



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

*MINUTES*

Monday, June 12, 2023  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

*Meeting #5*

Hybrid Meeting Held In-person and Virtually in Microsoft Teams

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

**A. Roll Call**

A quorum was present.

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

*Excused:* Mark Butler  
Karl von Lührte  
Carolyn Ramsey

*Staff:* Tom Davis, Senior Planner, Planning Department

*Guests:* Kathleen Plunkett, Russian Jack Community Council

**B. Review of Agenda**

*Chair Melinda Gant* proposed adding an item 3.E. to address unfinished Boundary Study Area #25. *Care Clift* proposed adding an item under section 4 regarding criteria for community councils to show their participation levels. *Al Milspaugh* moved to approve the agenda with the two proposed changes. *Michael Packard* seconded.

***The motion to approve the agenda as modified passed unanimously.***

### **C. Minutes**

The draft minutes from April and May were not yet available.

#### **2. Boundary Study Areas for immediate approval as a group, of the staff recommended option as provided in the June 9, 2023, Revised Draft White Paper No. 2.**

*Chair Gant* asked Committee members wanted to pull any of Boundary Study Areas #15, #31, #37, and #34 for discussion before voting. None were pulled for discussion. *Chair Gant* observed that the four study areas were brought forward by only one questionnaire responder each and that the boards of the affected community councils opposed any boundary changes.

*Charlie Welch* moved to approve the staff recommendations for Boundary Study Areas #14, #31, #37, and #34. *Matt Burkholder* seconded.

***The motion to approve the staff recommendations for Boundary Study Areas #15, #31, #37, and #34 passed unanimously.***

#### **3. Boundary Study Areas from June 9, 2023, Revised Draft White Paper No. 2, for Discussion and Recommendation,**

##### **A. Boundary Study Areas #6, #7, and #9 in Northeast and Scenic Foothills**

*Michael Packard* moved to approve Option G for Boundary Study Areas #6 and #7, as provided on page 16 of the June 9, 2023, revised draft White Paper No. 2. *Emily Weiser* seconded the motion.

*Michael Packard* spoke to the motion, and explained that DeBarr Road seems like a good dividing line, as it's a huge separator between neighborhoods. *Chair Gant* noted that she had attended the most recent Northeast Community Council meeting, where the community council including all 20 or so members attending opposed changing Northeast's boundaries in a straw vote. *Care Clift* responded that 20 people is a small group, and not necessarily representative of the neighborhood desires as to boundaries. A resolution will be voted on at their next meeting. People who do not feel represented or welcome are not showing up to the meetings.

*Emily Weiser* added that a relatively large number of questionnaire respondents (16) said that Northeast is too big. She believed that the people who don't attend the meetings and vote are the ones who don't feel they are a part of the community council.

*Care Clift* commented that Option G is a more drastic change than what Scenic Foothills is proposing in Option C. *Darrel Hess* responded that Option G would not change any boundaries or split the council. Option G recommends that the Assembly create a new community council in the future *after* people from the neighborhood petition to become a community council. That would give opportunity for people who do not feel represented to come forward, hold meetings, submit bylaws, and petition to be recognized as a new community council. They would need to make the effort to initiate a community council. *Carmela Warfield* responded that people who do not feel represented also have the opportunity run for officer positions at Northeast and become active, regardless of where they are within the district.

*Stan Moll* supported Option G more than Option F. He said that splitting Northeast between north and south makes more sense than splitting it east-west, because Turpin/Baxter is not as strong of a boundary. The areas north and south of DeBarr are different from one another.

*Tom Davis* explained that either Option F or G would leave a future group of residents the opportunity to suggest a different boundary for initiating a new community council. *Darrel Hess* added that community councils can bring forward proposed boundary changes or initiate new community councils outside of the 10-year review process. He pointed to the merger of two community councils on Hillside several years ago and the creation of Midtown Community Council in 2004 as examples.

***The motion to recommend Option G for Boundary Study Areas #6 and #7 passed unanimously.***

*Tom Davis*, in response to a question about Boundary Study Area #9, said that the Committee had recommended Option A, no change to boundaries, in Study Area #9.

**B. Boundary Study Areas #8, #10, #12, and #13 in University Area, Tudor Area, and Campbell Park**

*Tom Davis* explained the geographic interrelationships between these four boundary study areas. The Committee then determined to address them individually. The Committee discussed Boundary Study Area #8 first, as follows:

*Emily Weiser* moved to recommend Option A, no change to boundaries in Boundary Study Area #8. *Charlie Welch* seconded the motion.

*Emily Weiser* explained her motion by noting that the president of University Area Community Council (UACC) is already concerned about having enough residents to run the community council, and that losing the residents in study area #8 would negatively affect its ability to function.

*Al Milspaugh* supported Option B. He explained that he is an officer of UACC and that UACC has good geographic representation of officers. UAA is also an active participant at council meetings. UACC has a couple of officers on its board who are from the area east of Baxter Road, who feel that they are more a part of Scenic Foothills than University Area. Boniface Parkway is a natural boundary, a four-lane arterial that has commuter traffic and is harder to walk across than Baxter Road. *Mr. Milspaugh* continued, reporting that a few years ago he and another officer had walked the neighborhood east of Boniface to encourage people to become active in UACC, and found there was not much interest there in participating in UACC. *Care Clift* added that people from that area have attended Scenic Foothills meetings at times.

*Emily Weiser* responded that she had once lived on one of the dead-end cul-de-sacs on the east side of Boniface, and did not at that time feel a part of Scenic Foothills. She felt more a part of University Area. There were no street connections from where she was living to areas east.

*Chair Gant* asked if anyone knew the history of the how the boundary came to be at Baxter Road. *Darrel Hess* surmised that there may have not been many residents in the Boundary Study Area when the council districts were formed many years ago. *Stan Moll* asked about the distribution of the population of UACC, and suggested consideration for dissolving UACC by transferring its eastern portion including all of Boundary Study Area #8 east of the UMED campuses to Scenic Foothills, and the western portion to community councils to the west. There was also discussion about a merger of UMED and Scenic Foothills.

*Al Milspaugh* responded that there has not been any discussion at UACC regarding merging with Scenic Foothills. *Mr. Milspaugh* continued, explaining that concerns about adequate population or

losing existing officers is not a boundary review criteria. The “natural communities” boundary criteria calls for community council districts based on neighborhoods. Community councils should draw their officers from the neighborhoods within their boundaries.

***The motion to recommend Option A failed by unanimous vote.***

*Al Milspaugh* moved to recommend Option B, to transfer the area east of Boniface Parkway to Scenic Foothills. *Emily Weiser* seconded.

*Al Milspaugh*, speaking to his motion, said that Boniface Parkway is a natural boundary. People east of Boniface have expressed concerns about why they are not a part of Scenic Foothills, and. *Chair Gant* asked if there is concern about losing so much population. *Al Milspaugh* responded that, other than a couple of board members, there have been few participants from the area in question. *Chair Gant* noted that Scenic Foothills has a concern that it is too small, and that Option B might help solve their problem. *Emily Weiser* added that the Committee will next be considering adding Tudor Area to UACC which will add some population to UACC.

***The motion to recommend Option B passed, with 8 votes in favor and 1 opposed.***

The Committee next discussed Boundary Study Area #12, Tudor Area Community Council, as follows:

*Darrel Hess* commented that Tudor Area is very small, and inactive. *Mr. Hess* explained that Tudor Area has struggled for years. *Tom Davis* explained that he had corresponded with the acting chair of Tudor Area, Todd Butler, and included what he learned from Todd Butler and a few others in White Paper No. 2. *Mr. Davis* reported that Tudor Area has resumed meetings in 2023, however only 2 or 3 people are attending. *Darrel Hess* explained that Todd Butler has made herculean efforts for many years but Tudor Area is so small that he has had trouble getting enough people engaged to make it viable. *Chair Gant* asked what the history of the area was that led to the creation of this community council however no attendees were familiar with that history.

*Al Milspaugh* offered that UACC would not object if people in Tudor Area want to join UACC.

*Emily Weiser* moved to recommend Option C, to merge Tudor Area Community Council into UACC. *Michael Packard* seconded.

*Emily Weiser* explained that Option C will be mutually beneficial. It will allow Tudor Area to be a part of a community council that is already active, and will help address concerns about whether UACC will have enough people to run its community council. *Al Milspaugh* responded that UACC has not had any problems remaining active, and reiterated that the people in Boundary Study Area #8 (discussed above) have not participated much. The relative populations of Tudor Area Community Council and Boundary Study Area #8 were then discussed.

*Stan Moll* asked why Rogers Park Community Council was not interested in combining with Tudor Area. *Tom Davis* reported that he has asked the Rogers Park board this question but it has not yet met to respond. *Darrel Hess* explained that Rogers Park, in general, is a very old and self-contained, insular neighborhood. *Al Milspaugh* added that *Rogers Park* is a strong, active community council. *Stan Moll* concluded he supports merging Tudor Area with UACC because Rogers Park opposes being merged, while UACC will apparently be happy to have Tudor Area join.

*Emily Weiser* noted that the only negative aspect of merging Tudor Area into UACC was that it looks less clean on the map than does merging Tudor Area with Rogers Park—Tudor Area will look “tacked on” to the west end of UACC. However, beyond the aesthetics of the map, the roadways form a natural set of boundaries around the combination of Tudor Area and UACC. 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a

strong boundary. *Chair Gant* added that in her experience the Tudor Area district feels like it is a part of the University area.

***The motion to recommend Option C, to merge Tudor Area into University Area, passed unanimously.***

The Committee next addressed Boundary Study Area #10, University Area Community Council, as follows:

*Emily Weiser* moved to recommend Option A with a clarifying adjustment to its wording to: No changes to UACC boundaries, except where the committee recommends in the other Boundary Study Areas. *Michael Packard* seconded.

***The motion to recommend Option A with the clarified wording passed unanimously.***

The Committee next addressed Boundary Study Area #13, South of Tudor Road and East of Lake Otis, as follows:

*Carmela Warfield* moved to recommend Option A, no change. *Emily Weiser* seconded.

*Al Milspaugh* noted that Campbell Park is trying to be active and address community issues in its area, although they do not have a big area or population. *Carmela Warfield* noted that Kevin Fimon, an officer of Campbell Park's board, is an experienced community council federation leader and mentor. If as documented in White Paper #2 the preference of Campbell Park's board is to retain its existing boundaries, and that the board is working hard to actively represent its existing district areas, that she would support their preference.

*Darrel Hess* commented that UACC will still receive notice and be asked to comment about municipal public facility decisions south of Tudor Road, such as regarding the proposed Navigation Center for people who are homeless, even if the UACC district does not include the areas south of Tudor. *Al Milspaugh* said that UACC is already involved in the Navigation Center issue.

*Emily Weiser* commented that she would be concerned about reducing the population of Campbell Park Community Council and its capacity to remain active if neighborhoods south of Tudor Road were to be transferred to UACC.

***The motion to recommend Option A, no change, passed unanimously.***

### **C. Boundary Study Area #32 in Turnagain**

Boundary Study Area #32, Spenard Beach Park, was discussed as follows.

*Tom Davis* explained that representatives from Turnagain and Spenard Community Councils had recently agreed to jointly propose to share Spenard Beach Park between Turnagain and Spenard by overlapping their district boundaries. *Mr. Davis* reported that Turnagain's general membership has voted and approved a resolution in favor of the proposal. The Spenard representative is bringing the idea to Spenard's general membership for consideration. Turnagain Community Council's chair did not think Option B, for each community council district include half the park, would make sense. The Planning Department staff therefore had added Option C, to share Spenard Beach Park, to the list of options for this Boundary Study Area in White Paper No. 2.

*Charlie Welch* moved to recommend Option C, to include Spenard Beach Park in both Turnagain and Spenard Community Councils, by overlapping their district area boundaries in the park. *Care Clift* seconded.

*Emily Weiser* said that she liked that the two community councils are working together on this item, and since the name of the park is Spenard it makes sense that Spenard Community Council would have some ownership over it. Therefore, if it is technically allowed to share an area between two community councils, she would support Option C.

*Carmela Warfield* asked if community council boundaries have ever overlapped in this manner, or could they be allowed to? *Darrel Hess* responded that he believed they could if the Assembly approved it. He continued that, since there is no population or businesses in the proposed overlap, there does not seem to be any harm. *Mr. Hess* and *Emily Weiser* added that, if PZC and Assembly support a different option besides Option C, they can do so.

*Carmela Warfield* asked, if the boundaries of community council districts are supposed to be unique, can the Boundary Review Committee establish a new precedent by recommending an overlap in this location? Is this recommendation unique to this area, or should we consider that it will lead to proposed overlapping boundaries in other areas? *Tom Davis* responded that it could set a precedent in other areas. He explained that there have been boundary disputes between community councils in the past over other public lands and facilities. He also cautioned that overlapping districts could present problems for municipal administrative functions, for example for sending out public notices or maintain geographic information databases.

Committee members discussed what the downsides of Option C could be. *Chair Gant* suggested that one downside could be if the two community councils develop different visions for the park in the future. Could this overlap create problems regarding who makes decisions in this area? *Darrel Hess* responded that community councils are only advisory and do not make decisions about what happens at the park.

*Matt Burkholder* added that since Spenard and Turnagain are each individual community councils, it is ok if they have their own opinions on the overlapping area. *Mr. Burkholder* noted that there are no residents in this park and the community councils are cooperating—two factors that could set a precedent for making similar decisions in the future.

*Chair Gant* and *Darrel Hess* noted that if at some time in the future the overlap is found to not be working well, anyone can propose to change the boundaries back again.

*Darrel Hess* noted that Option C might be a precedent for public facilities, such as parks and airports. In the future, community councils could have overlapping boundaries if it makes them feel that they have a vested interest in such facility. *Care Clift* gave an example of a recent dispute over a park, and pointed out that no community council has ownership over a public park. However, *Chair Gant* and *Al Milspaugh* responded with different examples in which community councils were very active in the development and maintenance of the parks in their districts and had a strong sense of ownership.

***The motion to recommend Option C, to include Spenard Beach Park in both community councils, passed with 7 votes in favor and 2 opposed.***

#### **D. Boundary Study Area #33 in Taku Campbell**

Boundary Study Area #33, south of Dimond Boulevard to 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, was discussed, as follows.

*Tom Davis* introduced this Boundary Study Area and the proposed boundary change supported by the officers of both community councils. *Mr. Davis* and *Stan Moll* reported that the presidents of Taku

Campbell, Bayshore/Klatt, and Old Seward Oceanview had met with them and had agreed to support the transfer of Boundary Study Area #33 from Taku Campbell to Bayshore/Klatt.

*Emily Weiser* moved to recommend Option B, to transfer the area south of Dimond Boulevard from Taku Campbell to Bayshore/Klatt Community Council. *Carmela Warfield* seconded.

*Darrell Hess* commented that Dimond Boulevard and Seward Highway are strong natural boundaries.

***The motion to approve Option B passed unanimously.***

### **E. Boundary Study Area #25 in South Addition**

Discussion of Boundary Study Area #25, north of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West of L Street was discussed, as follows:

*Chair Gant* explained that the discussion of Boundary Study Area #25 is a continuation from Committee meeting #4. This item had been tabled to give Downtown Community Council and South Addition residents in Bootlegger's Cove more time to provide input before the Committee makes its recommendation. *Tom Davis* reported that SACC's board is apparently reaching out to residents in Boundary Study Area #25, and that because of this Downtown's board is waiting for the outcome of SACC's efforts before deciding its own position. In absence of having more information about the community desires, the Committee determined to apply the project's Boundary Review Criteria to determine its recommendation for Boundary Study Area #25.

*Michael Packard* moved to recommend Option B, to transfer the areas west of L Street and north of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue from South Addition to Downtown Community Council. *Charlie Welch* seconded.

*Mr. Packard*, speaking to his motion, explained that Option B would increase the resident population of Downtown, giving it a larger and more diverse group of people who can be active members.

*Emily Weiser* found no compelling reason to transfer the people in this area to Downtown. The proposal to change the boundary is not coming from the residents of the affected area. She is inclined to default to Option A, retain existing boundaries.

*Chair Gant* explained that she used to live in Bootlegger's Cove and never felt a part of Downtown while living there. She explained there is a big physical barrier between Bootlegger's Cove and Downtown, because of the topography that drops off west of L Street and creates a natural divide. L Street is also a large state roadway. *Chair Gant* continued that many residents walk recreationally in the area and they tend to stay in Bootleggers or go to and from South Addition and Westchester—not Downtown. She did not support the transfer. *Darrel Hess* added that he has bicycled in the area for years he finds that it seems like Bootleggers is a part of South Addition; it has the same atmosphere as South Addition. It does not feel like Downtown to him.

*Darrel Hess* added that although there is a desire to add more resident population to Downtown, transferring this study area is not necessarily the right way to do that. There is a lot of housing being developed within Downtown.

*Stan Moll* agreed that the neighborhood identity in the Boundary Study Area is the same as South Addition and it should remain in South Addition. *Mr. Moll* and *Chair Gant* questioned why the SACC board supports consideration for transferring the area to Downtown. *Chair Gant* noted the South Addition residents who attended the Committee's previous meeting (Meeting #4) had opposed such a transfer.

***The motion to recommend Option B failed unanimously.***

*Charlie Welch* moved to recommend Option A, to retain existing boundaries. *Emily Weiser* seconded.

***The motion to recommend Option A passed unanimously.***

**4. Schedule and Next Steps**

**A. Criteria for Community Councils to Show Participation Levels**

*Care Clift* explained her concern about the lack of a consistent set of minimum quorum requirements and the activity levels at community councils. During this boundary review project, a small group of people attending a community council meeting representing all of Northeast, a very large community council, took a position opposing a boundary change. *Ms. Clift* said she did not believe their position was truly representative of the community desires regarding district boundaries in at least some parts of Northeast. *Ms. Clift* suggested that the Committee recommend the Federation of Community Councils evaluate quorum requirements to develop a fair way of measuring quorum that would consider the population size of the community council.

*Darrel Hess* explained that quorums are up to the individual community councils to establish through their own bylaws. There is nothing in the municipal code about community council quorums—it's up to the individual councils, and their quorum requirements vary widely. *Ms. Clift* responded that this is a problem, because the Committee has been trying to determine if there is adequate participation levels in the community councils.

*Al Milspaugh* and *Charlie Welch* discussed that there is a wide variety of community councils, and whether the Federation's Board of Delegates could recommend or suggest generally applicable criteria for setting quorum.

*Care Clift* moved that the Boundary Advisory Committee recommend that there be more measurable criteria for participation and quorum at community council meetings. *Charlie Welch* seconded.

*Michael Packard* expressed concern for large community council areas that cannot get enough people to show up to meet some uniform threshold requirement, and could never meet quorum or vote on any action?

*Carmela Warfield* added that each community council has its own bylaws, governing documents, and elected body. But the proposed motion on the table is to establish uniform standards by which we would measure everybody. *Ms. Warfield* expressed that each community council should be able to set its parameters for its quorum, and by its elected representatives be represented. She offered a comparison to municipal elections where although there is sometimes low voter turnout, but the community respects the results of the election and the will of the people even if the percentage turnout is not what one might have desired from our fellow residents. *Ms. Warfield* concluded that, out of respect for each individual and unique community council, she would oppose the motion, because it should be up to each individual community council to establish what their quorum looks like.



*Darrel Hess* questioned who would establish or enforce uniform criteria for quorum? He explained that community councils are not a part of government. Community councils are private membership associations.

*Charlie Welch* responded that the proposed motion does not need to lead to a requirement or be enforced. Providing a matrix of different quorum thresholds or how active community councils are relative to their population size could be informational. For example, if Tudor Area Community Council (Boundary Study Area #12) cannot meet quorum, perhaps their own bylaws should have a lower threshold for making quorum. But if there are only a few people attending votes, should we consider such a community council as active as others where many more people are participating?

*Darrel Hess* explained that varying participation levels is inherent in community councils. In Fairview, for example, he found that typically only 20 people would attend most meetings, but 150 people would show up for one or two months whenever a hot-button issue came up. By the third month attendance would taper back down to 20. He believed that is how most community councils operate. You have the smaller group of hard core committed people who show up to do the work month-to-month, and then you have the larger number of people who show up only when there is a hot-button issue that affects them. *Mr. Hess* believed it's a good topic for the Federation to consider, if it is a topic that they want to look at.

*Care Clift* expressed that she did not think that the criteria should be a matter of how many people show up at each meeting, but rather how many people are active generally, such as on email or social media or whatever the council uses. There should be some way that the council can show that people from all areas of that community council district are active. For example, University Area Community Council happened to get information from several its officers that residents east of Boniface wanted to become a part of Scenic Foothills. But other community councils are probably not getting that kind of information about similar situations in their districts.

*Matt Burkholder* and *Al Milspaugh* explained that historically the Federation periodically sent mass mailers to all residents in community council areas that identified the community council and the issues it is addressing. This gave all residents an opportunity to become informed and active.

*Emily Weiser* moved to extend the meeting to 8:10 p.m. *Michael Packard* seconded the motion.  
***The meeting was extended to 8:10 by unanimous vote.***

*Care Clift* concluded her arguments in favor of the motion, explaining that the Committee has been trying throughout this boundary review process to determine the participation levels of the community councils districts affected by the Boundary Study Areas.

*Al Milspaugh* explained that community councils are required to keep an attendance record of who attended their meetings.

***The motion to recommend that there be more measurable criteria for participation and quorum at community council meetings failed, with 1 vote in favor and 8 opposed.***

**5. Public Comments (none)**

**6. Adjournment**

*Stan Moll* moved to adjourn the meeting. *Care Clift* seconded. ***The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.***