

Session 22-04, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Roberta Highland at 6:32 p.m. on March 16, 2022 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS CHIAPPONE, HIGHLAND, VENUTI, CONLEY, AND BENTZ

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS SMITH AND BARNWELL (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE
CITY CLERK MELISSA JACOBSEN

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

CONLEY/BENTZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was a brief discussion on when it would be appropriate to discuss the section of the minutes regarding the memorandum to City Council.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2022

Vice Chair Highland introduced the item on the Consent Agenda and requested assistance from the Clerk on the process. Deputy City Clerk Krause explained that Commissioner Venuti can request the minutes be moved to the regular agenda.

Vice Chair Highland requested a motion and second.

VENUTI/BENTZ MOVED TO REQUEST THE MINUTES BE MOVED TO THE REGULAR AGENDA.

There was brief clarification where on the regular agenda that the minutes would be placed.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report 22-20, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 22-20 and highlighted the following:

- City Council on Monday passing the Charles Way Special Assessment District
- moving ahead with green infrastructure items
- discussion during the City Council Committee of the Whole regarding the large retail parking with Council being very receptive to changes
- Final stages of working out the permitting software
- Received a few inquiries on the rural residential rezone update
- City project to replace a water transmission line that comes down from the hill
- City Council visioning event – biggest item do far is the restructuring of city departments
 - Julie Engebretsen has been promoted to Economic Development Manager
 - Creating a Building Department
- Bringing forth item at the next meeting regarding tiny homes on chassis as he has received some inquiries and current code does not address them.
- Encouraged a Commissioner to report at the next Council meeting
 - Commissioner Bentz volunteered after brief clarification was provided on the next Council meeting date and time

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Staff Report 22-21, Lloyd Race & Eker Estates Lujan 2022 Replat Preliminary Plat

Vice Chair Highland introduced the item by reading of the title.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 22-21 for the Commission. He commented on the following points:

- Lot 15 A has a long narrow panhandle configuration and can be accessed from Mission Road and Baranof
- City requests for easements for drainage and utilities
- Additional right of way dedication to effect a 40 foot right of way to correct something that was not built to code prior to annexation.

After a brief delay it was determined that there was no applicant present and Vice Chair Highland opened the public comment period.

Mr. Jack Ginnever, neighboring property owner, expressed concerns on the easements referenced for Mission Road and asked about additional ordinances or limitations that may affect his property or others in this area.

City Planner Abboud responded to the concerns of Mr. Ginnever stating that the right of way would not affect any properties outside the proposed actions. He then clarified that the easements would not affect any private lands outside the subject area.

Vice Chair Highland closed the public comment period and opened the floor to questions from the Commission, hearing none, she requested a motion and second.

VENUTI/BENTZ MOVE TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 22-21 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE LLOYD RACE & EKER ESTATES LUJAN 2022 PRELIMINARY PLAT TO SHIFT A COMMON LOT LINE BETWEEN TWO PARCELS RESULTING IN TWO PARCELS OF ROUGHLY FIVE ACRES EACH.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification that staff recommendations should be included in the motion for the record in response to questions from Vice Chair Highland.

VENUTI/BENTZ MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCLUDE STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.DEDICATE A 15 FOOT UTILITY EASEMENT FRONTING RACE ROAD.
2. DEDICATE A 30 FOOT DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ON THE CREEK.
3. DEDICATE A 15 FOOT UTILITY EASEMENT ALONG MISSION ROAD AND BARANOF AVENUE
4. MISSION ROAD APPEARS TO BE 40 FEET WIDE ALONG LOT 1 A. VERIFY THE WIDTH OF MISSION ROAD ALONG LOT 1-A AND DEDICATE ANY ADDITIONAL RIGHT OF WAY NEEDED TO CREATE FORTY FEET OF RIGHT OF WAY FROM CURRENT CENTER OF THE RIGHT OF WAY AS SHOWN ON THE MAP (NOT AS CONSTRUCTED.)

There was no discussion.

VOTE (Amendment) NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

There was no further discussion on the main motion as amended.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Staff Report 22-22, 2022 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Vice Chair Highland introduced the item and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report for the Commission.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 22-22 for the Commission noting the processes to date and next steps.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion on the draft local hazard mitigation plan for the following points:

- Coordination with existing plans such as the Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan
Table 2-3: Existing Plans and reports - Opportunity to incorporate information from or point to these plans in more detail:

Comp Plan: The land use planning process can help drive investments in nearly every type of nature-based solution to natural hazards. Preserving parks and greenways before all remaining land is developed may be most important.

Transportation Plan: Managing flooding and erosion

- Section 3: Hazard Identification Climate Change:

- Add bullet: Introduction of harmful or invasive species, with changing weather patterns and warming creating a change in the migration patterns.
 - If the species have a more prolonged existence in the County, there may also be a greater number of infestation events or a higher value of loss tied to infestation. Some invasive plants have been shown to destabilize soil due to high densities and shallow root systems, negatively impacting nearby buildings and septic systems. Other invasive plant species such as have been known to clog culverts and streams, increasing flooding risk. Utilities may be interrupted by invasive plants, blocking the water intakes of treatment plants and power generation facilities. Marine invasive can be hazardous to port and harbor facilities, including biofouling of encrusting organisms like tunicates, and habitat and bank stabilization issues with European Green Crab.¹

- Page 43. Flooding. Recurrence probability. Address fall flood events- frozen ground with extensive rainfall. Less predictable events with changing climate and weather patterns.

- Section 5: Mitigation Strategy

- 5-2 wrong heading on page 63. Human not financial resources
- Financial resources include:
 - Other External Grants:
 - In addition to applying for hazard mitigation grants, this community could apply for habitat conservation grants, water quality grants, and coastal resilience grants.
 - NOAA's Community-Based Restoration Program
 - National Coastal Resilience Fund
 - Capital Improvement Plan
 - Stormwater Utility Fees and Incentives
 - Clean Water State Revolving Fund (EPA)
 - Incentivizing Private Investment
- Mitigation: Actions might include wetland protection, low impact development, and use of green infrastructure

- Table 5-3: Planning and Policy Resources for Hazard Mitigation

- Add other city zoning code? Or Building Code?
 - One of the most cost-effective ways to safeguard our communities against natural disasters is to adopt and follow hazard-resistant building codes. Not only are casualties

¹ Resource provided by Commission Bentz:

https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/planning/Climate_Adaptation/Section%205.4.6%20-%20Infestation%20and%20Invasive_032521_dfr.pdf

reduced, but the cost of building damage is also reduced during a natural disaster.

Building codes also help communities get back on their feet faster by minimizing indirect costs such as business interruptions and lost income.

- 5.4 Table 5-6: Recommended action Add: Property buyout of wetlands with green infrastructure value
 - Inclusion of the information on earthquakes, expressed concerns on the hillside behind the hospital and then questioned the steep slopes code and if that should be reviewed.

City Planner Abboud responded that they can revisit the code and there is always room for improvement, he reported that he has been working with the Public Works Director/City Engineer on the coastal setback items which fits into the steep slope guidelines and can get more complex but they can have an evaluation done as it plays along with erosion and destabilization. They are better off than most communities in Alaska but not to the degree that California is.

Further discussion on these topics ensued:

- the condition of the Bridge Creek Dam
 - o this has not been spoken of pointedly
 - o not sure of any mitigation proposals if something happened with the dam
- Page 60, Emergency Shelters – the city has several places that are designated as emergency shelters and concerns were raised during previous earthquakes, regarding the use of the schools as an emergency shelter due to possible structural damage. It was noted during the visioning event that more table top exercises should be conducted.
- the amount of valuation of the new police station should be corrected
- Reviewing the document brings forth that the City is involved in many things that can go awry even in their small little town
- additional errors noted on table 4.6 page 60 of the packet

A. Minutes for Regular Meeting March 2, 2022

Vice Chair Highland introduced the items and invited Commissioner Venuti to bring forth his comments on the section of the minutes regarding the memorandum.

Commissioner Venuti expressed that the minutes reflected that not all Commissioners were supportive of building code and he believed that to be incorrect as he did not recall that any Commissioners were against establishing building code.

City Planner Abboud reported that he included the unapproved minutes as an attachment to the memorandum in response to questions on whether City Council has seen the minutes.

Additional comments from the Commission ensued that there was unanimous consent on the implementation of building code but not for establishing a building department.

Deputy City Clerk Krause responding to questions on process stated that she can review the audio and correct the minutes if the Commission believes that they currently do not reflect the action and discussion taken. The Commission can then approve the corrected minutes at the next meeting. Mrs.

Krause confirmed that Commissioner Bentz could include this action in her report to City Council and will forward a copy of the corrected minutes for her use in the report.

Vice Chair Highland requested a motion and second to effect this request.

BENTZ/VENUTI MOVED TO REQUEST THE CLERK REVIEW THE AUDIO OF THE MARCH 2^N MEETING TO CLARIFY THIS TOPIC IN THE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UANNIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report for Feb. 28, 2022
- B. Planning Commission Calendar

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

City Clerk Jacobsen commented that it was nice to see everyone this evening.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Conley complimented Vice Chair Highland on doing a good job.

Commissioner Venuti questioned City Planner Abboud regarding the lack of sidewalks in recent new developments, they have constructed really nice roads but did not put in any sidewalks and he would like to know what can be done to incorporate sidewalks into a subdivision.

City Planner Abboud responded that this was a topic at the Council Visioning event, further stating that currently there are no regulations requiring a sidewalk unless it is identified in the Homer Non-motorized Trails and Transportation Plan (HNMTTP). We require paving urban residential roads. The City would only requires a minimum standard road in others. I would recommend updating the HNMTTP, they can then make connection and determine where they would be best to install and then they would have the rule of law.

Commissioner Venuti responded that it would be nice to develop a ruling on this as it is certainly more expensive to put sidewalks in after the road is built.

City Planner Abboud commented that it was expensive but that is one of the things about figuring out where you want to put sidewalks as there are consequences from the cost to making the street much faster and possibly more dangerous. He compared the speed of driving on a paved road in comparison

to a gravel road. He reemphasized that there is a lot to talk about and consider, and City Council is looking into it.

Commissioner Venuti then wished his friends a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Commissioner Bentz expressed appreciation for the Hazard Mitigation Plan and it is interesting to see the different staff and departments that the planning process engages and it is great for them to see that level of how they can leverage different policies and planning and public works to build resilience to natural hazards and would like to keep in mind nature based solutions and green infrastructure because she thinks a lot of solutions could help with integrated approaches. She then stated that she will not be in attendance for the April 6th meeting as she will be out of town attending a workshop to identify ways in that Communities can identify non-tangible benefits that derive from the natural environments so moving beyond some of the regulating and hazard mitigation things that nature based solutions might provide into some of those more community cultural values like aesthetics and family recreation and just enjoyment of the place we live in.

Vice Chair Highland expressed her appreciation for all the work that is accomplished by the staff.

ADJOURN

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. A worksession is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.



Renee Krause, MMC, Deputy City Clerk II

Approved: April 6, 2022