

**Girdwood Land Use Committee**  
**Notice of Meeting on November 13, 2023**  
**7PM**  
**Minutes Final**

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 2311-01:**

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 November 13 2023 meeting	Lisa Miles/Mike Edgington	Assent
Minutes approval from the October 9, 2023 meeting	Lisa Miles/Mike Edgington	Assent
LUC Officer reports: None		

GBOS updates: Jennifer Wingard Just met with Fire Department Board.  
Safer Seward Highway meeting WED Dec 6 at 5:30PM at Girdwood Community Room  
Request for community members input regarding Short Term Rental item will be addressed later in the meeting.

**Announcements:**

Girdwood Land Use Committee will hold officer elections at their January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting.

**Agenda Item LUC 2311-03:** Public Comment:

Mike Edgington: EMS budget amendment under consideration in an Assembly work session to increase Girdwood EMS budget by \$160,000 to meet budget request. Public is encouraged to write Assembly about this.

**Agenda Item LUC 2311-04:** Committee Reports.

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

- Girdwood Housing and Economic Committee Updates: Brett Wilbanks & Matt Schechter  
Most is included in STR discussion, new business item also is  
Other action moving forward: feasibility study of infill/exfill and working on a more solid plan regarding RV camping

**Agenda item LUC 2311-05:** Eaglexit presentation by Sean Murphy (10 Min) [EAGLEXIT - Eaglexit Home Page](#)

Idea of detaching from Anchorage has been active since the 1970's including a separation that occurred in 1974 which was overturned. Concept came back around in 2017 with formation of more formal group. Sean is now serving as the president. Must increase land mass to create a new borough which must be larger than the size that is currently District 2 to the east in largely unpopulated area bordering and perhaps including Whittier.

Project is now with Land Boundary Commission (LBC) for technical review. Following that there will be signature collection, approval by LBC. Process and meetings are outlined and updated on the Eaglexit website, earliest to go to voters is in 3 years, if passes, then 2 year transition period begins. Only members of tax district 2 would vote on this item. Eaglexit group believes that the new area can self-fund services at a lower tax cost to taxpayers. \$200,000 currently raised for the effort. Additional fundraising is ongoing. Group discusses that Girdwood has also researched separation from the MOA. LBC indicated to Girdwood committee that they would not look favorably about a petition that doesn't include another community that is currently in an unincorporated borough. Mr. Murphy agrees that this has come up in LBC discussion, also the number of signatures required is unknown. Statehood act funds for new borough is \$650,000 has not been increased in 40+ years and should be recalculated.

It is noted later in the meeting that if this new borough was accepted by LBC and was formed, it would likely prohibit Girdwood's ability to form its own borough as it would encompass all areas bordering Girdwood.

**Old Business:**

**Agenda Item LUC 2310-06:** Discussion of STR permitting proposal by Assembly.

Assembly is currently engaged with budget items but will be taking this up December 5, currently. Proposal is that all STRs will be required to get a permit and pay an annual fee. Limits on number of guests and requirement to have responder to complaints, there are several community concerns that are not addressed.

Room tax of 12% is paid by STR renters. These funds are divided by code as follows: 1/3 goes to pay for Dena'ina Center, 1/3 goes to Visit Anchorage, 1/3 goes to MOA general fund. Very little funding comes directly to Girdwood. MOA collects no information from entity that collects these funds. Permit and registration would supply information that the MOA currently does not have and implements some "good neighbor" elements such as on-site parking and required local contact to deal with issues that may arise.

Flat rate of permit, paid annually: In Girdwood some STRS are seasonal or even less-often used, so flat rate is a different impact on different rentals. Consider possible benefit to lower permit fee with higher penalty for non-compliance.

Lack of provision within this proposal to deal with Girdwood issues related to STRS and housing. Anchorage is a completely different long and short term rental market. Randy Sulte has indicated that this is not intended to solve Girdwood issues and is more geared to Anchorage Bowl. Adoption of permit system for STRS where they are not currently legal removes some tools for regulation that may be desirable. Legitimizing commercial use in residential areas is a possible unintended negative consequence of this proposal. It is unclear if this permit structure has to include Girdwood or if Girdwood could opt for something that is designed to address issues that are prevalent here.

Wilbanks suggests considering zoning overlay district, as he has recommended in the past, as with the Downtown and Airport districts. Mike Edgington: Zoning overlay is a larger process that is a complex project that would be hard to achieve. There is potential to manage STRS under T21C9.

**New Business:**

**Agenda Item LUC 2311-05:** GHEC recommendation that LUC consider that land in the South Townsite is designated for a soccer field, repurposing the existing soccer field as a potential site for workforce housing due to its location adjacent to utilities, pathways and amenities, and collaboration with stakeholders including Government agencies and community organization. (Brett Wilbanks)

GHEC is looking for developable pieces of land for workforce housing needs. Soccer field parcel would need to be rezoned in order to develop it for workforce housing. GHEC seeks input from community. This would involve public process for rezone if accepted by community and GBOS. Soccer field would be relocated in the South Townsite within the floodplain, specific location is not yet known currently.

Group discussion includes:

Consider developing the area behind the soccer field and maintaining the soccer field in its current location

Need to update flood plain maps

Support for concentration of recreational facilities in central location in floodplain

Both parcels are dedicated parks by ordinance in 1990's changing this designation is a process.

Loss of parking area adjacent for Moose Meadows year-round

Recommend outreach to adjacent neighbors, change in park designation.

Cottonwood trees in south townsite are a challenge for management of recreation facilities.

Geotech will be needed - soccer field was old shop for Alyeska with some hidden challenges buried underneath. Possible wetland under the current cap, similar to that of the area behind the Conex and land beyond the soccer field.

Wilbanks requests that LUC considers non-objection to additional study of this idea by GHEC.

**Agenda Item LUC 2311-06:** Consider possibility of adding GVSA to the bond proposal for public restrooms in Anchorage, with a goal of receiving funding for 3 restrooms, locations to be determined. (Brooke Lavender)

Assembly is considering bond proposal to fund construction of public restrooms connected to water, sewer and electricity. Bond proposition appears high cost because of the connection to utilities. Request that Girdwood be considered in this if it goes forward.

Girdwood uses portable toilets under contract, which includes maintenance, relocation, replacement. Seeking clarification if the funding includes maintenance and operation of the facilities once constructed. It is noted that public restrooms currently available throughout Anchorage in stores etc. are often locked to restrict vandalism and misuse. In other locations, there have been sponsors who oversee operation of the facilities. Design of the proposed units considers many aspects of concerns regarding misuse of public restrooms.

Assembly will be considering this for bond in 2024 for action. More information will be presented at the next meeting. LUC may consider non-objection to forward to GBOS in December. There is some synergy with the proposed facilities related to RV development in South Townsite

**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  
None

**Adjourn** 8:30PM