

## Mayor's Report January 16, 2024

**Conversations.** This month we've been engaged in community communications and conversations about land access and use in Gustavus. I am very proud to be a member of this community for many reasons, but especially for the intelligent, articulate, and compassionate dialogue the community has had about sensitive, difficult, and potentially divisive issues.

**Public Access on the Hydro Road.** The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is engaging in dispute resolution between the Olneys and AP&T regarding public access on the Hydro Road. FERC has welcomed the City's participation, and former City Council Mayors (and Hydro Road hikers) Mike and Karen Taylor, Jim Mackovjak and I met by Zoom with FERC mid-month. I sent a letter to FERC on December 12, 2023. The correspondence for this and the following issues will be posted on our website in the correspondence folder at <https://www.gustavus-ak.gov/citycouncil>.

**The Nature Conservancy Lands.** As we discussed at the Work Session on January 8<sup>th</sup>, the City learned at the end of December that the Hoonah Indian Association had sent a letter to The Nature Conservancy in November 2021 proposing transfer of the Gustavus Forelands Preserve to HIA, and that TNC traveled to Hoonah in April 2023. Gustavus was not informed of the conversations and a petition was circulated opposing the land transfer. By January 8<sup>th</sup> over 200 signatures were collected and 100 letters sent, and 75 people attended the Council meeting by Zoom, not including those present in Council chambers. Attending by Zoom were TNC Director Ivy Spohnholz, Julia Nave, and Hank Lentfer. In response to the passionate and articulate concerns of the community, TNC has committed to retaining title to the Preserve for the foreseeable future. See the City's correspondence file for emails from Director Spohnholz and the City's January 15<sup>th</sup> response. Gustavus initiated preservation and has maintained stewardship of the Forelands Preserve a quarter of a century ago and we are hopeful that we can rebuild our partnership with and trust in TNC.

**The Xunaa Borough Petition.** The Xunaa Borough petition has been accepted by the Local Boundary Commission and the public comment period will be open until February 29<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm we will have an informational public meeting by the Local Boundary Commission to describe the petition review process. Questions are welcomed. The City will send out information on how to submit public comments.

### **What Else is Happening.**

Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am: Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new playground equipment at Salmon River Park.

Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm: Capital Improvement Plan Council Work Session.

Thank you, Gustavus,

*Shelley*