The meeting convened at 5:04 PM. Present were Chair George Davidson, Vice-Chair Sandy Williams, and commission members Errol Champion and Steve Sorensen, constituting a quorum to do business. Commission member Caren Robinson arrived at 5:13. Planning Supervisor Peter Freer and Assistant City Attorney Barbara Ritchie provided staff support at the meeting. Numerous members of the public were also in attendance.

Fire Division Chief Martin Beckner and Fire Marshall Rich Etheridge of Capital City Fire and Rescue (CCFR) gave a presentation on emergency medical response, with an emphasis on emergency medical response to areas off the CBJ road system. The CBJ does not have boats or aircraft for responding to remote locations, and must rely on the Coast Guard, the State Troopers and private helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft services to send medics to remote locations.

Residents located in remote areas of the borough have a higher priority for emergency medical services than people who live outside the borough boundaries and, as borough residents, they receive a reduction in ambulance transport costs. For example, if Funter Bay were in the borough, a resident transported from Funter to Juneau would receive a $200 ‘rebate’ on transport costs; the ‘rebate’ is not available to non-residents. Chief Beckner clarified that medical response within the borough, both on and off the road system, is paid for both through the property tax and on a fee basis, making the point that borough residents on the road system also pay a fee for an ambulance call-out.

Fire Marshall Etheridge stated that that CCFR conducts fire investigations at no cost within the borough. He contrasted this with the unorganized borough, where investigations are conducted by the state fire marshal’s office, but only in cases where damages are in excess of $1 million.

Building Official Debra Purves gave a presentation on application of the building code. She stated that the building code and associated requirements for permits and inspections apply in the borough areawide, and thus would apply to all commercial and residential construction within the borough, on or off the road system. The exception is for recreational cabins, which do not require either a permit or an inspection, and are presumed to be seasonally occupied. Ms. Purves presented her responses to a series of questions that were posed by Funter Bay property owner Gordon Harrison, about the application of the building code if Funter Bay were annexed.

Peter Freer gave a staff report on mapping and other land status information available from the Forest Service, and about other borough boundary efforts underway or being discussed in the region. These efforts include a large annexation petition recently filed by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, a planned borough incorporation by the City of
Petersburg, and a recent meeting attended by communities from central and north-central Southeast with Representative Thomas (Haines) on the formation of a “super borough” reaching from Pelican to Kupreanof, and including Hoonah, Gustavus, Angoon, Tenakee Springs, Elfin Cove and Kake. No “super borough” proposal has been made, but the idea is in play. Freer reported that the City of Hoonah has talked for ten or more years about petitioning for incorporation of a Cross Sound/Icy Straits borough, and the “super borough” appears to be the latest iteration of this idea.

There were question and answer sessions, including the opportunity for questions from the public, following each of the presentations.

The commission discussed the boundaries that it might (or might not) recommend in its report to the Assembly and how to go about the process of making its determinations and recommendations. Chair Davidson had prepared a memorandum to commission members discussing considerations for a boundary determination, and maps with three boundary alternatives. He asked that commission members consider the points discussed in the memorandum and review the maps between now and the May 3rd meeting. He asked that they come to the May 3rd meeting prepared to discuss boundaries, findings, and recommendations. Chairman Davidson expressed his belief that the commission is not bound to look only at the Local Boundary Commission’s current model borough boundary for the CBJ. He suggested the commission also consider and make a recommendation to the Assembly on the boundaries that it determines make the most sense for the community.

Commission members supported and adopted Chair Davidson’s approach as set out in his memorandum. The commission also discussed the charge to the commission and concluded that it is deliberating in a manner consistent with the Mayor’s directives in establishing the commission. With regard to process, the members agreed that once the commission develops its recommendations, it will invite Mayor Botelho to attend a meeting at which the commission will present its recommendations, and the commission will hold a public hearing to take comment on the recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 PM.