HERITAGE LAND BANK ADVISORY COMMISSION
Meeting

June 14, 2018, 11:30 a.m.

Permit & Development Center conference room 170
4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

Commission Chair Tim Trawver called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

Commissioners Present:
Tim Trawver, Chair
Jim Fredrick, Commissioner
Peggy Looney, Commissioner
Brad Quade, Commissioner
Ron Tenny, Commissioner
Wende Wilber, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent:
Kati Capozzi, Vice-Chair (Unexcused)

Staff Present:
Robin E. Ward, Executive Director
Nicole Jones-Vogel, Land Management Officer
Kristy Despars, Land Management Officer
Tawny Klebesadel, Office Manager

II. Approval of the June 14, 2018 Agenda and the Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2018 and March 8, 2018

Commissioner Jim Fredrick moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded and approval of the agenda passed unanimously. Mr. Fredrick moved to approve the meeting minutes of February 8, 2018 and March 8, 2018. The motion was seconded and approved of the minutes pass unanimously.

III. Director’s Report

Ms. Robin Ward reported that quotes were received for the Former Native Hospital Site (FNHS) master planning, and the contract was awarded to The Boutet Co. We’ve used the site for temporary uses for a long time, but we want to see what it’s going to be when it grows up. The Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance will be breaking ground on their project this summer. The Iditarod National Historic Trail Phase I expansion is also starting this summer; it’s underway now. We’re working on Girdwood Industrial Park, we’re putting in sewer facilities and utilities. The CEA easement action item, we suggest, postponing that item indefinitely. We’ve been working with CEA for a compromise and we’ll bring forward a new action item in July. The Salvation Army officially gave notice they will not be renewing the Clitheroe lease, which is on HLB property. They’re buying a building and moving all of their operations and clients to the new building. We’ve been working on possibly developing that area into a medical campus. We will be working on a shorter-term temporary use in the interim. In July, we expect to transfer 5 lots into the HLB inventory. We don’t do that very often. The parcels are in the general real estate inventory and are located on the southeast corner of Lake Otis and Tudor. You’ll remember that there used to be a gas station, Peacock Cleaners, and an old motel there. All of those buildings have been demolished. Two of those parcels are active environmentally contaminated sites that are in remediation. At some point in time those sites will be very developable. Right now they are vacant uncommitted parcels and that is our mission in HLB is to manage them. We are hoping to move those into the HLB inventory during the July meeting.

Mr. Fredrick inquired about The Boutet Co. timeline for master planning for the FNHS. Land Management Officer Nicole Jones-Vogel responded that we had just issued their notice to proceed and we’re looking to do most of the
work within a year. We are creating a working group and wish to invite any commissioners to be in that group. We should be kicking that off in the fall. Ms. Ward added that we always like to invite commissioners to be involved in HLB planning efforts and hopes that some of the commissioners are interested and have time to do that. Chair Trawver commented that’s very interesting and it appears HLB has a lot going on this year. Chair Trawver moved on to action items and public hearings.

IV. Proposed Action Items and Public Hearings:

a. HLBAC Resolution 2018-04: A Resolution recommending Assembly approval of the disposal by telecommunication and electrical easement to Chugach Electric Association, Inc. of portions within HLB Parcels 6-057(A-E) and 6-057-2, legally described as Lots 1-5 Block 2 and Tract A Girdwood Industrial Park Subdivision Phase I (Plat 2016-67). Postponed indefinitely.

Chair Trawver stated action item “a” was postponed indefinitely and, as Robin had stated, you would probably see a revised easement in July. He moved on to item “b.”

b. HLBAC Resolution 2018-05: A Resolution recommending Assembly approval of the withdrawal of a portion of HLB Parcel 1-074 from the HLB inventory and transfer to the Real Estate Services general inventory for Management Authority to Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility for proposed Tract 3 Carol Creek Subdivision (Preliminary Plat S12423), legally described as Tract B4 Recreation Center Subdivision (Plat 85-82).

Ms. Jones-Vogel provided the staff report, including the adoption of the Carol Creek Site Plan in March of 2018. We submitted a preliminary plat to the Planning Department, which is scheduled to be before the Platting Board on August 1st. We are implementing the Site Plan. Anchorage Water and Wastewater (AWWW) has requested 3-1/2 acres for their water reservoirs. In instances like this, where there is an identified use for the land, we withdraw this from the HLB inventory and transfer it to the general real estate inventory, which is managed by Real Estate Services, with management authority is provided to AWWU. So, they’ll have long-term management of the site. Ms. Jones-Vogel referred to the attachments in the meeting agenda packets, including additional comments that were received after the packets were disseminated, and the Chugach Community Council May meeting minutes where we did our community meeting for the platting action. You’ll note that they’re not opposed to this transfer to AWWU, but they’re dissatisfied with the process that occurred during the adoption of the Carol Creek Plan. They have some recommendations for changes that they will probably talk about during their testimony. Our recommendation is to move forward with AWWU being able to go forward with their design and capital planning for this utility use. When the plat is recorded, hopefully before the end of the year, AWWU will be able to have management authority and meet their deadline for some of their financial planning.

Chair Trawver opened up the public hearing. Kimi Donnelly provided testimony that HLB is superseding the will of the people. There is a long time table of events that she would be happy to fill the commissioners in on. There was a press release indicating HLB was tabling the high density housing; publicly that was the last thing she could find. They never really told us when they decided to un-table everything. They said they couldn’t make it pencil out. Ms. Donnelly stated this was a deceptive and strategic move that was to mislead the people in the area. Where’s the proof in how and exactly what and when exactly precipitated this tabling and un-tabling and by whom the numbers changed and when. It seems that somehow we should know the timing of all the events, and how it came about. Where is the logical progression and where are the leaps. I thought these plans were designed for the next 10, 20+ years. It seems that HLB doesn’t have the ability to plan that far ahead, as demonstrated by the many conflicting plans, timelines, and the on-record statements. The AWWU water reservoir proposal has been used as the reason why these unreasonable plan update proposals have occurred. It cracked the door, if you will. I ask, respectfully, that they take themselves out of the equation. I respectfully ask that we table this vote for the moment and that
no more forward movement happen until this is investigated, examined and vetted through our local representatives, the community, and through science. I haven’t seen a justification on any of these numbers that crop up. All of these massive changes in density and against the will of our own resolutions and against the will of our community council. My radar goes off when I see this deep disparity in the numbers and the side-by-side comparisons in the new plan and the old plan we all worked on. And you flash up there on your slides, but without any of your new appropriations and changes to the plan. I think it’s the best interest of everyone involved if we start from scratch. It’s a bad deal for us and it’s done forever. Even though I have not verified this, I have heard Agnew: Beck is no longer involved in this going forward, and I’d like to know who is. And shouldn’t we see if they have new ideas present themselves before committing to this course of action that has only brought our community a rating of “F.” When you look it up on real estate and being able to live in our community, it’s rated an “F.” Try to sell your home now for top value. And it might preclude some future possible agreed on resolution. There’s a demonstrable pattern of HLB’s lack of transparency, bullying, and weasel moves that should concern every person in this room. Our individual voices and the voices of our Community Councils have been suppressed. “We the people” has no meaning to them. Our only hope is that it still has meaning to you, the people at this table. Chair Trawver thanked her for her testimony.

Debbie Butts commented that it is really scary following Kim, because actually she has followed along with this whole process along with our neighbors. I am actually here to thank the Municipality for the notification of this meeting. In the past, we have not been notified properly. Thank you very much for this notification, because it has enabled us to show up at this meeting. Ms. Butts stated she is not against AWWU, because they need the water tank. I still think we do need to address the density of the rest of Carol Creek, but that’s for another time. This is for water and I’m all for that. Thank you very much for sending this out and making sure that we’re notified of this meeting. Too bad it wasn’t done for the previous ones. But let’s move forward and see if can have meaningful communication with our community and with our Councils on what’s going on. Chair Trawver thanked her for her testimony.

Kay Abrams inquired if this proposal that you have of area Tract 3 being taken out, if that is approved, does that lock anything other than that tract into another plan. Chair Trawver stated that he thought the answer is no, but referred inquiry to Ms. Ward. Ms. Ward stated that in order for HLB to withdraw the piece that AWWU wanted, we were required to update the plan. The Plan has now been updated and adopted. This is the only action we’re taking right now. We’re proposing to take this one piece of the parcel out of the inventory and giving management authority to AWWU. That is the only action that we’re anticipating right now. Ms. Abrams responded that you all should be aware that you may think the reservoir is approved, but it ain’t done yet. Chair Trawver thanked her for her testimony.

John Abrams provided testimony that he has no objection to the water. While he doesn’t like the high density, Mr. Abrams stated that in the area there are one-acre lots, and his main concern is safety. The access ways in there from the Harry McDonald Recreation Center is Fish Hatchery Road. Mr. Abrams stated he’s lived on Fish Hatchery Road since 1971 and he didn’t think it was a problem until he saw kids walking or being driven down the road to the bus. Until you actually sit there at the school bus time in the morning, and you see how many kids and adults are walking, until you actually watch the foot traffic, if you put extra traffic on that road, it’s going to create havoc. The same thing happens on the Harry McDonald Road, it goes right near the elementary school, and there’s a bike trail there – kids walk on the opposite side of the road. There’s a lot of traffic in and out of the rec center, a lot of traffic in and out of that school, and I think the traffic on either road, if this thing goes in, the traffic will be outlandish. Mr. Abrams said he had no problem with the water, but thinks better access and roads need to happen first. Chair Trawver thanked him for his testimony.

Sandy Quimby provided testimony that she does not oppose the water and the transfer of land, as does the Chugiak Community Council. Ms. Quimby stated she wants the density to return to the original Plan, reducing the maximum
allowable density to be less than 10 dwellings per acre, instead of 15. You can see there’s a lot of frustration in the community because of the public process, the way it’s been handled and the lack of engagement throughout the entire process. **Ms. Quimby** stated there’s a whole long list of issues and like in the mission, there’s mistakes. One or two we understand, we all make mistakes, but the sheer number is pretty inexcusable. Like Ms. Donnelly stated, Ms. Ward was quoted in the Alaska Star that this development was not going to happen or go forward. Not this part, the AWWU, but the housing development was definitely on hold. So, after hearing that, **Ms. Quimby** stated she was surprised when she got an email from Debbie Ossianer, in October, where she said that HLB was proceeding with the increased density in the area. Subsequently the Chugiak-Eagle River Advisory Board wrote a resolution against it. So did the Chugiak Community Council, and Eagle River Valley Community Council — and maybe one other. We went to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and we said “hey”. And they said to take it back to the 2010 Plan. That was the end of public testimony and we came back the next month and HLB agreed to it. Then they came back and while they did reduce the total density, they made some significant changes that will affect other things. And again, it’s a detail thing, and I don’t know how much you read in to this or are familiar, but there are some problems with what they came back with. We weren’t allowed to testify, and public testimony was over, and one of the commissioners caught that and they said “wait a minute”, that isn’t the intent of what they said in 2010. And all of what HLB’s response was is that they took it back to 125 total dwellings and, as I mentioned, there were other problems. That was what we’d like to address. And then, it went to the Assembly and nobody was there because we didn’t know about it. We provided our emails and we were told that we would get informed and there would be updates on the website. **Ms. Quimby** stated the website wasn’t kept up to date, we weren’t emailed about the meeting, and stated she bird-dogged the PZC for over a year after we were here in December of 2016. HLB said, oh, it will be 2 or 3 months and you’ll see it at PZC. **Ms. Quimby** stated she signed up for e-alerts, she called them, she was told she would get notification, and none of that happened. **Ms. Quimby** requested the Commissioners to consider looking at reducing the density, and reintroducing the transitional density prior to approving the platting. Chair Trawver thanked her for her testimony. Seeing no other persons wishing to provide testimony, Chair Trawver closed the public hearing.

Chair Trawver stated that it appeared to him that this resolution was for the extraction of a portion of the parcel for AWWU’s use and it isn’t for updating the Carol Creek Plan. In the future, there will be more discussion on the Carol Creek Plan, is that correct? Ms. Ward responded that is correct. If there’s any other intention for the use of this property, or development, or withdrawal, or any disposals, or leases, we would come back to the Commission. This is the only action anticipated for the current Plan. Chair Trawver stated any action would then come before this Board. Commissioner Ron Tenny inquired if we were only taking a portion of the parcel out of the inventory. Ms. Ward responded that once this plat records, it will no longer be HLB Parcel 1-074, it will be renumbered and each one will have its own HLB number. This one HLB parcel will then be withdrawn. Mr. Tenny inquired if the one with all the housing would remain in. Ms. Ward confirmed all the rest would remain in HLB and any further action in Carol Creek comes forward to you again. Chair Trawver reiterated this resolution is only for the AWWU portion. That’s what we’re discussing today. Commissioner Wende Wilber stated that she would be voting in favor of the resolution in support of this water system, thought it was a public health issue, and that it is needed. The plat doesn’t designate how many dwellings or what any future use would be. The plat is simply lines on a piece of paper, so it doesn’t change anything in that regard. Any further subdivision will go through a robust public process. Final density and road access will be dealt with and expects that it will be less than what is shown. Commissioner Brad Quade stated he agreed with Ms. Wilber and added that he is sensitive to the gentleman’s comment about road access and safety and that they’ll have opportunities to address that, and in the same mindset that Wende was saying, to address those as they develop. This is just a change in the plat. Mr. Quade said he was highly sensitive to the gentleman’s comments and had also had these types of issues come up in other areas of town. Additionally, there seems to be some confusion about getting notification. That may be something that would need to be addressed separately. Mr. Quade stated that is something that is an issue in and of itself. Maybe that’s something that we can work with and maybe as a Commission, we can break down some barriers there. Chair Trawver stated those were good comments and he’d been working with HLB staff about notification procedures and make sure...
that these folks who are affected by anything we do here, get notified so they can attend these meetings. Mr. Tenny inquired if putting the water tower was imminent, was it something that was 5 or 10 years down the road. **Paul Hatcher**, AWWU, we call this the 520 reservoir site that would serve the lower Eagle River zone. This is in our 5 to 10 year plan and I believe that there is 2019 budget money to start the design. The piping would have to go from Fred Meyer’s, down the Old Glenn Highway and up the Harry McDonald Road to the site. There is no budget money currently to build the reservoirs, just for the design for the layout. Commissioner Peggy Looney shared that the Commission had heard testimony that water was an issue in that area. **Mr. Hatcher** stated not in this particular area. Water for this area comes directly off of the Eklutna main line. There is no water storage for this area.

Seeing no other Commissioner questions, Ms. Looney moved to approve. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

This motion: Passed 6-0

Chair Trawver stated, addressing everyone in the room, the HLB office is open, the doors are open to everyone. You can come in and address issues with Robin, or Tawny, or Nicole, or anyone else on staff. All the way down the line, if you have issues to discuss regarding the Carol Creek Plan, they’ll do that. They aren’t keeping you out of the process if you come into their office.

V. Appearance Request(s)

a. **Deb Essex, Girdwood Nordic Ski Club**, will provide a presentation regarding the proposed trail easement.

**Ms. Essex, GNSC**, provided map handouts with her presentation and asked which trail she should begin with – the 5K Loop or the proposed trail. Ms. Jones-Vogel clarified that with the recent request for information detailing the history of the 5K Loop and the new proposed trail, she left it up to the Commissioners which they’d like to hear about first. The commission requested to start with the existing 5K Loop. **Ms. Essex** started with pointing out landmarks on the 5K Loop map. This trail is currently being surveyed by CRW. Historically and currently collaborating with the Forest Service for revegetation and maintenance. This year we’re continuing to reduce the visibility from the 5K Loop to the Winner Creek trail. We’ve been working with moss enthusiasts in Girdwood. We’ve been looking at which types of moss colonies reproduce the fastest. It’s been exciting. We did find a sample that had not been recorded before. We’ve been looking at which types of moss grow better on clay versus rock. We’re looking at replacing one bridge which had been a culvert. We’re continuing to work on the visual impact on the 5K and we’re planting more trees. There are some areas that used to be gravel pits and we’re adding topsoil. We’re letting those areas compact naturally and then we’ll add more trees over time. We’ve been working with the only certified arborist in Girdwood. The two other really big visually impacted areas along the 5K, where Girdwood Mountain Bike Alliance (GMBB) will be coming onto the 5K, we’re going to be collaborating with GMBB to get that work done. We don’t want to go in and revegetate it and then they go in and build a trail. The next report you’ll see from the Girdwood Nordic Club will be the CRW survey when it is finished. We’ll come in and give HLBAC the final report. **Ms. Essex** asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Tenny said you know when you look at the 30’ easement, from the standpoint of the feasibility study, the issue I have is, I still think the trail is too wide. I think the building method dictates the trail width. It was supposed to be only 30’. I guess my issue is from an oversight standpoint. Once the trail is presented, I think there has to be better oversight on what’s to be built. I do think the trail is greening up on its own, but the trail is more of a road than it is a trail. My question to you is how do we go about building it better? **Ms. Essex** asked if Mr. Tenny was referring to building on the 5K and Mr. Tenny confirmed. **Ms. Essex** stated they’re not building any more on the 5K at all. We’re doing revegetating to get the 5K visual impact better and there were allowances given to go outside of the
easement for gravel extraction. So, that’s what we’re doing is going back to revegetate all the gravel pits. Mr. Tenny stated it’s a broader question. Are there any measures in place for HLB to do better? Mr. Tenny stated he’s gone back and researched this, not only for the GNSC, which I do represent, but I also represent the citizens of Girdwood. And my issue is if somebody comes in and says they’re building a 30’ trail, or a 40 or 50’ trail, the mechanism to build that trail determines that trail. We have a system that HLB doesn’t follow through or doesn’t have a system to actually do it. What’s happened, or maybe I’m wrong, but I guess this question is to HLB. If we gave a 30’ easement, the question then becomes, from an oversight standpoint, do we just do it on a feasibility study? If I look at the feasibility study, the part that confuses me is the fact that feasibility studies are only a matrix. The feasibility study had a matrix of what people wanted and the reality was that people wanted it, but the study said it was only going to be so deep. They also said they didn’t want it to impact other trails and they also said that they wanted a groomed trail. And we ended up with a racing trail. Where my issue comes in is if we approve something in HLB, through the Commissioners, we’re approving it on the basis of just saying it’s an easement of 30’, without any knowledge of how it’s being built, I think there’s a flaw in the system. Chair Trawver stated he agreed and wondered why they would’ve allowed them to go beyond the 30’. I realize that you all weren’t out there and there’s no blame here. I think, or what I’ve been told by the Director, is that you’re all working on that. We’re all very much looking forward to see your plan, because in the future when you’re granting these easements, is going to be contingent on how well you do it, because there’s been some beyond its limits. Or maybe you can say that there’s going to be a presentation by the Municipal Surveyor to discuss the difference between a regular survey and a GPS survey. I think that an actual survey is needed prior to construction, so there’s no question about where they are. Mr. Tenny stated this is how we learn, he realized this was the first big trail constructed in Girdwood. It isn’t Utopia and I’m not criticizing, what I’m saying is I’m a believer that if I’m an advisor, then we need to find ways to correct this and make sure it’s done right. Ms. Ward stated first of all we don’t know if it’s outside the easement yet, we’re doing a survey now. Please be patient until we see that. Ms. Ward stated she talked to the surveyor (CRW) and the surveyor has committed that any impact outside of the easement will be documented on the final survey. We think the resource extraction may be outside of the easement. We anticipated that piece. But whether or not the actual trail construction exceeds the boundaries of the easement, we don’t know until we actually get that survey. What you’re talking about, I assume Ron, is in the future is staking that easement. Mr. Tenny stated that say people come here and it looks wonderful, and we all vote on the trail. With the Trails Committee, we had fought to keep a trail a certain size. I use the trail and in some places it is wide. We don’t need to wait for a survey. As a group, the reality is there needs to be good trail management from HLB. Someone should’ve analyzed this and say how close is this to Winner Creek trail. I’ll be honest with you, I looked at that feasibility study. If we build these trails on the basis of a feasibility study, and I’m not criticizing — no, I am criticizing, if you look at what it really takes to build a trail. Girdwood is doing a great job - now. We’re working together and analyzing, and it really is a very difficult process to build a trail. And if the HLB from the standpoint of giving a trail away just by showing a picture and saying we’re going to build a trail, I think there is a problem with the system.

Ms. Jones-Vogel addressed the process piece of what happened with GNSC is we recorded a document with this being the trail alignment, and this is a conceptual map. We’re not doing that any more. I asked Nick Georgelos to be here because he is on the GMBA and that’s our next sort of Girdwood trail. They’re probably going to get a lot of attention when they break ground. We want to make sure that the conversations we’re having here with you today - that he’s hearing. But what we’re doing with the GMBA permit is we’re giving them an early entry authorization. So, they’re going to go out there and do the construction and then they’ll do the survey. And then, we’ll record an easement. So, once we get a survey from GNSC, we’re going to re-record the easement. The document of the survey will show exactly where the centerline is. It will be an exhibit of what is actually on the ground. So, GMBA will go out and construct the trail, then we’ll do the survey, and then we’ll record the easement. Until then, they’ll be working under an early entry authorization. Steve Schmitt, our surveyor, will talk a little more about that in a little bit. But, we are trying to overcome some of the shortcomings that have been identified with having a trail that we don’t have a survey for. We thought we did, because it has some GPS points and some other
data points we have from working with UAA. But, we have revamped our process to make it have more sense and to have it like a real document at the end of the day. So, that’s our process. And that’s what the Commission agreed to and that’s how we’ll go forward.

Ms. Wilber added, correct me if I’m wrong, but isn’t the roll of the Commission to approve the concept plan and the roll of staff to have the details of these; is this something that is out of our purview? Or is this incorrect? Ms. Ward stated we do understand the issue and we’re going to be very careful going forward. This was a learning experience for us and GNSC. They’d never done this before and we’d never done this before. The other trails are different from these. And different because a non-profit was constructing it. We all have a learning lesson, and they’re committed to making sure that if there is anything outside the easement, that it gets revegetated. We’re committed to changing our standards and changing processes to make sure that we have a good product going forward. Ms. Wilber stated that this has been a healthy dialogue and everyone’s being responsive. We’re all learning from it and doing better.

Ms. Essex added that it’s not just the circled areas on the map where we have more revegetation to do. We have been revegetating it since the beginning. We’re aware of how big the area is. Nobody wants a big road in the middle of the woods. We did need to build a big track to attract collegiate and world racing, and last year we finally did. And now, we have 5 races coming up. People are now coming to Girdwood to race. We wanted it to be safe, we built parking. It’s a great venue for the Municipality.

Mr. Quade stated it’s great that you’ve had success there. As far as the specifications, it’s up to whoever is taking these projects on to abide by those specifications. So, our purview is not CRW’s, that’s why we have that third party process that you have in advance to look at the potential issues and impacts may be. That burden to be successful is on the people who have taken on that responsibility, and in this case is GNSC. We’re just the body for specifications – on what we want it to be limited to. And you’re doing a fantastic job in handling it, thank you.

Ms. Essex stated we’re still working on some drainage issues. We put cameras on the gates last summer because somebody kept cutting the locks off. We thought we could find out who was doing that, but in the end it provided really good trail usage counts.

The discussion moved onto the GNSC proposed multi-use trail. Ms. Essex shared where the proposed trail is in relation to the 5K and other Girdwood landmarks. We have taken the guidelines from the resolution and have been working extensively with the Trail Committee on a sub-committee level to create a trail that’s good for everyone. We’re looking closely at the existing trails to make sure we don’t have the same kind of impact as we did on the 5K. We’ve tried to minimize the trail density, so that when you’re on the series of loops, you don’t end up seeing the other loops. The trail will be about 2.5K and it will be an easier trail than the 5K. It’s not ski only – everybody can use it. We’ve noticed a lot of people like to ski a loop and come back in. There is a huge amount of people that don’t ski any longer than 2.5K. This trail is necessary for people who are learning or just want to ski a short distance and get back to their car. We have two more sub-committee meetings before it goes back to the Trails Committee meeting in August. If it gets approved then we’ll be back here in front of you, probably with the survey and updates about the 5K, then hopefully go to the Assembly. Chair Trawver thanked her for her presentation.

b. Eryn Boone, Girdwood Board of Supervisors will provide a presentation regarding the trails in Girdwood.

Ms. Boone, GBOS, stated she had been on GBOS for the past couple of years and had been supervisor over Parks & Rec and involved since the beginning of the proposed multi-use trail. I’m not here representing anyone, I just want to provide an unbiased update regarding the proposed multi-use trail and the process that it’s gone through to get to this point. Ms. Boone stated that she’d read through the minutes of the last two meetings regarding the concerns for the 5K trail on HLB land and the investigation about the GNSC easement. After reading these minutes, I thought
it was important to come to one of your meetings and give a summary of the process that’s taken place and is still taking place for the new proposed trail. The Girdwood Trails Committee is a sub-committee of the GBOS. Typically resolutions move forward from the Trails Committee to the Land Use Committee, and then on to GBOS for discussion and vote there also. The Trails Committee hosted discussions between the trails committee, the GNSC, and Girdwood community regarding a proposal presented by the GNCS in October 2016 to construct a new summer and winter multi-use trail on HLB property located in the forest north of the Catholic Church and east of Glacier Creek. Many hours were dedicated to discussing the trail proposal during monthly Trails Committee meetings over the past eighteen months. All interested citizens were given the opportunity to express their ideas and there was a lot of feedback from the community. Major concerns from the community for this proposed trail were trail width, minimizing visual impact to existing trails, environmental impact of trail building, and making sure we use lessons learned from the past, such as the 5K. The GNCS modified its proposal in response to public comments during this time. The Trails Committee voted in June of 2017 to approve the trail concept (16 in favor, 6 opposed) with the understanding that the GNCS would communicate and cooperate with the Trails Committee concerning final trail alignment, trail cross-section design, and construction. This resolution included some stipulations:

1) Two access options to the trail.
2) Trail is maximum 10' wide, hardened surface, with targeted maximum width of 14' clearing
3) Design minimized visual impact on existing trails
4) Design minimized environmental impacts
5) Girdwood Trails Committee has ongoing input on trail design and construction, with specific review and approval once the center line is set.

This motion then went on to Land Use Committee and was approved (36 in favor, 5 opposed) and GBOS where it was approved (5 in favor, 0 opposed).

The GNCS continued fine-tuning the trail alignment and commissioned the trail designer to modify the original trail alignment to answer public concerns about the proposed trail proximity to existing trails. The Trails Committee voted in April of 2018 to approve (29 in favor, 5 opposed) the updated alignment as presented by GNCS, contingent on a subcommittee being formed of Trails Committee & GNCS members to make a preliminary plan for the alignment, design, & construction of the trail.

Subcommittee has been formed and has met 4 times in the past month and a half. Subcommittee is made up of 3 people from GNCS and 3 people from the Trails Committee, with me as chair. Discussions have focused on trail access locations, trail width, alignment, and construction methods. The subcommittee’s goal is to present its findings and preliminary plan for the alignment, design, and construction of the trail to the Trails Committee in August, 2018. Subcommittee meetings are open to the public and we have received public comments at all meetings. We are considering these public comments and incorporating them into the design of the trail as much as possible. All of the meetings and public process shows that the majority of the community supports a new trail in this area. There is a seemingly small group of people who don’t want to see this area developed at all, because it is such a unique area with important historical significance for the valley. We as the subcommittee are trying to be sensitive and consider all needs presented by community members as much as we can while still completing the work we were tasked with.

Members of the subcommittee recently proposed modifications to the trail alignment. These changes to trail alignment are aimed to reduce and minimize visual impact to existing Stumpy’s trail. Next on our agenda is to continue discussing access points and what those will look like, and to finalize a preliminary trail specification document that would eventually be given to the trail building contractor. The subcommittee will also work to complete the Trail Management Objectives form as required by the Girdwood Trails Management Plan for new trails.
Ms. Ward requested a copy of Ms. Boone’s report to disseminate to the Commissioners. Ms. Boone confirmed she would send it. Mr. Tenny stated being involved with the sub-committee was great learning experience.

c. **Steve Schmitt and Brooke Blessing, of PM&E** will provide a presentation, “GPS vs. Surveys for trail easements.”

Mr. Schmitt, PM&E, provided a presentation regarding GPS vs. Surveys. GPS is a global positioning system in relation to satellites. Alaska doesn’t have good enough satellite coverage to get accurate positioning. GPS is helpful in getting from point A to point B. In regards to the CRW effort, the problem with the ski area is that it’s at the base of the mountain, you cannot get a good GPS position. In this venue, it’s a sinuous corridor, and a drone isn’t going to be able to get a good position. So, surveying this trail system down in Girdwood it’s not really conducive to GPS or a drone. The bulk of CRW’s process is going to be a conventional survey, which is kind of old school, but in this case it’s more efficient. It’s going to save them time and money to do it conventionally. Mr. Schmitt shared that recreational grade GPS is good to plus or minus 50’. Mapping grade GPS is good to plus or minus 4 or 5’. Survey grade GPS needs to be plus or minus centimeters. The more expensive the equipment, the better positioning you get. In the case of trails on municipal property, it’s necessary to have a survey grade product. That is what CRW is working on. Questions? Mr. Fredrick and Mr. Tenny stated that was very helpful. Mr. Schmitt stated in the case of another project on HLB land, HLB gave them a right of entry. The trail was constructed and then an as-built was completed, and we got a finalized easement for the trail at a specific location. At the beginning you know the general location, but as you’re constructing it, say you hit a large rock, and the trail might shift over 20.’ Then you survey the trail, you get an as-built, and then you know exactly where the trail is. Your easement is going to be exactly where the trail is built. Mr. Tenny asked how do you know how accurate the MOA trail data is?

Ms. Blessing, PM&E, stated MOA was updating the trail GIS data throughout the Municipality. Mr. Tenny asked what happens with new development. Ms. Blessing responded that her role with MOA is non-motorized traffic and that any development, whether it’s MOA, DOT, or private development, I review the plans to ensure they comply with areawide trail plans, etc. I don’t really deal with existing trails. That’s more Parks & Rec, but we do our best to coordinate together. Chair Trawver thanked Mr. Schmitt and Ms. Blessing.

VI. **Persons or Items not on the Agenda**

Brendan Yukoubian (passed out letter) proposed that a portion of the Girdwood valley be a protected area to stay in its current condition as a wild back-country primitive area in perpetuity without additional development, including no trails development. Girdwood’s well-being and economic future are intimately tied to the natural environment, which has been identified time and again as the key feature of the community and its identity, such as in various Girdwood-related planning documents. At least until very recently, we have been blessed with the potential for having it all — to have within walking distance of the community a wide range of land uses — from undeveloped wild areas to residential, commercial, and a varying of levels of developed recreational activities. However, owing to some recent development, the community is on the cusp of losing the last wild areas that are near the community and don’t involve climbing up the mountainside. There is a large user group in Girdwood who is losing their ability to enjoy their community as they have always done with these developments. The area in question is considered by many to be nearly sacred. It contains only some primitive trails — notably the Stumpy’s trail routes — but is largely prized for its backcountry, ungroomed, wilderness-like characteristics. It also important to preserve these amazing diversity of land uses in Girdwood. Such an area would be crucial to preserving Girdwood’s character and lands heritage, to prevent completely losing this type of land use near the community, and I believe it is vital to our community’s well-being and economic future. I believe it would be extremely compelling to visitors to be able to market to visitors — in addition to our arts and music scene, the resort, the hand-tram and variety of trails and recreational opportunities, everything you know about Girdwood — a protected wild area literally right outside people’s doorsteps. It would also help address the shortcoming of the past years in our
attempts to fulfill visions in Girdwood planning documents, such as the Girdwood Area Plan by formally protecting such an area and addressing an increasing imbalance in the types of land uses, including recreation types, which are served in Girdwood. How to do this is another question. HLB lands are crucial to the idea. There are a number of possible avenues that I have in mind and would like to talk with you about more in the future. But today I just wanted to bring the idea to your attention to start the discussion. I look forward to any feedback or thoughts now or later. Chair Trawver thanked him and suggested Mr. Yukoubian speak with Robin and other HLB staff. This is a good letter and this is the right avenue to go ahead and talk to them directly.

Julie Raymond-Yukoubian (passed out letter) stated she wholly endorsed Mr. Yukoubian’s proposal for a preserved wild area. I wanted to talk about the 5K trail, I recently read the summary report produced by HLB staff and wanted to thank staff for compiling this report, and the Commission for investigating these issues, and I support continued investigation here. There are some points I would like to make with regard to the report and the investigation moving forward. Specifically, I feel a number of revisions are required to the report before the Commission uses or approves it as a plan moving forward. Some of this has been partially addressed in previous conversations. I think it should be clear in the report that by trail what is meant is the entire trail footprint — that is trailbed plus the entire clearing width — and not just the trailbed itself. I think that should be spelled out in the report of what we’re referring to. And to address a few comments here, growing moss after cutting down old growth trees does not help restore a viewshed. I’m sure it helps prevent erosion and other things and makes it look nicer in general, but it doesn’t remediate the viewshed problem we have. Nor do tiny little trees that have been replanted. I think there’s some clarifications or revisions to the summary report that also need to be done regarding the Winner Creek trail viewshed issue. For example, the report seems to be suggesting that other than the issue of excessive clearing widths outside the easement, that there aren’t community concerns related to the development of the 5K in terms of its proximity to the Winner Creek trail, and that close proximity was part of its design, however I think that is not accurate. Degrading the forested quality of the Winner Creek trail viewshed was, as far as I understand, never part of the plan for this trail, yet it occurred. It doesn’t make sense to undermine the quality of Girdwood’s premiere trail by constructing another one so close to it. Many people, including HLB, have commented on this. The Girdwood Area Plan also discusses not impacting the Winner Creek trail. And a review of the public discussion pertaining to the history of the trail shows there was public concern during development and design for this issue. We think it’s appropriate to consider remediation related to the 5K, which even associated — aside from the easement width issue, takes into account the need to restore the Winner Creek trail viewshed. Not just to have tiny trees and bits of moss. Gravel extraction was also a huge concern with that project. In terms of the Forest Loop proposed trail, I just wanted to reiterate I don’t think that any future trails that HLB approves, should be giving away gravel for free. If people are going to be extracting gravel from the site to be used for trail construction, then they should be paying full market value for that or have to bring gravel in from outside. I strongly support HLB staff to come out to the 5K and visit this summer, it’s been promised several times, but hasn’t happened yet, and would just encourage that to happen as soon as possible. Chair Trawver thanked her.

Debra Croghan stated she’s a little confused and guessed during the resolution is the time to speak, which is what I thought, but was a little concerned about the presentation. I think Eryn did give a good synopsis, but I think there’s definitely some issues are disconcerting during the sub-committee meetings. I don’t want to hammer them all out here, but I wanted tell you this isn’t a smooth transition. It’s a great idea and I really welcome the people putting in some of the time, or most of the time, it’s really not consistent — the time — in most of the meetings. There’s not consistency during the meetings themselves. It’s confusing, it’s concerning, there’s width changes that have happened during this sub-committee meetings already, and that’s why I’ve recently started to attend them. That was not in the resolution that we decided, as a community, as the Girdwood Trails Committee and the club decided to get together and make a sub-committee. That is very disconcerting. I do want to make that clear. The way it’s being presented is not as in-cohesive as it really is. We have a few more meetings, and we’ll see how it goes. It’s confusing right now. As far as the 5K goes, I’m all in favor of trying to mend it. It is devastatingly, destructive, environmentally irreversible situation that has occurred. I think that Ron making this comment here about the
procedure here is really crucial. I think you, as an HLB, maybe skirted on that a little bit. I just do not understand still how the procedure goes from construct, survey, public comment. Am I missing that? Did I not get that correctly? Because this just doesn’t make sense to me. Ms. Jones-Vogel stated that the Commission hears the application and then makes a resolution. And then we work on getting an early entry authorization. Then they do the survey and that’s the basis for the easement document itself. All the public comment period is the very first thing to happen. Ms. Croghan added if the surveys are so difficult and we have this technology that’s not really working, if the area is so dense, then no matter where it is, wouldn’t it be prudent for the proposed group that wants to put a trail in, to at least stake it out first, before you construct. Chair Trawver thanked her and added that the Commission is watching how HLB makes their processes better, this whole process of building trails, we’re paying attention to that process, so we can let you know what’s happening going forward on action items.

(Christopher) Matthew Cavanaugh, Vice-Chair of Rabbit Community Council, but stated he is not here in that capacity. A lot of the concerns that I have and my neighbors have are related to a lot of the topics discussed here. I don’t think it’s completely irrelevant for what I am about to announce. I wish that my Chair, Frank Pugh, was here — he couldn’t make it, but he has written this statement for the introduction of the Alliance for Protective Property Rights and Neighborhood Self-Determination. The main group right now in Potter Valley and Bear Valley. There are myself, Frank, 61 members representing 114 properties, and 1,770 acres of land, and just under $32M in assessed tax value. One of the reasons for the formation of this group is just the difficulty of the people involved in each and every meeting that could bear upon our property interests. I try to go to meetings and I try to be involved in our Community Council, but there are meetings, like this one today in the middle of the day, which is difficult for me to attend. Some of us have large tracts of land and a lot of property, but they’re pilots and they fly all around, or they go out of state or out of country a lot of the time. So, together, you’ll probably hear a lot more from us, attending the meetings, either myself or another member on the list who are involved. The main concern is just trying to be more involved. There’s a lot of people who are involved who have different opinions and come from a different direction. We want to have our voice heard. The biggest issue for us is that people’s property rights are restored. Everybody’s property rights, not just those that are on the list. We hear things about not being notified, and that is concerning. One of our missions in Rabbit Creek is notify everybody in the area, and then they get to make the decision if it impacts their property. We want to err on the side of notification. So, he’s got a lot of stuff in here and I’ll give it to you to distribute it. One of the things I’d like to mention is the trailheads and parking. We have private land that is next to trailheads and we don’t want public parking with security issues. And we all know about the security issues in public areas around town. Another thing which is false trails, bringing the database up to be current and accurate with real trails on it. Not ones that someone has included or uploaded that crosses private property that aren’t real trails. Where the landowner hasn’t been consulted — that sort of thing. Chair Trawver thanked him and said that notification is important, that’s how you get people involved, and keep doing what you’re doing. Ms. Wilber asked if the group had a mission statement. Mr. Cavanaugh said they did and the best thing would be to distribute it. It also lists who is on it, so you can have that information as well.

Shirley K. Duertsche stated she’s here to observe and listen and to make sure that honesty is upheld, because she’s having a real hard problem with that. I’m a resident of Girdwood. I’ve been there 16 or 17 years, which isn’t a long time, but it’s long enough to have hiked or run all the trails in Girdwood. I was around when the 5K was built. Peter, Jim and Brian were working on the trail. And I asked them from the Winner Creek trail — what are you guys doing? And they laughed at me. Because they were so close to the Winner Creek trail. I call it the [expletive] road. I’m sorry, but that’s what it is. The 5K road. There using it to drive on this summer. It’s a road. And Nick is a gravel man, and these are the people who they want to build Forest Loop. The Forest Loop is a rainforest. It’s the only rainforest area that we have that’s accessible to the local community. Even this new access that Deb is bringing up, is kettle ponds. Do you know what a kettle pond is? It’s a natural pool of water. And Bill Spencer said when he presented the trails to us, if there’s water there, we can’t build the trail there. So, I’m just trying to bring up some little facts that get pushed over to the side. And GNSC is very manipulative and they get what they want. I’ve seen it over and over again. I really appreciate Eryn coming in a giving a presentation of how we formed this subj-
committee. And already, in four meetings, it’s been manipulated by GNSC. They’ve changed their stance on the width of the trail; they tried to push it to 18’, because that’s the only groomer they have. That groomer isn’t even theirs, it belongs to Chugach Powder Guides. And you can groom a trail with a 2’ wide groomer. It doesn’t have to be 18’ wide. I’m sorry, I’m more of the factual type person and not the pretty presentation. I really look for honesty and truth from everyone, and I’ll look at each one of you in the eyes and tell you I’m telling the truth. I’m not lying. I love Girdwood, but it’s really hard to live there now, because of the influx of people with bad intentions. Chair Trawwer thanked her.

VII. Commissioner Comments

Ms. Wilber thanked the residents from Girdwood for coming to Anchorage to provide testimony at the meeting. I appreciate the transparency. I try to be as informed as I can. I certainly want to hear from all sides. I think transparency during the process is very important.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled commission meeting date will be at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, July 12, 2018 in the Permit & Development Center conference room 170, at 4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, Alaska.

IX. Adjournment

Following the completion of business, Mr. Fredrick moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

PASSED and APPROVED on this, the 12th day of July, 2018.

Tim Trawwer, Chair
Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission

Jim Fredrick, Acting Chair

Respectfully submitted for the Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission by:
Tawny Klebesadel, RED Office Manager

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