

Mayor's Report for August 8, 2022 General Meeting

(Drafted for deadline 8/3/22)

Mike Taylor

It's been a busy summer month in Gustavus. City Administrator Kathy Leary was away some of the month on a pre-scheduled family trip but stayed in touch by email and phone to keep up on key activities. I oversaw staff during her time away and am relieved to have her back and once again energetically involved in City Hall. Welcome back, Kathy!

Healthy You in 22. Summer's a great time to work on family health and fitness. Let's make the most of it! The DHSS Healthy You in 22 webpages have healthy ideas for families:

<https://health.alaska.gov/healthyyou/default.aspx>.

Join your friends and make new ones at fun classes offered at the Gustavus Community Center every week in yoga and movement. Or sign up for the fitness center.

Nothing beats healthy outdoor activity. Try the wonderful trails from Dock Road into the upland meadows and the Beach Park, the Nagoonberry trail, and for a bit more workout there are the Hydro Road and trails from that road up into the Yellowlegs Savannah.

Much of our work in July kept projects going:

1. Library Bike Shelter. We issued a notice to proceed for design to 20% and a PO to PND Engineering. They submitted their 20% design for our review on August 1. The funding for the design originated from budget remaining from the Library roof repair job but was not enough to meet the cost of the full design for the Bike Shelter. The Council August agenda includes introduction of a Non-Code Ordinance to provide \$5000 more to complete the design to 100% and cover the cost of the required Fire Marshall review. Once we have full funding for the design in place we will issue a PO and NTP for design to 100%. That may be in September. We plan to issue a Request for Quotation for construction per the design and specifications during the fall for construction when conditions allow in spring.

2. Library Story Trail. Congratulations to our Library team and volunteers for completing the story trail and posting the first story—Looking for Moose. Great job! Check it out!

3. Good River Bridge. The Road Maintenance team is evaluating the options provided by PND engineering for repairs to the Good River Bridge. This winter we will be searching for grant funds to make the repairs both to the bridge railings and deck and corrective action for the slumping embankment at the northwest corner of the bridge.

4. Wilson Road Drainage Rehabilitation Project—Eastside Ditch Extension. This has been a major project for the Road Team this month. Thanks to Glacier Bay Construction for a nice job. The FEMA-funded project is 95% complete but awaits work by ByteNet to move two internet junction posts that were in the ditch alignment. ByteNet has submitted a civil work permit application for that work, which the City approved. Glacier Bay Construction will re-mobilize to finish we hope before the end of August.

5. Tong Road Project. The Road Team decided to reconfigure the drainage ditch on the east end of Tong Road and do it as a separate project in the future. The FEMA-funded work to replace a culvert at the west end under the Country Inn driveway is scheduled for immediately after the Inn closes for the season. We got a start on east end project however, by removing a few trees along the north edge.

That space will also provide room for moving snow off the road during winter, alleviating last winter's problem. Logs from the site now outline a parking area at the beach park where the Gustavus Visitors Association will relocate the "Welcome to Gustavus" kiosk.

6. Road Cul-de-sac turnarounds. We are working with neighbors to improve turnaround spaces at the ends of Jensen Rd, Spruce Lane, and pleasant Ave. The first improvement will be Jensen Rd, in August.

7. Grandpa's Farm Road Bridge. The bridge package is still in manufacturing at the Western Wood Structures plant in Oregon with shipment expected before the end of August. We hope to get this major construction project, which is funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, finished by early September.

8. Heat Pumps for City Buildings. Dean Weikle and I met by Zoom with Jason Custer of AP&T to discuss heat pump installations in City facilities. The council approved a project to install a system in City Hall, only. Jason offered to reach out to manufacturer's reps to identify support for installations in city buildings, starting with City Hall. Dean and I will continue to work on developing a project this fall.

During the discussion I had the opportunity to raise my concern that the AP&T web page that reports percentage of electric generation being met by non-fossil fuel hydroelectric generation seemed to malfunction. It sometimes indicated 0% hydrogeneration when the diesels were not running at all. Jason asked their engineers to investigate. They identified the problem and corrected it on August 2. I appreciate their prompt action to provide Gustavus residents with accurate information on Falls Creek hydro generation. We are working with AP&T to add more helpful information on load patterns in the future.

9. Old Post office building renovation. I met with Kenn Magowan at the site, and we discussed what renovations would be needed to make the building rentable for a bike repair shop. I continue to seek tradespeople to complete some basic repairs. Glacier Bay Construction will be finishing up grounds improvements including hydroseeding in August.

10. Beach Park CRMA. The City received approval of our proposed Development Plan (the management plan portion of the CRMA) so has the authority to continue to make improvements such as identifying and posting a designated camping area on the east side of Dock Road. Final signoff on the updated CRMA awaits action, likely later in the fall, by DNR. We will continue to monitor that process and appreciate the assistance of Ben White and Megan Hillgartner of the DNR Southeast Office.

11. SEARHC Meeting. On August 2, City Administrator Kathy Leary and I met with visiting SEARHC executives Noble Johnston and Martin Benning at City Hall. Dr. Rod Vaught, the SEARHC-Gustavus Liaison joined us by phone. We discussed how the City can partner with the SEARHC clinic to support better public health and medical services in Gustavus. We are enthusiastic about the construction of the new SEARHC medical clinic. SEARHC continues to recruit for a full-time provider. We discussed expanding medical programs once the facility is completed and fully staffed. The City team of Fire Chief, City Administrator and Mayor will be meeting with Dr. Vaught in the coming weeks to begin a new Memorandum of Understanding outlining the relationship between the City, particularly the GVFD, which provides emergency medical service here, and the independent SEARHC clinic, which provides family medical care. We anticipate partnering with SEARHC and the DHSS Public Health Nurse to offer health promotion programs to benefit the community.

12. 77 Same Old Road PFAS Suit. City Administrator Kathy Leary and I met confidentially by zoom with City Attorney Bob Blasco and Megan Costello of his staff and Kyle Hardin of Alaska Public Entity Insurance for an update on the PFAS-related suit.

13. Tongass Federal Credit Union (TFCU) executives contacted me. TFCU is headquartered in Ketchikan, serves several communities Southeast Alaska, including Hoonah and Haines, and is interested in opening a micro branch in Gustavus, possibly hosted by Hoonah Indian Association at the Gustavus Inn. I will meet with CEO Helen Mickel and VP of Operations Garcia O'Connell to discuss opportunities on August 11. While the City has no authority to offer financial services, we encourage others who wish to do so as a benefit to our community.

14. Congressional Candidate Mary Portola plans to visit Gustavus on August 8 and Kathy Leary and I will meet with her that afternoon briefly to give her an introduction to Gustavus and our local government. We are pleased that she is interested in Gustavus.

15. Thanks to Jim Lesh for mowing the Salmon River Park grass on August 3!

16. Thanks, also, to the NPS and AP&T for working hard to achieve an agreement to get the intertie started. Jake Ohlson reported to me on August 3 that most of the issues are resolved and that the City's resolution restating the City position has allowed them to break through toward final agreement and startup of the Intertie!