

By: Peggy Horton
Introduced: May 15, 2023
Public Hearing: June 5, 2023
Action: FAILED

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 23-17**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION CONCERNING THE PROPOSED RENAMING OF A GEOGRAPHIC FEATURE WITHIN THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FROM LION HEAD TO NATSEDE'AAYI WITHIN TOWNSHIP 20 NORTH, RANGE 10 EAST, SECTIONS 32 & 33, SEWARD MERIDIAN.

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Department received a request for comments from the Alaska Historical Commission concerning a proposal to rename Lion Head to the Ahtna name for this geographic feature, Natsede'aayi; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Historical Commission is designated by statute as the Geographic Names Board for the State of Alaska. The citizen board, chaired by the Lt. Governor, reviews names proposed for lakes, streams, mountains, and other physical features in the state and coordinates its program with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names; and

WHEREAS, the feature is a large mountain on state land, located directly south of milepost 106 of the Glenn Highway, at the junction of Caribou Creek and the Matanuska River; and

WHEREAS, the feature is not in a designated wilderness; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the name Lion Head appears on the area's 1948 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) map; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, Ort's Dictionary of Alaska Place Names (1967) lists the mountain Lion Head at the junction of Caribou Creek and Matanuska River; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the Glenn Highway Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan, prepared by the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation in 2006 references Lion Head as Lion's Head and notes the traditional Dena'ina name of Nutsad'iy and the traditional Ahtna name of Natsede'aayi as well; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the proposed Ahtna name Natsede'aayi means Rock that is Standing [or] Rock that is protruding [or] Rock that stands; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the name change was proposed by the Tribal Administrator of the Native Village of Tazlina on behalf of the village council; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the Ahtna name, Natsede'aayi, marks trade and travel routes between Ahtna and Dena'ina regions in Southcentral Alaska; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the feature has been well-recorded in their oral histories, as reported in Shem Pete's

Edition, 2016) by James Kari and James A. Fall with principal contributor Shem Pete; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal and the Planning Division research, the proposed name has a long history of use by Alaska Natives in the area and is descriptive of the feature in the Ahtna language; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, the Ahtna placename connects the feature to its historic and pre-contact sense of place and importance for the Ahtna people, allowing for the cultural significance of this place to be recognized by a greater population of Alaskans and visitors; and

WHEREAS, in support of the United States Board on Geographic Names, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) maintains the Federal authoritative source of official geographic feature names, known as the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS); and

WHEREAS, a search in the GNIS system found Lion Head is the official name for the subject rock formation; and

WHEREAS, a search in the GNIS system found Glacier Point, Natsede'aayi, and Nutsada'iy as variant names for the subject rock formation; and

WHEREAS, a search in the GNIS found no indication of the name Natsede'aayi used as a geographic feature in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, according to the proposal, no conflict is reported with the proposed name; and

WHEREAS, a search in the GNIS found Lion Head Mountain, the name of a summit located within the Kakuhan Range, 46 miles northwest of Juneau, Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Glacier View Community Council held a public meeting on April 27, 2023; and

WHEREAS, by resolution, The Glacier View Community Council objects to the renaming due to a long history of settlers from the 1900s in the area; and

WHEREAS, public comments received noted reasons for objecting to the name change are that Lion Head has historical usage, is a descriptive name, is used in business marketing, and the proposed name is unpronounceable; and

WHEREAS, public comments received noted honoring and celebrating indigenous cultures and place names as the reasons for supporting the renaming of Lion Head to Natsede'aayi; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historical Preservation Commission is tasked to advise the assembly in identifying, protecting, preserving, and interpreting cultural resources within the borough that are of archaeological, historical, cultural, scientific, or geographic importance; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historical Preservation Commission held a public meeting on May 11, 2023; and

WHEREAS, by resolution, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historical Preservation Commission supports the proposal to apply the name Natsese'aayi on the basis that it is an indigenous Ahtna name in local use for millennia longer than the current official name of Lion Head; and

WHEREAS, testimony or comments are provided to the Planning Commission for consideration; and

WHEREAS, notification of the hearing for the proposed name and a request for comments was posted at the Sutton Library and the Sutton and Chickaloon Post Offices and advertised in the Frontiersman and on the borough website; and

WHEREAS, the planning staff requested comments from internal and outside agencies, including the Glacier View Community Council, via email; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed this application with respect to the standards and procedures for the Borough to comment on such proposals set forth in MSB 15.04.025; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on June 5, 2023 on this matter.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission, acting for the Assembly, recommends approval of the proposed renaming of a geographic feature in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from Lion Head to Natsede-aayi.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission this 5th day of June, 2023.

CJ KOAN, Chair

ATTEST

CORINNE LINDFORS, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

YES:

NO: