

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-14, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on August 20th, 2025 in the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL, HARNESS, SCHNEIDER, H. SMITH, S. SMITH & VENUTI

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER WALKER (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER FOSTER & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair S. Smith read the supplemental items into the record. He then requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as amended.

HARNESS/BARNWELL MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA BY TAKING UP PLAT CONSIDERATIONS AFTER RECONSIDERATION.

There was a brief conversation as to where on the agenda inserting the plat consideration made the most sense.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

HARNESS/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2025

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Tulin Terrace Subd. West Terrace Unit 1 Floyd 2026 Replat, Staff Report 25-39

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster, who provided a summary review of his staff report in the packet.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for the Applicant. Katie Kirsis identified herself as the surveyor for the plat and made herself available for any questions.

Chair S. Smith then opened the public comment period. With no one wishing to speak, Chair S. Smith closed the public comment period. He then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner H. Smith questioned whether the need to abandon the water service should be included in the staff recommendations or if it's a mutual understanding. City Planner Foster advised the Commission to include it under the staff recommendations.

Commissioner Schneider asked if the current easements on the property were to be abandoned. Ms. Kirsis noted that the intention is to vacate the easements that serve no purpose, and to grant an easement along the existing water main to encompass the existing or future water main alignment.

HARNESS/H. SMITH MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-039 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE SURVEYOR, HIRED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DEDICATE A CENTERED 30-FOOT WATERLINE EASEMENT ENCOMPASSING THE FULL EXTENT OF THE EXISTING WATER MAIN.
2. CORRECT THE SPELLING OF "TERRACE" IN THE LEGAL DESCRIPTION TO READ "TERRACE."
3. CORRECT THE NAMING OF "SKYLINE DR." IN THE VICINITY MAP TO READ "DIAMOND RIDGE RD."
4. THE SURVEYOR, HIRED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, PROVIDE A UTILITY EASEMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE EASEMENT GRANTED UNDER HM 2018-5 FROM THE ADJACENT PLAT TO THE SOUTH, TO ENCOMPASS ALL INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY FOR STAIRWAY ACCESS TO SERVICE THE WATER MAIN AND PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE.
5. THE SURVEYOR TO CORRECT (3) EASEMENT LABELS DEPICTED ON THE PLAT TO ALIGN WITH THE APPROXIMATE NOTES PROVIDED IN THE NOTE LEGEND:
 - a. THE LABEL CURRENTLY REFERENCING NOTE 3 TO BE UPDATED TO READ, "SEE NOTE 4."
 - b. THE LABEL CURRENTLY REFERENCING NOTE 4 TO BE UPDATED TO READ, "SEE NOTE 5."
 - c. THE LABEL CURRENTLY REFERENCING NOT 5 TO BE UPDATED TO READ, "SEE NOTE 6."
6. THE PROPERTY OWNER WILL NEED TO ABANDON ONE WATER SERVICE AT THE MAIN PRIOR TO THE RECORDING OF THE FINAL PLAT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

REPORTS

A. City Planner's Report, Staff Report 25-35

City Planner Foster provided a summary of his staff report in the packet, noting the following:

- Ordinance 25-54 has been referred to the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Advisory Commission.
- Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, 2025.
- Next Commissioner report to Council on August 25, 2025.

There was a brief discussion regarding the United States Army Corps of Engineers fill permit down at the Spit.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. A REQUEST TO VACATE THE 66-FOOT-WIDE SECTION LINE EASEMENT ACROSS LOT 2 ARNO SUBDIVISION, T 6S R 14W SEC 13 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 2001078 ARNO SUB LOT 2 THAT PORTION LYING INSIDE HOMER CITY LIMITS, KNOWN AS 1145 DIAMOND RIDGE RD, Staff Report 25-37

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster, who provided a summary of his staff report in the packet.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for the Applicant. Katie Kirsis noted that she was the surveyor for the project and made herself available for any questions.

Chair S. Smith then opened the public hearing. With no one coming forward to speak, Chair S. Smith closed the public hearing. He then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Harness questioned why the pedestrian easement was only 20 feet instead of 66 feet similar to the section line easement. Ms. Kirsis stated it's not likely a trail would be constructed through that area, and therefore 20 feet is a reasonable width to reserve for public access.

Commissioner H. Smith asked if the easement would affect what is defined as inside or outside city limits. Ms. Kirsis stated that it wouldn't affect the legal boundaries.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-37 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE VACATION OF THE SECTION LINE EASEMENT ACROSS LOT 2 ARNO SUBDIVISION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE 2025 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, Memorandum PL 25-038

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title. He then opened the floor for Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck. Ms. Wade covered the following items in her presentation:

- Timeline and process of draft plan to date and going forward
- Key elements of the plan
- Review of the top themes from the drafting process and how the hearing draft responds
- Planning Commission's role today

Upon the conclusion of Ms. Wade's presentation, Chair S. Smith opened the public hearing period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, provided written comments on the draft comprehensive plan, recommending revisions to language regarding harbor expansion, support for entrepreneurship, and commitments to the Transportation and Safety Action Plans. She expressed overall support for the ideas but suggested clarifying and strengthening specific language.

Hal Shepherd, representing the Kachemak Bay Watershed Council, supported the improved draft plan, emphasized addressing land development and extraction impacts on climate change, and encouraged using the plan as a foundation for watershed management partnerships.

Michael Jones, city resident, commended the progress of the draft plan, noted his written comments including an AI summary of Commission obligations, and recommended softening the language that appears to create obligations.

Tracy Nordstrom, city resident, thanked the Commission and the consultants for their extensive work. She recommended the Commission forward the draft plan along to City Council and further encouraged the Commission to use this document and cite components of it when new actions are before the Commission. She requested clarification on how Homer plans to court and support potential partners moving forward.

Devony Lehner, city resident, urged inclusion of the Diamond Creek Recreation Area in the Comprehensive Plan, highlighting its importance and recent connections to adjacent lands. She also suggested realizing Homer's potential role in coordinating food distribution during emergencies.

Rick Foster, city resident, urged the Commission to address potable water as a key growth management factor, recommending acknowledgment of the City's role in regional water supply and collection of data on delivery locations. He suggested policy changes included prioritizing water/sewer extensions within city limits, clarifying agreements with Kachemak City, correcting language on page 26, and maintaining the Gateway Business District identity.

Robert Ruffner, Planning Director for the Kenai Peninsula Borough, noted the Borough is reviewing the plan and public input, and encouraged the Commission to continue its work.

With no others coming forward to speak, Chair S. Smith closed the public hearing.

Chair S. Smith called for a 10-minute recess at 8:12 p.m.

Chair S. Smith called the meeting back to order at 8:22 p.m.

The Commission reviewed the document in its entirety. Discussion topics included the following items:

- Current introduction and condensed reflection
- Table of contents and list of appendices
- Gateway Business District presentation and zoning
- Water/Stormwater management and other water supply options
- Diamond Creek Recreation Area plan
- Affordable housing
- Public facilities and services

H. SMITH/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 9:45 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

H. SMITH/BARNWELL MOVED TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers, Memorandum PL 25-040

H. SMITH/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Barnwell was nominated for the position of Vice Chair.

With no other nominations called out, Chair S. Smith declared Commissioner Barnwell re-elected as Vice Chair. Mr. Smith then handed the gavel over to Vice Chair Barnwell.

Vice Chair Barnwell opened the floor for nominations of the Chair.

Commissioner S. Smith was nominated for the position of the Chair.

With no other nominations called out, Vice Chair Barnwell declared Commissioner S. Smith re-elected as Chair.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2025 Planning Commission Calendar
- B. 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Dates & Submittal Deadlines
- C. Memorandum from City Clerk re: Call for the Question & Open Meeting vs Quorum Requirements

Chair S. Smith noted the informational materials included in the packet.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

City Planner Foster thanked everyone for their hard work and great conversations regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER (If Present)

Councilmember Aderhold thanked the Commission for the thoughtful deliberation in regards to the Comprehensive Plan, noting that she agreed with much of what was said.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Venuti opined that the Commission should've been involved in the Comprehensive Plan process from the very beginning. He commended Ms. Wade and Agnew::Beck for a great job in developing the plan.

Commissioner Harness thanked everyone for a great meeting, noting that the Commission worked through a lot of details tonight.

Commissioner S. Smith apologized for his recent absence. He stated he understands the importance of the Comprehensive Plan and that he's hopeful it can be representative of the community. He gave thanks to the Commission and Agnew::Beck.

Commissioner Schneider noted that he's impressed with the Comprehensive Plan and thanked everyone involved in the process.

Commissioner Barnwell thanked Agnew::Beck and City Planner Foster for their extensive work on the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner S. Smith echoed all the sentiments made by the Commission. He suggested the Commission come back to the next meeting with their comments written down and ready to discuss them. He noted that there are unique perspectives and unique voices that make the Comprehensive Plan great.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair S. Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** All meetings

are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. Meetings will adjourn promptly at 9:30 p.m. An extension is allowed by a vote of the Commission.

Zach Pettit, Deputy City Clerk II

Approved: _____