

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Session 25-07, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Mike Stark at 6:35 p.m. on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL, VENUTI, CONLEY, SCHNEIDER, STARK & H. SMITH

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER S. SMITH (EXCUSED)

**STAFF:** CITY PLANNER FOSTER & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

**CONSULTING:** PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KORT

## **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Acting Chair Stark requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as presented.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

Jan Keiser, city resident, shared her appreciation for the Title 21 presentation during the group's worksession, and more specifically, the "pyramid of discretion." She stated that she's hopeful the consultants will reach out to surveyors and engineers in regards to the development of Title 21. She advocated for reconciliation among the various documents that relate to development in Homer, adding that annotations might be helpful in Title 21.

Larry Slone, city resident, proclaimed his fascination with the "pyramid of discretion." He questioned where zone conversions would fall into the "pyramid of discretion," and what the Planning Commission's role looks like for these situations in the future.

## **RECONSIDERATION**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2025

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

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS**

- A. Kenai Peninsula Borough Safe Streets 4 All Presentation and Q&A

Acting Chair Stark introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Malia Walters and Ryan Goentzel. Together, they covered the following in their presentation:

- The need for the Safe Streets 4 All Project
- Crash trends from 2018-2022
- High Injury Network
- Community outreach
- Program and process recommendations
- Strategies and solutions for the Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Proven safety countermeasures
- Priority project locations and steps to identify final project locations
- Next steps for the project

### **REPORTS**

- A. City Planner's Report, Staff Report 25-17

City Planner Foster reviewed his staff report included in the packet, covering the following:

- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Special Meeting scheduled for April 29, 2025
- Next Regular Meeting is May 7, 2025
- Next Commissioner Report to Council on April 28, 2025 (Commissioner Barnwell)

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. Ordinance 25-XX, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Amending Homer City Code 21.10.030 Amending the Homer City Zoning Map to Rezone a Portion of the Rural Residential (RR) Zoning District to General Commercial 1 (GC1) Zoning District.

Staff Report PL 25-018 as backup

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

Acting Chair Stark then opened the floor for the Applicant. Katie Kirsis noted that she was the surveyor that helped prepare the rezone application. She made herself available for any questions.

Acting Chair Stark opened the public hearing period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, shared her support for the rezone application. She pointed out an oddity in the application, recognizing that access is granted from Ocean Drive through parcel one to access parcel two. She inferred that someone will need to figure out how to provide legal access to the second lot in the future, questioning whether or not an easement is currently in place.

With no other members of the public wishing to provide testimony, Acting Chair Stark closed the public hearing period. He then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner H. Smith echoed Ms. Keiser's concerns, adding that he thought the two parcels were one lot altogether. He questioned Ms. Kirsis whether or not there is a dedicated easement from Ocean Drive. Ms. Kirsis stated that she hasn't seen any recorded documents indicating such, but that both lots are owned by the same LLC. She added that Seabright Surveying would be recommending granting a shared access easement across the two lots. She stated that legal access is provided through Lampert Lane, whereas physical access is from Ocean Drive. Mr. Smith highlighted that if the ordinance were adopted, the City would be providing access to a General Commercial 1 lot through a Rural Residential area. Ms. Kirsis noted that this specific issue would be addressed at the zoning permit level.

With no other pending questions or comments from the Commission, Acting Chair Stark requested a motion and second.

SCHNEIDER/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 25-018 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL OF THE ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO REZONE A PORTION OF THE RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL 1 ZONING DISTRICT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

- B. Ordinance 25-XX, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Amending Homer City Code 21.10.030 Amending the Homer City Zoning Map to Rezone a Portion of the Rural Residential (RR) Zoning District to Residential Office (RO) Zoning District.

Staff Report PL 25-019 as backup

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

Acting Chair Stark then opened the floor for the Applicant.

Larry Slone introduced himself as the Applicant, and noted that the wetlands designation has been removed by the Army Corps of Engineers. He provided that ongoing change and growth in Homer prompted his rezone application. He claimed that this parcel is suitable for rental properties, but not suitable for family/upscale residences, emphasizing various audible disturbances that occur on a daily basis. He noted that the current zoning designation permits the construction of a chicken farm or a trailer park, reasoning that these uses are

not best fit for the area. He provided that this property is isolated and surrounded by other uses which are better suited for Homer at this time.

Acting Chair Stark opened the public hearing period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, shared her support for the rezone application, reiterating the points made by City Planner Foster and Mr. Slone. She urged the Commission to think about access when development time comes for these two properties, stating that East End Road doesn't need anymore driveways directly onto it. She added that while there may not be wetlands on this lot, there are drainage issues that need to be addressed during the development process.

Travis Brown shared that he was representing Moore & Moore Services and Blackwell Pump, the two businesses to the east of this lot. He added both parties are in support of the rezone application, and that one of these property owners plans to apply for a similar rezone in the future.

With no other members of the public wishing to provide testimony, Acting Chair Stark closed the public hearing period. He then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner H. Smith agreed with Ms. Keiser regarding driveways entering onto East End Road. He noted that he's in support of this rezone given that the parcel is nestled between two properties that are supposedly Rural Residential, but are in fact businesses.

Commissioner Conley voiced his support for the rezone application, reiterating the two adjacent lots that are being used in this capacity.

Acting Chair Stark commented that the rezone application makes sense from his perspective.

With no other pending questions or comments from the Commission, Acting Chair Stark requested a motion and second.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 25-019 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL OF THE ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO REZONE A PORTION OF THE RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT TO RESIDENTIAL OFFICE ZONING DISTRICT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PLAT CONSIDERATION**

### **A. Staff Report PL 25-020 Cooper Subdivision 2025 Addition Replat Preliminary Plat**

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

Acting Chair Stark then opened the floor for the Applicant.

Mark Hennick (Applicant) noted that the property was not the highest and best use when he purchased it, and as a result of that it was an extreme fire hazard. He added that the replat is a way to comply with the law. He stated that the water issue has been addressed and permitted by the City to bring in a 3-inch main from the new main on Alder Lane, providing that this will gravity feed the third floor fire suppression system that's currently in place.

Acting Chair Stark opened the public comment period. With no members of the public wishing to speak, Mr. Stark closed the public comment period.

Acting Chair Stark then opened the floor to questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner H. Smith questioned whether or not water had been installed on Alder Lane. City Planner Foster informed him that both city water and sewer are available on Alder Lane.

With no other pending questions or comments from the Commission, Acting Chair Stark requested a motion and second.

H. SMITH/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-20 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE COOPER SUBDIVISION 2025 ADDITION REPLAT PRELIMINARY PLAT, WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE ALDER LANE PROPERTY: LOT 2A ABANDON THE CURB BOX OPERATING THE ABANDONED WATER SERVICE OFF OF HILLVIEW COURT.
2. NOTE 2. SHALL BE CHANGED TO READ FRONT 15' FOR THE UTILITY EASEMENT.
3. INDICATE EXISTING UTILITIES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSET.

Motion carried.

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Title 21 Update and Audit Discussion – If needed

Acting Chair Stark introduced the item by reading of the title. The Commission discussed the following items:

- Zoned area specifically for tiny homes
- Zoning height restrictions in Homer
- The concept of reducing minimum lot size
- Defining “livable” and other similar broad terms within the Comprehensive Plan

## **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

## **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Doug Baily, city resident, questioned why the Comprehensive Plan is urging the support of a political body with respect to decisions of that body which are presently undisclosed and may or may not be taken in the future. He referred the Commission to the portion of the Comprehensive Plan that aims to continue supporting the South Kenai Peninsula Hospital Service Area Board, adding that he and many others view that as a political endorsement that doesn't belong in the Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, he questioned how a plan that's supposed to reflect the majority of the views of the community can support a program which was in front of the voters of Homer just a few months ago before being soundly defeated. He added that he's having a hard time understanding why the Comprehensive Plan tends to reach out beyond the city boundaries and encompass a project which is not a city function.

Larry Slone, city resident, thanked the Commission for passing his rezone application. Addressing concerns brought up during the discussion, he noted that the plan is to construct a culvert and ditch to assist with drainage on the lot. He clarified that there is a mutual use driveway on the property, so there wouldn't be a need for another driveway directly onto East End Road.

Jan Keiser, city resident, spoke to the Safety Action Plan, voicing that it should be renamed the "Transportation Safety Action Plan." Speaking to the notice of funding for additional funding for Safe Streets 4 All, she noted the money can be used for planning or construction. She shared that in order for a project to be eligible for Safe Streets 4 All funding it must be on the Safety Action Plan, in which the City of Homer is currently partners in the Borough-wide Safety Action Plan. She continued, reasoning that the City needs to have projects that it's interested in that are not in the Borough's Safety Action Plan in order to submit for funding. She suggested devising a list of recommended high priority projects for Homer, and requesting the Borough to include that list as a supplement to their Safety Action Plan.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE STAFF**

Deputy City Clerk Pettit commended Acting Chair Stark on a great job filling in for the Chair, and noted that it was a good meeting.

City Planner Foster thanked Acting Chair Stark for filling in this evening. He thanked the Commission for their hard work.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER (If Present)**

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner H. Smith noted that there's a lot of work that needs to be done with the Title 21 Rewrite, adding that the Commission needs to be on top of it if they're going to be productive in an hour/two-hour time slot. He shared his appreciation for all the public input at the meeting tonight, and further shared his appreciation for all the applicants being in attendance at tonight's meeting. He thanked the Commission.

Commissioner Venuti questioned Ms. Keiser if the Safe Streets 4 All funding was federal or state. Ms. Keiser inserted that the funding is state funding. Mr. Venuti provided the reason for his question, noting that part of the overall plan is for the Commission to develop adoptability codes and develop an inspection process. He added that he had heard rumors that the federal funding was no longer available. He suggested that the Planning Department and Planning Commission needs to start thinking about how to achieve that without federal funding.

Commissioner Barnwell stated that the biggest point is that there needs to be more coordination between the City of Homer, the Department of Transportation, and the Borough. He added that the Commission needs to be on the same page in terms of the Comprehensive Plan in order to coordinate what's important and define broader terms.

Commissioner Conley thanked Acting Chair Stark for filling in tonight.

Commissioner Schneider thanked Acting Chair Stark for filling in tonight. He echoed Commissioner H. Smith's comments regarding the difficulty of tackling Title 21. He noted that he would be absent for the late April and early May meetings.

Acting Chair Stark thanked the public for their participation tonight. He also thanked City Staff and his fellow Commissioners.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Acting Chair Stark adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** A Worksession is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. A Special Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 5:30 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.

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Zach Pettit, Deputy City Clerk II

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_