

Session 21-03, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:31 p.m. on January 20, 2021 at Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, via Zoom Webinar. One seat vacant due to resignation.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, PETSKA-RUBALCAVA, BARNWELL, VENUTI AND BENTZ, CONLEY AND SMITH

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Commission met at 5:30 p.m. for a worksession prior to the regular meeting to discussion process for an appeal filed on Zoning Permit 1020-782 and items scheduled for discussion on the regular meeting agenda, towers and .

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the agenda.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI – SO MOVED.

Commissioner Bentz noted that the Public Hearing item was pulled from the agenda by the applicant and inquired if they should amend the agenda.

Deputy City Clerk Krause responded that it would be appropriate.

BENTZ/HIGHLAND– MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA BY REMOVING ITEM A STAFF REPORT 21-05 UNDER PUBLIC HEARING AT THE REQUEST OF THE APPLICANT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. (Amendment) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith inquired if there was any discussion on the agenda as amended.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. (Main) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2021
- B. Decisions and Findings for CUP 21-01, for more than one building containing a permitted principle use at 1308 Lakeshore Drive

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

HIGHLAND/BENTZ - MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

REPORTS

- A. Staff Report 21-04, City Planner's Report

Chair Smith introduced the item and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report to the Commission.

City Planner Abboud reviewed Staff Report 21-04 for the Commission commenting on the following:

- Main Street Sidewalk project costs higher than anticipated
- Welcomed new Commissioner Brad Conley
- Commissioner Barnwell was appointed to the Public Works Campus Task Force
- Adding additional report to the agenda for Task Force updates
- Truncated budget to June 30th working on a new two year fiscal budget starting July 1st
- Lampert Lake parcel
- Good communication processes in place for EDC on projects
- Related EDC goals and projects

Commissioner Smith volunteered to report at the upcoming January 25th City Council meeting.

Chair Smith appreciated the included Zoning Map in the packet.

City Planner Abboud provided a brief explanation of what 35% design meant in construction terms for the Main Street Sidewalk project; the cost of the parcel on Lampert Lake is around \$70,000 for assessments.

Commissioner Bentz provided a summary of the purpose of the Public Works Campus Task Force for the benefit of the new commissioner and requested information on project timelines and identifying that new campus and requested that the Wayfinding RFP comes before the Commission before advertising so they can review it not necessarily to make recommendations or changes.

A brief discussion ensued between staff and commissioners in the expected timelines, locations and input that the commission could possibly provide since there is work being done on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and Storm Water Management Plan for the Public Works Campus and the RFP for the Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Staff Report 21-05, Variance 21-01, to allow relief to Safeway from certain parking lot requirements at 90 Sterling Highway

This item was removed from the agenda for consideration by the applicant prior to the meeting.

PLAT CONSIDERATION

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Staff Report 21-06, Helicopters and tall towers near the hospital

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion on the building of towers in the Medical District and the potential impacts to the properties. He reviewed the report provided by City Scape that included drawings. The following points were noted by staff and commissioners:

- Possibly not allowing towers in the district
- FAA permission and consult on approaches
- Difficult using provided diagram in relation to location, maybe better diagram would help
- Relative distances between approaching aircraft and towers
- Federal regulations apply
- Current application is a 85 foot tower at the Christian Community Church parcel on Bartlett complied with all current regulations
- If a project will cause interference it will not be allowed by FAA so the city as previously done in other instances leans on the FAA to evaluate the potential hazard.
- The color of the tower and lights on a tower may impact air travel
- The impact to the neighboring residential properties

- Tower topping the trees which currently are at heights of 65 feet and what happens when or if the trees grow taller than 85 feet
- New tower for 4g LTE and future towers and installation of 5G will be on a different level

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATION MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for January 11, 2021 City Council Meeting
- B. Letter from Susan Mitchell Re: Coal burning in Urban Residential District
- C. Appointment of New Commissioner – Brad Conley

Chair Smith commented on the information provided in the City Manager's report regarding the changes to the Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan and the award for the new police department. He then asked if the Commission should address the coal burning.

City Planner Abboud responded that he would like to see direction come from City Council however he has it in his list regarding nuisance in residential standards.

Chair Smith commented on the health dynamics of the issue stating that the commission may need to address that issue in the near future.

Commissioner Bentz commented on the opportunity to increase non-motorized transportation on the western library lot trail project. She opined it was great to see properties being connected through the center of Homer, opening them up and being more accessible. She then noted the nexus between the camping report and the personal watercraft items in the City Managers report that Mariner Park was more of the in-state crowd where the fishing hole was more of the out of state crowd and the Commission can assist in long term planning for issues such as enforcement of vehicles on the beach, no wake zones and issues of following the port and harbor rules, etc. in the future.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented on the interesting meeting and worksession and looking forward to the next year.

City Planner Abboud commented on being a part of an internal committee working on sidewalks and trails, such as new subdivisions not having sidewalks and what current regulations exist on developing those amenities. He is hoping that they are able to get a developer to discuss these topics with the committee, since those type of amenities affect the cost of land development. He noted that it would come before the Commission at some later date. Mr. Abboud continued his

comments speaking about the development of an action plan to keep on top of work items accommodating the impacts to the staff and work load. He provided recent examples of staff being pulled to assist in the recent vaccination clinic, the recent appeals and upcoming staff vacations.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Highland welcomed Commissioner Smith back and wanted confirmation that he would be present at the upcoming special meeting.

Chair Smith responded jokingly that he was going to be absent and was hoping that Commissioner Highland would chair that meeting. He then confirmed that he would be at the meeting.

Commissioner Highland then welcomed Commissioner Conley and that it was a nice short meeting.

Commissioner Bentz congratulated the city and the hospital on a successful vaccination event. She then reflected on the worksession and thinking about the Commission taking the time to iron out a fair and easy for the commission to follow. Ms. Bentz stated that the Commission role in the different decisions they make is really important as appointed official with very diverse backgrounds and viewpoints they need to make sure that they all understand the rules and protocols that everyone is supposed to follow believing it makes it a transparent process for everyone involved. She appreciated that the Planning Commission appears to work really well together on addressing planning issues that are facing the community and prioritize what is best for the community as heart and they can have civil discourse and bounce ideas off each other. Ms. Bentz welcomed Commissioner Conley.

Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava welcomed Commissioner Conley and that it was nice to have a full commission again to make decisions and having meaningful discussions. She commented it was nice to see everyone again.

Commissioner Conley thanked everyone for the welcome, that he was looking forward to getting to know everybody and stepping into the role, so was excited and appreciated everyone showing up.

Commissioner Venuti commented that it was an interesting meeting and welcomed Commissioner Conley reciting his memory of his first meeting ending at 11:00 p.m. so he got lucky with a short meeting. Mr. Venuti noted that it was a great way to serve a beautiful community and was very interesting work.

Commissioner Barnwell welcomed Commissioner Conley and to have another voice on the Commission. He expressed that he was very impressed to see city staff working at the vaccination

event over the weekend and the first person he saw was Matt Steffy directing traffic. He was looking forward to working on the Public Works Campus Task Force. He commented growing up in Anchorage and doing the GIS for the City of Anchorage for their new public works campus on Tudor Road. He was very curious where in Homer that a new facility will go especially with Homer being much smaller.

Chair Smith welcomed Commissioner Conley and reminded the commissioners to guard their conversations with the public and each other so they do not disqualify themselves. He echoed the other sentiments on an interesting meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. A Worksession is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. A Special Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held virtually by Zoom Webinar from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska



RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: February 3, 2021