

PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 1, 2022

Session 22-09, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on June 1, 2022 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

**PRESENT:** COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL, VENUTI, SMITH, CHIAPPONE, BENTZ, HIGHLAND

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER CONELY (EXCUSED)

**STAFF:** CITY PLANNER ABBOD  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

HIGHLAND/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

Bradley Parsons, city resident, thanked the Commissioners for the work that they do recognizing at times how hard that work can be. He commented on placement and inclusion of sidewalks in the proposed connection to Fairview. He then provided recommendation on providing sidewalks and aesthetics noting that it is a heavily used pedestrian way. He further commented on the inappropriate design for pedestrian travel along Soundview, which according to the non-motorized plan on the map was to be separated pathway. What resulted was an area that is nowhere near wide enough and in winter is non-existent. Mr. Parsons stated that Soundview Avenue has become a shortcut to the medical center and believes that the same thing will occur when the Fairview Avenue connection is completed and urged the city to build accordingly.

**RECONSIDERATION**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of May 18, 2022

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Commissioner Bentz noted that the minutes under adjournment reflected the next meeting incorrectly.

It was noted that the Clerk can make that minor correction.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

**PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS**

## **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Staff Report 22-39, City Planner's Report**

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 22-39. He noted the following:

- Ordinances approved by City Council at the May 23, 2022 meeting
- Training has been scheduled for the new permitting software
- CUP reform
- Housing issues and the lack thereof of affordable housing problems
- Hazard Mitigation Plan will be presented to Council for approval
- A Presentation will be provided on the rezone
- Recent EDC Meeting and upcoming meeting schedule and vacancy

City Planner Abboud requested volunteers to make the report to City Council.

Chair Smith volunteered for the June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

City Planner Abboud provided information on the minor changes that were made to the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### **B. Memorandum from Chair Smith re: Mayor's Roundtable Meeting with Advisory Body Chairpersons.**

Chair Smith reported to the Commission that they briefly described challenges that each body is or has been addressing as follows:

- Port & Harbor – Housing for employees and reviewing the Spit Comprehensive Plan
- Library – Information Technology separate from Library Services, educating homeless people and providing educational platforms for Homer.
- PARCAC – ADA upgrades to trails and pathways
- EDC – encouraging Homer to grow wisely facilitating new businesses commercial and private but keep Homer, Homer

Chair Smith reported that Mayor Castner and Julie Engebretsen attended and Ms. Engebretsen who is now the Economic Development Manager cited that it is believed the Planning Commission was that there is a wall at the top of Baycrest and they only support certain things coming in. He further reported to the group that the Commission is working in the green infrastructure and storm water planning. Some of the items that may come forward to the Commission is a recommendation to amend city code to allow employee housing.

Chair Smith responded to questions on the following:

- parking study
- challenges to find housing for short term summer employees

City Planner Abboud facilitated questions and answers regarding to spit parking study, resulting information and where the Commission could review that report.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**PLAT CONSIDERATION**

A. Staff Report 22-40, Lillian Walli Estate 2022 Replat Preliminary Plat

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to the City Planner.

Commissioner Venuti declared he had a conflict.

HIGHLAND/BENTZ MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER VENUTI HAD A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Commissioner Venuti stated that he is expecting remuneration for services on this particular property, has a business relationship with the applicant that will exceed allowable limits.

VOTE. YES. CHIAPPONE, HIGHLAND, BENTZ, BARNWELL, SMITH

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti muted his connection and departed the meeting (room).

City Planner provided a summary of Staff Report 22-40.

There was no applicant present.

Chair Smith opened the floor for public comment seeing no public present wishing to comment he closed the public comment period and opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

BENTZ/HIGHLAND MOVE TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 22-40 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE LILLIAN WALLI ESTATE 2022 REPLAT PRELIMINARY PLAT

There was a brief discussion on the small amount of wetland, noted a drainage easement which will require development in accordance with regulations.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti returned to the meeting.

B. Staff Report 22-41, Yah Sure Preliminary Plat

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to the City Planner.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 22-41.

There was no applicant present.

Chair Smith opened the floor for public comment seeing no public present wishing to comment he closed the public comment period and opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 22-41 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE YAH SURE PRELIMINARY PLAT

Commissioner Highland noted a correction on page 28 of the packet, item G is missing the B for block number. She then questioned the lot line that is being removed. City Planner Abboud provided that it may not have been a good copy and that is why the vacated lot line is not being depicted.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. City Manager's Report for May 23, 2022
- B. Planning Commission Calendar 2022
- C. Public Comment Received re: Installation of Sidewalk and Traffic Calming Measures Along Fairview Avenue as Construction Occurs to Connect to Eric Lane.

Chair Smith noted the informational materials provided.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification what the “fast forward” of the Comp Plan would look like for the Commission. He stating that typically they would begin review in 2025. It will be setting the stage to look at staging things for the future. Noting such items regarding the housing issues such as density, building taller, etc.

Commissioner Bentz responded that it was a good idea, since it took them at least two years, she then commented that it would be ideal to have Council and the Commissions review the different planning components to make sure they all work together.

City Planner Abboud provided additional information on working with Public Works Department regarding the permitting, NMT, drainage, etc. It has been challenging and very enlightening on how it all intersects with the overall aspect.

Commissioner Barnwell commented on spending two years on the last review of the plan and questioned if that was the expected time frame for the Fast Forward plan.

City Planner Abboud stated that it will depend, noting the last time they did it in house, it did not have the public commentary, and will be contingent on funding availability and staff time.

Commissioner Bentz suggested that it would be great to have that road map in order to facilitate review and worksession with the commissions and that would provide some directive.

Discussion ensued on the benefits of these planning documents, obtaining funding, Council decisions to implement, as a city what can be done to address traffic calming measures, implementing the design guidelines that are available and enforcing them; sometimes paving and straightening out a road encourages speed; Fairview Avenue project will be happening this season and is dependent on Public Works Department; how can the public be involved in a project and have their say before a project is started; current progress on addressing concerns expressed by public comment; planning department not implementing visionary planning is a missed opportunity and what was done in the past which set the basis and developed these plans and it is time to update those plans; resulting plans will require amendments to city code which over time ends up in a “dirty” city code; how things get worked out is that it must be included in the Comp Plan and if it is not in there then they cannot do it; referencing past projects that did not have green corridors or sidewalks, etc.; establishing set standard requirements in developments; referencing title 22 when a subdivision agreement is entered; the comp plan shows what the future will hold and as an investor they should know that; the Commission can recommend what items should be in the comp plan before it is ratified.

Commissioner Bentz commented that she believed the Comp Plan was a guiding document and flexible while the City Code is more concrete.

City Planner Abboud commented that the 2018 Comp Plan has a lot of things in it, commenting that there is room for improvement. There is still opportunity as they get different demands as time goes on.

Chair Smith noted the brochure as a result of the Public Works Task Force and expressed appreciation for the tsunami brochure.

Commissioner Barnwell recognized the work of Donna Aderhold and Caroline Venuti and Elena Suleiman on the tsunami brochure coming forward.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

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

Deputy City Clerk Krause provided the last name for the person Commissioner Barnwell was thinking of that worked for DGGS and expressed her appreciation for a good meeting.

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

Commissioner Chiappone commented that he appreciated the Tsunami hazard work, it was very eye opening.

Commissioner Highland expressed her appreciation for the work done by City Planner Abboud and Deputy City Clerk Krause and advised everyone to watch for fried brain syndrome in this weather.

Chair Smith expressed his appreciation for a great meeting.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, June 15, 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.



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RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ July 20, 2022 \_\_\_\_\_