

STATE OF ALASKA

LOCAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

In the Matter of the)
Petition for Annexation)
of 0.05 Square Miles to)
the City of Fairbanks)

**STATEMENT OF DISSENT BY
COMMISSIONER JOHN HARRINGTON**

INTRODUCTION

This dissent in the annexation of the Fred Meyer Subdivision is limited to a narrow issue. The essential problem in this annexation is the mixed effect that the action will have on the delivery of services to the subdivision. I believe the Commission erred in only one aspect of the annexation process. It made a mistake by not requiring the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough execute an agreement allowed by 3 AAC 110.900(d) regarding the delivery of Fire and EMS services.

The City can provide police service and building code enforcement more efficiently and more effectively than can the Borough or the State of Alaska. But the Borough, exercising nonareawide EMS powers and service area fire suppression powers, is providing more efficient and more effective fire and EMS service than can the City. The presentation by the City lauded its more highly trained EMS and fire staff, but training cannot make up for the significantly longer response time. The current delivery of service from a station just 0.3 miles from the subdivision will be changed to a response from a station several miles away.

STATEMENT OF DISSENT

The Fred Meyer Subdivision has a reasonable need for city government. That need is partially met by the exercise of nonareawide EMS powers of the Borough and fire suppression through the University Fire Service Area. If it were not for the lack of several essential municipal services available from the Borough (e.g. police, and building code enforcement), this subdivision would not meet the applicable standards for annexation.

3 AAC 110.090. Need

- (a) The territory must exhibit a reasonable need for city government. . . .
- (b) Territory may not be annexed to a city if essential municipal services can be provided more efficiently and more effectively by another existing city or by an organized borough, on an areawide basis or nonareawide basis, or through a borough service area that, in the determination of the commission, was established in accordance with art. X, sec. 5, Constitution of the State of Alaska.

Because of the emphasis in 3 AAC 110.090 on “services provided more efficiently and more effectively...” the Commission was required to address the relative efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of Fire and EMS services to the subdivision. During the hearings the Commission heard testimony regarding the City’s attempt to come to an agreement with the Borough regarding the University Fire Service Area, specifically, the financial impact on the service area. The financial impact on the service area is significant, but the more important impact is the degradation of service delivery.

It is within the power of the commission (3 AAC 110.900(d) Transition) to prescribe an agreement between the City and the Borough.

3 AAC 110.900. Transition


...
(d) Before approving a proposed change, the commission may require that all boroughs, cities, unorganized borough service areas, or other entities wholly or partially included within the boundaries of the proposed change execute an agreement prescribed or approved by the commission for the assumption of powers, duties, rights, and functions, and for the transfer and integration of assets and liabilities.


One possible agreement would provide for the retention of the Fred Meyer Subdivision within the University Fire Service Area until such time as the City can provide a more comparable response time.

It is in the best interest of the subdivision, the community of Fairbanks, and the State that essential services are delivered efficiently and effectively. In this annexation action the degradation in delivery of fire and EMS services can be avoided, and as such, should be.

It is in this very limited area that I dissent from the action taken by the Commission. In all other aspects of the Commission’s approval of the annexation, I concur.

Approved in writing this 2nd day of December, 2009.

By:  x
John Harrington,
Commissioner
First Judicial District

Attest:
By  x
Brent Williams, Staff