

**DRAFT**

## MINUTES

### Heli-Ski Map Committee

Meeting Date: November 21, 2016

Date of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Haines Borough Heli-skiing Map Committee was held at the Haines Public Library on November 21, 2016. The meeting convened at 5:07 p.m. Ron Jackson presided.

**Members in Attendance:** Ron Jackson, Sean Brownell, Meredith Pochardt, Lori Smith, Scott Sundberg.

**Members Not in Attendance:** None.

#### **Public Comments:**

Cary **Weishahn** inquired about the CIV Provisional area and whether it was still in effect. She also asked why BLM Provisional Area had been renamed to BLM "Approved" Area. Staff member Holly **Smith** acknowledged the BLM title change as staff error and committed to fixing it. The committee did not know whether CIV Provisional Area was still implemented, but that right now use in not allowed. **Weishahn** also noted that years of map reform have (1) increased heliski use of lower elevations; and (2) extent of approved areas have doubled or tripled from the original SUD map.

Eric **Holle** inquired about the S7 proposal and why it was not shown on the map. Staff member Holly **Smith** explained the nature of S7 as being difficult to show as the proposal requests all BLM provisional areas be removed. He also wanted the committee to recognize the Northern Wild Sheep & Goat Council and encouraged the borough to wait until 2017 on map proposals until ADF&G can provide necessary wildlife habitat data. The process is too hurried and can be done better. Only consider increasing the length of runs or remove runs altogether.

Mike **Denker** noted that (1) the committee does not appear to be following the attorney's recommendation to have a member recuse himself from deliberations and votes when that member also submitted the map change amendment being discussed; and (2) the attorney's recommendation did not address the equal protection implications of exempting one member from code of ethics requirements set out in HBC 2.06.030 (C), while requiring that all other members must comply with these code of ethics requirements.

ADF&G members Stephanie **Sell** and Carl **Koch** attended the meeting by phone to provide feedback for each proposal and discuss preliminary bear-denning and goat habitat models. They noted high probability of bear dens near the S4 and S5 proposals and high probability of goat habitat near the AH7 proposal. **Sell** explained that goat habitat is relatively small – they tend to stay in one area throughout the winter. **Koch** explained that bear dens can be disturbed

by early springs or anthropogenic reasons, but that current data for population shifts is inconclusive at this time. Data compiled since 2010 will be available in the spring of 2017 and ADF&G reiterated their request to postpone map changes until the borough can properly review the new study. The current model for bear denning habitat includes likely slope and elevation of habitat. The current model for goat habitat is a series of kernel density estimations. Point source locations are not specified, though much of the area within the models contains known locations for each species, though Alaska statute prevents ADF&G from identifying specific locations.

Another public comment reflected on the nature of habitat, how it fluctuates over time because of food sources, climate change, and human activity. A request was made to consider removing existing areas instead of only adding new areas.

Staff Comments:

Holly **Smith** noted that ADF&G comments had arrived 30 minutes before the start of the meeting, which did not allow time for hard copies for the meeting, but that comments had been posted to the website. In responding to a conflict of interest concern from Mike **Denker**, **Smith** was confused about committee procedure. Two proposals had been adopted without unanimous consent, which might impact how they can move out of the committee

Committee Comments:

**Sundberg** requested postponement in incorporating ADF&G comments into the meeting as there was not efficient time to review them (they were posted 30 minutes prior to meeting).

**Pochardt** recommended the committee prepare for removal of some approved areas as proceedings continue.

Lori **Smith** noted that changes to the map are based primarily on safety concerns or unintended map errors from previous approvals. Secondary concerns are commerce and environment.

**Jackson** felt that the committee was working through the proposals too quickly. Too much change was being considered.

Meeting Motions:

*NOTE: All motions made in this committee serve as recommendations to the Borough Manager and Assembly. Map proposals are not finalized until Assembly approves map change. Recommendations are due November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.*

Agenda: Having recently received ADF&G comments, committee members suggested moving item #6 (Review of ADFG Comments) to the beginning of the meeting.

Motion: **Pochardt** moved to change ADFG agenda item to #5 after public comments and to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: **Sundberg** and **Jackson** noted an error on the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes about the motion concerning AH4. Holly **Smith** was requested to fix the error upon approval.

Motion: **Pochardt** moved to approve the November 1, 2016 and November 7, 2016 minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Map Amendments:

**S4: Sundberg** noted that this area would extend the run by about 1,200 feet and that it was a commercially important area, not a safety concern.

**Motion: Pochardt** moved to recommend Manager and Assembly approve S4 with a close date of April 1<sup>st</sup>. The motion carried 3-1 with **Pochardt** opposing and **Sundberg** abstaining.

**AH5: Brownell** specified that this was not an intended proposal, merely a question of clarification that the borough approved area follow the ridgelines. The boundaries currently overflow into the south-facing slope.

**Motion:** A motion was made to remove AH5 from the list of proposals; it carried unanimously.

**S5: Sundberg** explained that this proposal is a natural continuation to the peak of the slope. Committee members agreed that it was likely a technical map error from the previous amendments. A small edit to the proposal was done during the meeting to remove a portion of the south-facing slope.

**Motion: Sundberg** moved to recommend Manager and Assembly approve S5 as amended. **Pochardt** seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**AH6: Pochardt** volunteered to communicate with CIV to find out whether or not the provisional area near this proposal is still in effect. **Brownell** requested more time with the borough to correct the projection before committee review.

**S6: Sundberg** removed S6a from the proposals and requested more time with the borough to correct S6b before committee review.

**AH7:** ADF&G comments and kernel estimations shows increased goat habitat near the southern portion of the proposal (AH7b). **Brownell** asked the committee to consider AH7a and AH7b separately.

**Motion: Sundberg** moved to recommend the borough manager and assembly approve AH7a with a close date of March 31<sup>st</sup>. **Smith** seconded. The motion carried 3-2 with **Pochardt** and **Jackson** in opposition.

**Motion: Sundberg** moved to recommend the borough manager and assembly approve AH7b and **Smith** seconded. The motion carried 3-2 with **Pochardt** and **Jackson** in opposition.

**Next Meetings and Review Schedule:**

November 28, 2016 5:00 pm TBA

Review ADF&G Comments for AH1-4 & S1-S3 and Review S6b and AH6.

*Note: Due to scheduling conflicts, the meeting time was moved from 5:00 pm to 3:30 pm.*

**Meeting Adjournment:** The committee adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Holly Smith, Haines Borough Planner