

In comparison to most residents of Nikiski, I am relatively a new comer, a resident just since 2008. So, I was not a participant or even spectator in prior incorporation attempts.

When I first learned of this “mission” and witnessed a number of hard working people devoted to bringing about a change, I was “on the fence” as far as knowing if incorporation would be a good thing. However, the immediate attraction to the cause was the “democracy in action” aspect – the citizens of Nikiski just might be able to vote as to whether or not incorporation was a desired status for our town. The vision of being able to choose is very liberating. Of course, I quickly caught on that like most things in life, fruition coming about is somehow related to the moon and the stars and planets being in the appropriate house.

In this sense, those moon and stars and planets turned out to be a pretty good euphemism for the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) and alignment or being in the appropriate house is akin to the standards the petition for incorporation has to meet.

By virtue of the LBC’s website, I found both past and current petitions and accompanying statement of decisions, which really enlightened me as to the absolutely huge effort it takes to first compile a petition for incorporation, but also to get it approved by the LBC/staff in order to get to the ballot box

Further, an in depth study of those petitions and subsequent decisions, even though examined by the LBC/staff through the same set of standards, demonstrated that each were unique as their rulings

Well, I soon discovered the AK Supreme Court has formally recognized that determinations by the Commission has been given broad power to decide in the unique circumstances presented by each petition. (*Mobil Oil Corp v LBC* 518 P2d@98-99 AK197). That explained away part of my confusion...

For example, the preliminary report for Nikiski cites the failure of the petition to offer any new services above what is already being provided by the borough. Stated numerously in the petition are functions/services felt by the petitioners to be “new:” *City administration, law enforcement services (which the borough could provide by chooses not to), planning and zoning, local economic development, taxation, local community development, capital improvement, disaster planning and cooperative response with the borough.*

New services for Nikiski provided by the people who live in Nikiski; Nikiski, being administered by people voted into office by the same people what will benefit from these services and more. Yes, these services can be said to be provided by the borough, with an important caveat, Nikiski has just one member on the assembly, and that one member gets repeatedly outvoted.

The one thing that the borough cannot do is provide Nikiski with more representation, to allow it to exercise local community development, local control, apply for grants and matching funds that only municipalities can obtain, represent the community’s interest more effectively and efficiently. And a whole lot more.

I strongly support the endeavor to incorporate Nikiski.

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