Annexation Study Commission

February 1, 2006, Regular Meeting

The meeting convened at 5 PM in Room 224 of City Hall. Members present: George Davidson, Chair; Sandy Williams, Vice-Chair; Steve Sorensen; and Erroll Champion. Absent: Caren Robinson.

Minutes of the January meeting were not approved as the Commission did not receive them sufficiently in advance to review them. In the future, minutes from a prior meeting will be posted to the commission website well in advance of the subsequent regular meeting. The Commission decided to take up approval of the January minutes at its next meeting.

Commissioner Errol Champion expressed his desire to have materials posted to a website for easy access by the public and Commission members. Other committee members concurred. Subsequently, a website has been created with a link from the CBJ’s homepage and Commission materials are being posted.

CDD Planner Peter Freer reviewed the materials in the packet he handed out to the Commission. The materials consisted of correspondence from members of the public on various issues and questions and responses prepared by CDD staff.

Assistant City Attorney Barbara Ritchie reported on the possible effects of annexation on the subsistence rights of individuals/families and handed out materials on the issue. Inclusion in a borough would not necessarily affect subsistence rights, as these rights are not tied directly to political subdivision boundaries, but rather to numerous factors and criteria set out in state and federal law. Thus, it appears that annexation would have no immediate effect on subsistence rights and these rights may be preserved, even if outlying residents are within an ‘urban’ borough. Commissioner Sorensen pointed out that the group is not a subsistence commission and that individuals should consult directly with state and federal agencies if they are seeking advice regarding subsistence issues.

CDD Planner Peter Freer gave a brief overview of building permit requirements and mil levies. The building code is currently applied areawide, although recreational cabins are exempt from building code requirements. Application of the building code has emerged as a key issue with property owners and residents in outlying areas, in particular, Funter Bay and Horse and Colt Islands. The areawide mil rate is now 7.51 mils for residents off the road system. This largely comprises education and central government, and, without adjustment by the Assembly, would comprise the mil rate in newly-annexed territory. Further research is required to determine what the Assembly could do to adjust the mil levy for a newly annexed area.

General discussion ensued on the Commission’s approach to its work. The group determined that in order to make recommendations, it needs more information concerning
the areas within the model borough boundaries, and how that information relates to the regulatory standards for borough annexation.

After discussion, Commissioner Williams moved to direct staff to begin research on the area within the model borough boundaries based on the standards for borough annexation and the petitioning requirements. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Chair Davidson opened the meeting to public comments, and several property owners from outlying areas spoke, essentially on two topics: that the property tax rate would be disproportionately high for the level of services anticipated to be provided, and opposition to application of the building code for residential development.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 1 at 5 PM in Room 224 of City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.