue in this area that was discussed at a community council. *Darrel Hess* reported that, 20 years ago there was a lot of discussion on this boundary issue, and Fairview supported Sitka Street staying a part of Airport Heights. *Emily Weiser* commented that most of the access to the park is off Sitka Street (a local street) from Eastridge Subdivision in Airport Heights. *Carolyn Ramsey* explained that Airport Heights has done a lot of work with the improvements to Sitka Street Park.

Mark Butler moved to retain existing boundaries with Sitka Street Park within Airport Heights in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #21. *Michael Packard* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #27: Romig Park near Hillcrest Drive

Tom Davis walked through the evaluation of this boundary study area in the draft White Paper. *Mark Butler* explained that North Star has active members from the Romig Park area, and North Star has voted unanimously in favor of keeping Romig Park area in North Star.

Karl von Luhrte moved to retain the existing boundaries between North Star and Spenard in agreement with the staff recommendation of “no change” (Option A) for Boundary Study Area #27. *Al Milspaugh* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Boundary Study Area #28: Midtown Community Council District

Tom Davis walked through the comments that recommend merging Midtown Community Council with one or more of the adjacent community councils (Spenard and/or North Star). The concerns behind the comments was that Midtown was not providing representation to its residents, because of its noon hour meeting time. *Mr. Davis* in responding to a question confirmed that providing representation is one of the boundary review criteria.

Darrel Hess explained that community council membership (not the Municipality) determines when a council meets. *Emily Weiser* responded that if a meeting is at noon and residents cannot attend at that time then the residents cannot vote to change the meeting time; if they are not being represented now then they aren't being represented in choosing the meeting time.

Mark Butler gave a brief history of Midtown and its community council. At some point 5 to 7 years ago Midtown was minimally functional and approached North Star about joining their meetings. However, then Midtown got new officers and it is functional now. *Chair Melinda Gant* concurred that she has been attending Midtown meetings and the community council is very functional, and that the Midtown executive board does not support merging or changing its boundaries. She commented that the Midtown area east of Arctic is very distinct from Spenard. *Mark Butler* explained that historically Midtown was undeveloped, but the area has grown up to be an economic center; going back to the old, historical boundaries does not seem helpful.

Chair Melinda Gant reported that Midtown community council has relatively few active or attending members who are residents of Midtown. 3 residents regularly attend. Most of the active members are the business community. Typically 10 to 15 members attend meetings, not including guests, and the agendas are busy.

Emily Weiser observed that it seems like a functional community council for businesses, but not representing residents, which is a concern. 3 questionnaire responses from its residents expressing concern is a relatively high number for its population size. *Darrel Hess* responded that 3 to 5 comments is not really a lot, and questioned how many residents would attend the meetings held in the evenings. *Care Clift* suggested to give the Midtown Community Council the opportunity to respond and indicate what the council doing to encourage residents to attend. *Chair Melinda Gant* added that staff should provide the Committee with a summary of the questionnaire responses from Midtown and Spenard, not just the responses that called for changes.

The Committee determined to continue the Midtown discussion to next meeting.

Care Clift moved to table the discussion of Boundary Study Area #28 regarding Midtown until next meeting. *Michael Packard* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by a vote of 11 in favor and 1 opposed.

5. Schedule and Next Steps

Tom Davis and the Committee discussed scheduling the next meeting for April 24.

6. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.