

From: [Jennifer Wingard](#)
To: [Tyler, Margaret S.](#); [Amanda Sassi](#); [Kelley, Kyle T.](#)
Subject: Seward Highway bullet points
Date: Friday, August 26, 2022 1:45:22 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hey all -

Here's a rough draft of discussion points/community concerns for the joint GBOS/LUC meeting about the Seward Highway intersection project. We could then build on these for the discussion with DOT. Please let me know what you think:

Firstly - Size and scope of Loop on Turnagain Arm side:

- Negative impact to wetlands and viewscape
- Availability of DOT to maintain the extensive infrastructure
- Size and scope of the project is excessive: the project seems to overcorrect for existing as well as future safety concerns in the area, and is inconsistent with the small-town nature of the Girdwood community
- Concern over impacts to businesses in the gas station mall area due to decreased access

Secondly - removal of secondary access: The removal of Toadstool, which can be a secondary access for emergencies and needs to be maintained

- Jennifer

Municipality of Anchorage



P.O. Box 390
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
<http://www.muni.org/gbos>

David Bronson, Mayor

GIRDWOOD VALLEY SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Mike Edgington & Briana Sullivan, Co-Chairs
Jennifer Wingard, Amanda Sassi, Guy Wade

June 22, 2022

Community Development Director Adam Trombley:
Adam.Trombley@anchorageak.gov

Dear Director Trombley,

Thank you for your attendance and contributions to the June 14th joint Girdwood Board of Supervisors/Land Use Committee (GBOS/LUC) Town Hall meeting regarding Holtan Hills.

The meeting minutes are available at:

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/operations/streets/Service/GBOS/GBOS%20LUC%20Town%20Hall%20June%2014%202022%20minutes%20final.pdf>

A recording of the full meeting has been published on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/t-cWGfIvVI>

The context for the Holtan Hills project is that Girdwood has an acute housing crisis.

There is high demand from non-residents to purchase property in Girdwood, and a very limited inventory. House prices have increased dramatically. Consequently, and inevitably, this has squeezed out those who work in the community and either rent here or wish to move from renting to purchase. These very individuals contribute significantly and are essential to the healthy, sustainable functioning of our community. A paucity of workforce housing is the primary factor limiting the operation, stability, and certainty of local businesses and service providers.

At the June 14th Town Hall the overriding sense was extraordinarily clear that the community of Girdwood has serious concerns with the Holtan Hills development as currently proposed. These concerns broadly fall into four categories:

- **Process** Several speakers expressed concerns about the process of developing the RFP, the lack of information provided to the community during the negotiation of the development agreement, and the limited degree of public engagement since the proposal award in June 2021. The development agreement itself was only made publicly available on May 23, 2022. Girdwood embraces a very attentive public process: Our community values and expects updates and information, especially when requested and of significant interest. Such data directly affects current and future planning for infrastructure, vital services, residents, and visitors to our town. HLB, as an entity managing public assets, is required to honor public process and transparency. The RFP taking place behind closed

doors lowered the trust in the project from the start by giving the impression that public input would be ignored.

- **Infrastructure & impact study** The Holtan Hills project will add approximately 30% to our residential developed land and ultimately about a 20% increase in housing units. Given the scale of this development, many in the community want to see an impact study to understand the anticipated changes to traffic, utilities, noise, and other environmental factors.
- **Indirect link to housing** Since this is a land development project, housing will not be produced directly. The resulting housing would be built by third parties, however there is no guarantee on the amount, nature, or timescale for that housing. The developer has explained that HOAs and the requirements of conventional financing could guide the eventual housing, yet this depends on multiple unknown factors which may not materialize. This lack of clarity does not earn community support, rather, increased uncertainty.
- **Housing affordability** During the June 14th town hall, the developer stated the estimated market sales price of the least expensive, entry-level one bedroom apartment would be \$500,000 in current value. This would mean that the lowest price entry-level unit is 20% higher than the *average* 2021 home sale price across Anchorage.

While the Holtan Hills project may provide additional housing stock (although that is dependent on future actions from third parties) the project does not address our housing affordability crisis. The creation of a large number of second homes, investment properties, or short-term rental businesses does nothing to alleviate the economic and societal problems that our community is facing, and instead exacerbates the widespread stress on Girdwood's housing, vital services, commerce, labor, and economic stability.

Other resort communities use public land, partnerships, and related policies to provide workforce housing at affordable rates. All developable public lands in Girdwood are held by HLB, pressing our community from all sides. Consequently, we urge HLB to use their ownership of those lands to address the desperate need for workforce housing. GBOS is in the process of forming a Holtan Hills Advisory Committee, and we hope HLB can work together with GBOS and the Advisory Committee to amend the Development Agreement so it benefits the community.

While GBOS has yet to vote regarding support of the Holtan Hills project, it remains difficult to see how any responsible body could support such a major development in Girdwood without any mechanism to address the most serious of our housing needs.

Regards,



Briana Sullivan
Co-Chairs, Girdwood Board of Supervisors
Cc:



Mike Edgington

Mayor Bronson: dave.bronson@anchorageak.gov
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Assembly Committee on Housing and Homelessness Vice Chair Constant: Christopher.constant@anchorageak.gov
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HLB: hlb@anchorageak.gov

GIRDWOOD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
RESOLUTION No. 22-0_

A resolution of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors requesting the Municipality of Anchorage Heritage Land Bank amend or cancel the request for proposals No. _____ [Holtan Hills], in order to advance policies of; 1) increasing the supply of workforce housing in girdwood; 2) address the results of the required moa impact studies; 3) limit the use of Holtan Hills property for short term rentals by using tools such as deed restriction.

Whereas, the community of Girdwood recognizes the importance of developing Heritage Land Bank (HLB) lands for a variety of critical needs; and

Whereas, the Heritage Land Bank RFP was issued without public discussions regarding community needs on the RFP lands as an agenda item with Girdwood Board of Supervisors; or with Girdwood Land Use Committee (Girdwood's de facto community counsel); and

Whereas, numerous important service groups in Girdwood have raised valid questions about the impact of the RFP, but no plan to identify or address these issues was done or communicated prior to or since the RFP was awarded; and

Whereas, a severe lack of available workforce housing has been developing in Girdwood, a problem that impacts numerous local businesses, first responders, health care providers, educators, daycare and local government entities.

Whereas, the most urgent need for land development in Girdwood is to provide workforce housing, which is critically under-supplied and becoming less available each year; and

Whereas, a successful workforce development process requires prior analysis, planning and many features not addressed in the RFP; and

Whereas, there are other critical needs for HLB lands, including but not limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, access, and for recreational purposes; and

Whereas, the winning RFP respondent's proposal is set up just to perform land sales, and does not require construction of an identified amount of workforce housing, include deed restriction to limit a percentage of the property for short term rentals, or engage specific developers with qualifications that can result in a more predictable, successful final product; and

Whereas, there has been extremely limited information released about a suggested "Alyeska Village" that is to be constructed on a portion of the lands included in the RFP; and

Whereas, RFP lands have a significant footprint and impact on trail use areas, the airport, school, community water source, utility lines and access roads. However, the HLB has not released any information regarding the studies required under 2021 HLB Annual Work Program and 2022-2026 Five-Year Management Plan that would address these issues; and

Whereas, successful land development has to be commercially viable; and

Whereas, given the lack of community discussion regarding specific needs, pre-planning, and failure of this RFP to respond to the most critical needs, it is urgent that a viable process be

implemented that will result in land development beneficial to Girdwood's residents, businesses, and other users while advancing a public policy of increasing the supply of workforce housing.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Girdwood Board of Supervisors request the Heritage Land Bank to immediately provide a draft copy of the proposed development agreement to GBOS and LUC and allow up to 60 days for comments. The RFP must be amended to address the community needs for workforce housing and the results of the required MOA impact studies. If this is not possible the current RFP proposal should be canceled; and
2. If the development agreement plan cannot obtain a resolution of support by GBOS, then a new RFP should be released in consultation with GBOS on or before Spring 2023. The RFP should use conditions and covenants intended to increase the supply of workforce housing in Girdwood and use tools, such as deed restriction, as a mechanism to reach these needs.

Adopted by a duly-constituted quorum of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors on this ___th day of _____, 2022.

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

Voting Conclusions: The community's stated objective is to provide unified statements and recommendations from the Girdwood community. (Conditional Use Permit has its own resolution process.) However, three possibilities exist regarding agreement between the Girdwood Board of Supervisors and the Land Use Committee:

a. Consensus:

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors votes in accordance with the Land Use Committee recommendations. In this case, all recommendations of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors shall include the official actions of the Land Use Committee without changes. The Girdwood Board of Supervisors may include additional supporting information and comments when sending forth the actions of both groups.

b. Not in agreement; no time restriction:

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors does not vote in accordance with the Land Use Committee recommendations and the requirement to report forth on the issue is not time restricted. In this case, the Girdwood Board of Supervisors will provide a written explanation of the dissenting GBOS action to the Land Use Committee, and will provide any and all additional and/or new information pertinent to the issue being considered, and request that the Land Use Committee reconsider their action in view of the additional and/or new information. An issue can be sent back to the Land Use Committee one (1) time for reconsideration by the LUC, and the issue in question must appear on the following month's Land Use Committee agenda.

c. Not in agreement; time sensitive:

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors does not vote in accordance with the Land Use Committee recommendations and the requirement to report forth on the issue is time restricted. In this case, the Girdwood Board of Supervisors will provide a written explanation of the dissenting GBOS action to the Land Use Committee, and in sending the recommendations forward, will include the official actions of the Land Use Committee without changes, along with the official actions of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors and any relevant comments.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors may also request an extension for advisory comments to be made, in which case the issue of dissent may be referred back to the Land Use Committee as described in "b" above.

Municipality of Anchorage



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David Bronson, Mayor

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Resolution 2022-14

Resolution in Support of Amendment of the Development Agreement between Heritage Land Bank and CY Investments to Address Girdwood Community Housing Needs

Whereas, the community of Girdwood recognizes the importance of developing Heritage Land Bank (HLB) lands for a variety of critical needs; and

Whereas, on April 6, 2021, Heritage Land Bank issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for “Girdwood Residential 2021”, development of a portion of HLB parcels 6-011, 6-016, 6-017; and

Whereas, the project envisioned by the RFP would be the largest housing development in Girdwood since Alyeska Basin over 40 years ago, and the largest development of any kind since the Alyeska Hotel was built almost 30 years ago; and

Whereas, the RFP included “Promote Housing and Employment Stability” as one of eight development goals, and required the proposal to detail the number of specific housing units intended for “affordable or senior housing, market rate housing, workforce housing, multi-generational housing, etc.”; and

Whereas, two proposals were received in response to the RFP and evaluated by a nine member selection committee which, on June 29, 2021, recommended selection of the “Pomeroy Partnership” proposal, a partnership between Pomeroy Property Development Ltd, Seth Anderson P.E. and CY Investments LLC; and

Whereas, between July 2021 and April 2022, HLB negotiated a Development Agreement with CY Investments LLC for development of part of the “Pomeroy Partnership” proposal, specifically the part west of Glacier Creek referred to as “Holtan Hills”; and

Whereas, the Development Agreement between HLB (through the Municipality of Anchorage) and CY Investments LLC for Holtan Hills was signed and became effective on April 29, 2022, with the agreement made publicly available on May 23, 2022; and

Whereas, HLB provided no formal or informal mechanism to incorporate Girdwood community concerns and priorities into the original RFP or into the Development Agreement, and provided very limited information on the status of either document during their drafting and finalization; and

Whereas, as a resort community, Girdwood has a very distinct housing market from the rest of Anchorage, characterized by an extremely high proportion of second homes and investment properties at approximately 70% of residential housing units, and a high proportion of housing used for Short Term Rentals at 15-20% of the total housing units; and

Whereas, using the Federal definition of “affordable housing” as spending no more than 30% of gross household income on housing, including mortgage or rent plus basic utilities, median housing costs continue to be well above median household income, indicating a housing affordability crisis; and

Whereas, through testimony at Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS), Girdwood Land Use Committee, Housing Working Group and the experience of local service organizations, there is a well-established lack of housing in Girdwood for purchase or long-term rental with evidence suggesting the problem has become significantly worse over the past 3-4 years; and

Whereas, this lack of housing is having a demonstrable negative impact on the housing stability of residents and the viability of local businesses, first responders, health care providers, educators, daycare and local government entities; and

Whereas, Girdwood's most urgent need for land development is provision of workforce and mid-income housing, which is critically under-supplied and becoming less available each year; and

Whereas, the land covered by the Development Agreement has a significant footprint and impacts trail use areas, the airport, school, community water source, utility lines and access roads, yet HLB has not released any information regarding the studies required under 2021 HLB Annual Work Program and 2022-2026 Five-Year Management Plan that would address these issues; and

Whereas, the Development Agreement for Holtan Hills is set up to perform land sales, leaving the characteristics of resultant housing to third parties, with no identified mechanism for construction of specific housing uses; and

Whereas, the Development Agreement for Holtan Hills provides only market-rate housing, with no provision of affordable or senior housing, workforce housing or even mid-income housing; and

Whereas, the Development Agreement for Holtan Hills has no mechanism, such as deed restriction, to encourage use of the resultant housing as primary residences, or to discourage their use as vacant second homes or commercial short-term rental businesses; and

Whereas, despite the RFP including promotion of housing and employment stability as a goal, there is no evidence that the Holtan Hills Development Agreement meets that goal; and

Whereas, successful land development has to be commercially viable; and

Whereas, there are other critical needs for HLB lands, including but not limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, access, and for recreational purposes; and

Whereas, GBOS has created a Holtan Hills Advisory Committee to recommend how the Holtan Hills project could meet community needs; and

Whereas, this resolution was recommended by the Girdwood Land Use Committee by a vote of 42 in favor, 1 opposed and 6 abstaining at their Regular Meeting on June 13, 2022;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Girdwood Board of Supervisors requests the Heritage Land Bank engage with GBOS and the Holtan Hills Advisory Committee to address the community needs for workforce and mid-income housing as part of this development, perform the required MOA impact studies, and codify changes through an amendment to the Development Agreement or through a similar binding mechanism.

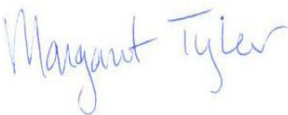
PASSED AND APPROVED by a vote of 4 to 1 this 18th day of July 2022.



Mike Edgington
GBOS Co-Chair



Briana Sullivan
GBOS Co-Chair



Attest

June 2022 LUC meeting

Agenda Topic

Agenda Item LUC 2205-07: Girdwood Chamber of Commerce request for LUC recommendation for GBOS Resolution of Support for request of Anchorage Heritage Land Bank to amend or cancel the request for proposals for HLB parcels 6-011, 6- 016 and 6-017 [Holtan Hills], in order to advance policies of; 1) increasing the supply of workforce housing in Girdwood; 2) address the results of the required moa impact studies; 3) limit the use of Holtan Hills property for short term rentals by using tools such as deed restriction. (Patty Wilbanks, presenting)

Motion:

Motion to endorse the letter
Kellie Okonek, Jacky Graham

Discussion after motion/2nd is made:

ME: language in the resolution is very specific. Are you looking for that specific language with steps and repercussions? Are you looking for something with the same directionality?

LD: Chamber is willing to work with GBOS and community determine is fair and reasonable (1.12.54). willing to work with the powers that be.

ME: So these are examples idea of what you want rather than hard and fast conditions.

LD: If the letter is the same as proposed, that's fine with us. If GBOS feels that they will sign their name if we do this, that, the other to the letter we still feel that's 100% better than where we're at with the project.

Minutes version:

Motion: LUC recommends a GBOS Resolution of Support for HLB to amend or cancel the Request for Proposals for Holtan Hills in order to increase workforce housing, study impact on the community, and limit short term rentals in the community. Motion by Kellie Okonek, 2nd by Jacky Graham Vote in room: 10Y, 0N, 3A; Poll 6Y, 0N, 0A; Chat 7Y, 0N, 3A; voice: 19Y, 1N, 0A Total 42 in favor, 1 opposed, 6 abstain Motion carries

Girdwood Assembly Member Listening Session

Question & Comments from 7/19/2022 Hybrid Meeting

TO ASSEMBLY MEMBERS:

1. Should the assembly make the final determination on approving the development agreement for Holtan Hills?
2. Mr. Sulte and Ms. LaFrance, Does Holtan Hills need to be approved by the assembly in order to come to fruition? Have you decided how you will vote when that time comes? If yes, why? If no, what do you still need to know before you decide?
3. Do you support this project as is? If not, what are you working on to change it?
4. What can you do in your capacity to change the direction of this project?
5. Mr. Sulte, in response to my email today expressing concerns about Holtan Hills, you said you thought it would ultimately pass, why?
6. HLB is municipal land. Do you feel that it is the responsibility of HLB/Muni to ensure our community is healthy, thrives and takes into consideration its current residents? If yes, how will you help our community?
7. I would like to ask assemblyman Sulte to commit himself to regulating Short Term Rentals (STRs) on a Muni wide basis. Right now, it is a Girdwood problem, but we are part of the Muni, so any solution must be Muni wide. Limiting STRs is working in many other resort communities.
8. Community land trust have existed in the US for decades. Girdwood now has one, The Girdwood Community Land Trust, and it was formed to directly respond to the housing crisis and childcare needs. As you represent Girdwood, are you open to advocating for GCLT to purchase land below market value for the purpose of workforce housing and childcare facility?
9. Would you support new language that requires Public Lands equals Public Benefit to be inserted into City Charter/MOA Operating Policy, when disposals of public lands are being discussed with any development concept, whether it's with a Non-Profit developer or For-Profit Developer in the MOA?
10. Why has HLB/Real Estate Dept of the MOA been allowed to enter a For Profit Partnership with CY Investments (Development Agreement for HH) on the disposal of public lands called Holtan Hills?
11. CY Investments/MOA/HLB was not the entity that was awarded the RFP in June of 2021, why was the RFP not been voided, since the Capital Partner/Pomeroy Property Development and Seth Anderson, were eliminated from the award? In most jurisdictions, that would have voided the award and gone back to the drawing board.
12. Why has the MOA/HLB/Real Estate Dept of the MOA taken on the full Indemnification for the HH development and for terms that exceed the construction of the project per the Development Agreement executed on April 29, 2022? Is this a new policy that the MOA is now adopting and if so, what does Risk Management think of this exposure and liability to the Citizens of Anchorage/MOA?
13. Why did the MOA/HLB give a sole source contract to DWELL Realty to be the Marketing company to sell this public land, through the Developer/CY Investment, as buildable tracts in Holtan Hill?
14. Why did the MOA/HLB give CY Investment, a sole source contract to be the HOA

- management company for the Holtan Hills development in Girdwood?
15. The current Development Agreement has the MOA/HLB paying an 11% fee to CY Investments for services and fees associated with this development, that has been billed since May 2022. How much money has the MOA/HLB paid CY Investments/Connie Yoshimura to date?
 16. Would the MOA/Assembly commit to completing the GWD Area Plan, in the next 12 months, to have a framework to propose a new RFP to address Workforce Housing, Affordable Housing, and Commercial development opportunities with the HLB lands in Girdwood?
 17. The HLB has been without a Director for over a year now, can the Assembly demand that the Administration of the MOA, go out and find a qualified candidate with at least 10 years+ of public land disposals to fill that vacant position? The lack of leadership has caused numerous meetings to be cancelled and provide stronger oversight by the HLB Commission of the HLB office of the MOA.
 18. Would you support voiding this RFP/Development Agreement with CY Investments/MOA/HLB and starting over with the Community of Girdwood, to have a transparent, public process, with defined community needs being addressed for public lands to be sold under?

TO GBOS:

1. What is GBOS rationale for “softening the language in the letter to HLB?
2. How is a voted on “letter of resolution“ allowed to be so butchered, and completely rewritten by GBOS without review in agreement by “land-use?”
3. Why are there two real estate agents on the Holton Hills housing advisory committee?

FOR HLB:

1. Should a plan for HLB to issue an RFP for development of 100+ acres of HLB land have been included in an HOB annual work plan and presented to the HOB advisory commission before it was issued?
2. Do you think using public land to increase the supply of workforce/affordable housing should be a public policy of Anchorage?
3. At the Townhall in this community room that Adam and Connie attended, there were a number of questions Adam was unable to answer. He jotted them down and said he'd get back to us with the answers. Has GBOS or Girdwood Inc. reviewed these answers? If so, are they publicly available? If not why not? (Girdwood Inc response = No. Mike Edgington response = No.)
4. The three entities involved with the project as explained on the RFP proposal are different than the one entity enumerated in the agreement document. What happened to the other two entities? Does that invalidate CY investments original proposal? Was HLB ever approached about this difference and did they OK it?
5. Last night, Tony Hoffman discussed four areas of Holton hills, only three of which one for Connie's project. Who is the fourth area for?
6. Could a listening session such as this one be arranged with the full HLBAC?
7. Years ago, Girdwood was asked to create a committee to develop a plan for Crow Creek Neighborhood. What ensued was months of meetings and public input. Eventually a plan

was adopted by Girdwood and then the assembly. The ball went to the municipality and that is where it stopped. Now this land, and more, is slated to be sold for the price of two or so developed acres. Why is it that the plan Girdwood developed and the Muni adopted received no follow through?

8. As a 20+ year resident, of Girdwood, please outline the cost affect money the Holton Hills development would have on the current homeowners in Girdwood?
9. What assurance do we have that impacts to infrastructure are assessed, understood, validated, budgeted to be implemented? How is it responsible to allow this project to progress without these basic assessments being done and integrated?

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

1. Tony Hoffman said the planning process is currently happening but would not be accepted/approved until a master plan (I think) was developed. Why is this? Completing the platting but delaying its acceptance just sounds fishy to me...
2. Linda Bennett. Will the high tower road/Alyeska highway intersection support a roundabout? Will the fire trucks be able to function with a roundabout? What allowances does the Holtan Hills development have for auxiliary EMT/fire station?

GENERAL QUESTIONS & COMMENTS:

1. I hear "affordable and 30% of income." But what monthly dollar rate for a rental is the community looking for? And how many units in total? This is something a developer needs to know.
2. Chris Urstad - Several years ago the Sand Lake residents of Anchorage received all new "soundproof "windows as a result of the airport noise at Ted Stevens Airport. Girdwood Airport is across from the Holton Hills planned development. There are over 65 based in Girdwood, there are two state EPT. Lots got to be developed for added hangar space. There are air taxis both during summer and Heli-ski in the winter. Holtan Hills should provide their dwellings with soundproof windows. Sorry this is not a question.
3. Holtan Hills #1) Allow affordable housing #2) Must have a traffic plan for access, connect Arlberg Crow Creek Road.
4. Legal action has been discussed, against HLB, since a major intent of the "Holton hills RFP ""affordable housing "was not met!!! Is this being pursued, and by whom?
5. As an owner of six properties in Girdwood including five long-term rentals in a primary residence, I know a little bit about developing land. We have had to follow the process set by the MOA and have never been allowed to skip over steps like the Holtan Hills project has done. Why does Holtan Hills get to skip over steps when other developers spend weeks in the MOA permit and land-use office going through the process the RFP was named three different companies/individuals and now is only one. This is one of many issues with Holton Hills development. I say go back to step zero and re-bid as the one developer and follow the rules.

FIRE:

1. On the topic of workforce wages... Can Chief Westin mention what firefighter/EMT wages are?

DEVELOPMENT TEAM:

1. I would like to know the size and price of lots. What are the covenants? Is there a building timeline? Are structures based on price or size? Are sales made first come first served?

CHAT THREAD (7-19-2022):

[8:16 PM] Karolina Pavic

Please remember that the “we” in this reference is not members of this community. We didn’t make this a mess. We are here because HLB, the Municipality and CY Development made this a mess by attempting a heist of public land that will only benefit HLB and CY Development. There is no “we” in this plan.

[8:33 PM] BKohler

It feels like HLB. As a local Girdwood land owner. Like many on this meeting, are not listening to their neighbors. I would ask why and invite HLB to be a good neighbor. And please listen to their neighbors and take part in growing this community as it wishes. As opposed to imposing their will and self focused end goals of increasing their tax base. Thanks to all in attendance.

[8:35 PM] Matt Martyn

Question - What recourse does Girdwood have to intervene when decisions are being made that are opposed to overwhelming community input and involvement? Holton Hills isn’t the only example with the appearance of a united community being ignored and decisions being made from entities in Anchorage that don’t have the same vested interest in our community. Is there any way to have something like a 3rd party review in these cases?

[8:45 PM] Gabrielle Paulk (Guest)

Regarding the “affordable;” housing issue, supposedly Creekside is just that but a one bedroom is over \$1300 without utilities which would equate to making \$24 an hour 40 hours a week. It’s not really affordable at all, so how would Holtan Hills be held accountable or how would they keep it so called affordable?

[8:51 PM] Matt Martyn

Question - What recourse does Girdwood have to intervene when decisions are being made that are opposed to overwhelming community input and involvement? Holton Hills isn't the only example with the appearance of a united community being ignored and decisions being made from entities in Anchorage that don't have the same vested interest in our community. Is there any way to have something like a 3rd party review in these cases?



The Scott and Wesley Gerrish
Library and Girdwood
Community Center Boosters
Post Office Box 1102
Girdwood, Alaska 99587

August 22, 2022

Ms. Judy Eledge
Deputy Director of Library Services
Municipality of Anchorage
Anchorage Public Library

Via electronic mail only:
judy.ledge@anchorageak.gov

Dear Ms. Eledge:

Recently, Girdwood's librarian, Jamie White, left for a professional opportunity in Washington. We will miss her friendliness, energy, professionalism, and commitment to the library mission. We hope that our next librarian will be just as passionate and professional.

However, supporters of our library have heard that there are plans to downgrade the permanent librarian position in Girdwood from Professional Librarian II to a newly created branch manager entry level position, Professional Librarian I. We object to the possible lowering of our librarian's qualifications and request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this plan before the position is advertised.

Our library is the heart and soul of Girdwood. The librarian at the Scott and Wesley Gerrish branch is the heart and soul of the library. Girdwood is an isolated community that needs an experienced librarian who can enthrall kids during story hours, manage and enhance collections, speak well when representing the library at community meetings, create programs to engage readers, reach out to the public at local events, and understand and use the specialized professional vocabulary of librarians. As an isolated community, Girdwood needs this MORE than other branches of the library system. The branch manager librarian in Girdwood needs to meet existing minimum qualifications.

The history of the Girdwood branch is unique. Long-term bonds to finance the construction of the Girdwood branch library were voted down (except in Girdwood) four times over 16 years. So a Boosters group was formed. After 20 years of planning, fundraising, and grant writing, the taxpayers of Girdwood assessed themselves a million dollars over five years and built our current library in 2008. The Boosters group has continually supported the Girdwood library since its opening. When the library was threatened with closure a few years ago, concerned citizens packed a meeting with the mayor.

The community has built and cherishes its library space where everyone is welcome to gather and to share the accumulated knowledge and creativity of the world. Girdwood has been blessed to have been served by outstanding librarians and support staff. They have directed their professional skills in many ways to advance a love of reading and access to information from preschoolers and students to seniors.

As long-time library supporters, we are aware of staffing concerns throughout the system. We sincerely hope that the process for filling Girdwood's librarian vacancy will focus on the candidates' meeting established professional qualifications for an AML branch librarian and will follow a path that yields another outstanding, well qualified librarian to serve Girdwood. Please let us know by a reply to this e-mail if you are willing to meet with us.

Sincerely,

Girdwood's Gerrish Library & Meeting Room Boosters

Lynn McNamara, Co-Chair, Terry Mercurio, Co-Chair

Kate Sandberg, Sherry Dugan, Kathy Peters, Brooks Chandler, Betty Charnon, Meghan Nedwick, Susan Opalka

cc: Girdwood Board of Supervisors

Library Advisory Board

Friends of the Anchorage Public Library

Suzanne LaFrance, MOA Assembly Chair

Randy Sulte, MOA Assembly Member

**Sustaining the Library and Community Center for Girdwood's
Second Century!**

From: [Brooks Chandler](#)
To: [Girdwood Board of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Fwd: Girdwood Branch Manager
Date: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 8:19:25 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Greetings:

Here is the response to the Booster's letter to Ms. Eledge. Boosters will be discussing next steps later this week.

Brooks Chandler

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Eledge, Judy N. <judy.eledge@anchorageak.gov>
Date: Mon, Aug 29, 2022 at 3:21 PM
Subject: Girdwood Branch Manager
To: brooksandler55@gmail.com <brooksandler55@gmail.com>

August 29, 2022

Dear Community Center Boosters,

Thank you for your recent letter and concerns about the upcoming Scott and Wesley Gerrish Library manager position vacancy. Your support for this library in the Girdwood community is commendable and we wish our other branches had such strong community involvement. We agree that Jamie White will be missed but are excited about her new venture in life. Well before her notification of leaving, we had started assessing positions and classifications throughout the library system, looking for ways to increase efficiency and reduce costs with the top priority continuing to be patron satisfaction. Mayor Bronson asked all departments to submit the same budget in 2023 as in 2022. As you are aware, even though not a “budget cut,” with inflation and the rising cost of employee benefits, our budget dollars simply do not go as far as they did in 2022.

Many of you may be aware that there was a large endowment to the Anchorage Foundation to build a downtown library and one of Mayor Bronson’s goals has been to make this library part of his Downtown Revitalization efforts. I am happy to report after many years of delay we have made great progress in the past year, and hope to have it up and running in the next 3 years. In researching management options for the future small branch Downtown Library, we reviewed the current Associate Librarian (non-rep) position description. It seems this position was previously held by the original branch librarian when the Scott and Wesley Gerrish Library first opened. This branch librarian did not have a Library Science degree, but from what I understand was an excellent and beloved member of the community, as well as excellent librarian. The next branch manager, although they did have master’s degrees in Library Science, was hired into the same Associate Librarian (Non-rep) position, even though it was later changed to a 14. So, history shows us that it is often the person, not the position classification, that makes for an excellent library branch manager.

In discussions with City Manager, Amy Demboski, and our HR department, we decided to develop a Professional Librarian I: Small Branch Manager to be in charge of small branch libraries. We felt this would be more appropriate than the Associate Librarian position mentioned above. Even though it is no longer a Professional Librarian II, the Professional Librarian I can perform virtually all the tasks and duties the Librarian II can do with the exception, of supervising other professional librarians. In a small library this is extremely rare. The bottom line is the Gerrish Library will continue to have a Professional Librarian as the Branch Manager.

In doing this we hope to defend any budget cuts that may adversely affect the small libraries and enable those patrons to have the same service as in our larger libraries. Indeed, the Gerrish Library has been blessed with outstanding librarians, some with MLS degrees and others without.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at 907-343-2975.

Sincerely,

Judy Norton Eledge

Deputy Director

Anchorage Public Libraries

3600 Denali

907-343-2892 (Messages)