

Girdwood Land Use Committee
Notice of Meeting on December 11, 2023
7PM
Minutes Final

Meeting will take place via Teams teleconference and in person at the Girdwood Community Room, 250 Egloff Rd.

The following items have been submitted as agenda items for consideration at the meeting of the Girdwood Land Use Committee. A voting member is any Girdwood Valley resident eighteen (18) years of age or older. Non-resident property owners, businesses, and non-profit associations are allowed one (1) vote per entity. Detailed voting qualifications can be found in the rules outlined in the Girdwood Land Use Committee Operating Principles.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings. The Girdwood Land Use Committee operates under the Girdwood Public Meetings Standards of Conduct.

Agenda Item LUC 2312-01:

Land Acknowledgement: As we gather with a common intention for our GVSA this evening, LUC would like to begin by acknowledging the stewardship of the indigenous peoples of Alaska, whose land we reside on and the surrounding waters we depend on. The current area of Girdwood is situated between the areas known to be Dena'ina and Alutiiq homeland. A necessary connection for Alaska Native people, the landscape and waters around us served to carry their traditional ways of life; to gather here and harvest Native foods. The community of Girdwood respects the Dena'ina and Alutiiq people, who were stewards of this land for generations. We will continue to be stewards of this land and are grateful to be a part of this community.

Call to order 7PM Kevin McDermott, chair

Agenda Approval for December 11 2023 meeting with Addition of new business item 2312-05: Temporary Workforce Housing Proposal

Lisa Miles/Guy Wade Assent

Minutes approval from the November, 2023 meeting

Lisa Miles/Guy Wade Assent

LUC Officer reports

None

GBOS updates: Jennifer Wingard states that the Short Term Rental item on the agenda tonight has also been discussed at GHEC with overall consensus that the STR Ordinance doesn't address Girdwood needs and although likely to be amended with an S version, that version also is unlike to address Girdwood needs, according to one of the sponsors, Randy Sulte. GBOS discussed as well and also is pending formal action.

Announcements:

Foraker Group Board Training is scheduled for TUE Feb 27 at 5PM in the Girdwood Community Room. All are welcome to attend.

Agenda Item LUC 2312-02: Public Comment (3 minutes each)

Brian Burnett comments that recent land transfer from HLB to Greatland Trust to create the Potter Marsh Watershed District could be an avenue for Girdwood to acquire and protect land via Greatland Trust. He suggests the land north of the airport, which is within the flight path of airport operations and has many existing trails. Group discusses that Greatland Trust was working on land across Seward highway at the mouth of the valley, however this is on hold pending DOT Seward Highway project information.

Agenda Item LUC 2312-03: Committee Reports.

Any items for update or discussion should be brought up at this time.

Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee Updates: GHEC items are on the agenda. Affirms that GHEC has discussed STRs with no formal action yet.

Old Business:

Agenda Item LUC 2310-06: Discussion and possible recommendation of LUC regarding proposed STR permitting proposal by Assembly.

Remains unclear if and how Girdwood can opt out of the ordinance and reserve the ability to create an ordinance that addresses only Girdwood. Discussion of overlay district by Assembly being an option to achieve this.

Elements of ordinance that would address Girdwood concerns identified by GBOS are:

Ordinance needs to provide a mechanism to address STR impact on neighbors

Ordinance needs to use funds from fees accrued in permitting in Girdwood to mitigate housing crisis in Girdwood

Ordinance needs to help incentivize Long Term Rental

Ordinance needs NOT to make Short Term Rental in primary residences as an accessory use (ADUs with owner-occupied home). IE different structure for accessory use than for fully commercial use.

GBOS members are reaching out to Assembly members to help in pursuit of finding a good solution for Girdwood. There remains a lot to be learned about how best to move forward. No formal action is advised or taken at this time. Assembly action may take place in January.

Agenda Item LUC 2311-05: GHEC request for LUC consideration of non-objection to proposed study of South Townsite for relocation of the soccer field and study of repurposing the existing soccer field and adjacent land as a potential site for workforce housing (Brett Wilbanks)

Among the parcels that GHEC is reviewing, the dedicated park land that is used as the soccer field is seen as being potentially developable because of its size, proximity to utilities, and location out of the flood plain. In order to consider this, GHEC suggests relocating the soccer field to another parcel, possibly on HLB land within the south townsite, adjacent to Girdwood Park.

Current information is that as dedicated park land, a change in this zoning would require a simple majority in an Areawide vote. Soonest that this could occur is 2025 Municipal Election. From there, it is likely to need to be replatted and possibly have another parcel dedicated to replace the rezoned parcel.

Jacky and Ken Graham in opposition to re-zoning of park land is noted in the meeting packet and below:

We are writing in strong objection to the proposed recommendation from the housing committee to relocate the soccer field and turn the current soccer field into housing. That land is designated as a Park. We strongly object to the suggestion of any housing on dedicated park land.

Conversation is intended to be exploratory. No funds are being spent at this time to explore the topic. LUC will review any updated information at the January meeting. No formal action taken at this time.

Agenda Item LUC 2311-06: Review and consider Assembly areawide bond proposal for public restrooms in Anchorage.

Item is on agendas as member of the public wanted to ensure that Girdwood was aware of the bond proposal discussion and able to be included in acquired a restroom if desired. Bond Proposal is Areawide, rather than via Anchorage Parks and Rec, so it is likely that at least one unit would be proposed for South of Anchorage.

Proposition is still under review by Assembly, likely to be reduced to \$9M. Restrooms are connected to water, sewer and power and are designed to be easily maintained although their use in winter environments. It is to include purchase and installation of 18-20 units and set aside \$50,000 per year for 20 years for maintenance. No specific locations have been proposed at this time. If the bond passes, location would likely be determined through input from community councils.

Staff offers that this is fairly preliminary and unclear if the bond will be accepted by voters. Girdwood contracts with Rent a Can for 12 units in the summer, 4 in the winter. Although they do not have running water, they are cleaned and owned/operated under contract successfully.

Item does not require action by LUC, it will return to agenda in January for status update of bond proposal.

New Business:

Agenda Item LUC 2312-04: Girdwood Land Use Committee annual officer elections. Positions are chair and 2 co-chairs. Anyone interested in serving as an LUC officer may self-nominate or be nominated and elected at the January 8 meeting.

Agenda Item LUC 2312-05: Temporary Workforce Housing proposal.

Draft proposal in the packet is a preliminary attempt to put ideas to paper. Proposal comes following a meeting held at the Girdwood Clinic the evening of November 29, to which the clinic invited community members known to be involved in homeless and housing issue jointly with the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness. ACEH met earlier that day with members of the unhoused population in Girdwood and presented ideas on possible approaches. In Girdwood, it is noted that the homeless discussion becomes a discussion about lack of affordability for employee housing and then the lack of employees to fill jobs throughout the service industry sector here. In Anchorage the discussion heads toward conversion of vacant commercial buildings, however this resource does not exist in Girdwood. Creation of new housing will take 3+ years, while the problem of lack of housing remains at a critical level. This idea is to relax rules for housing on commercial land to provide a location for RV camping at various locations in Girdwood. Current scope is for 3 years and meeting benchmarks to create additional workforce housing. Once these parameters are met, the relaxation of code would sunset. In effect, it makes legal a practice that is already taking place. Some are skeptical about relaxing Municipal Code quickly enough to have an impact during this winter, however Supervisors Edgington and Sullivan think that there is potential Assembly and community support.

Item came about after the last GHEC meeting at noon on 11/29. It is introduced at LUC now and will be brought to GHEC for their December meeting. Input is requested, draft documents are included in the LUC meeting packet. Contact Mike Edgington or Briana Sullivan with input: gbos.medgington@gmail.com; bsullivan.gbos@gmail.com

Request for GBOS/LUC Joint Meeting (2 of 2 required meetings completed in 2023): Jan 4, Jan 9, Apr 10, July 3, July 10 2023

Adjourn 9PM Lisa Miles/Brian Burnett