

Session 21-02, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Roberta Highland at 5:41 p.m. on January 6, 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

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER SMITH (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Commission met at 5:30 p.m. for a Special meeting prior to the regular meeting to address a Motion for Continuance for an appeal filed on Zoning Permit 1020-782. No worksession was held prior to this regular meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Vice Chair Highland requested a motion to approve the agenda.

VENUTI/BARNWELL – MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

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 December 2, 2020

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS**

- A. Main Street Sidewalk Project. Janette Keiser, PE, Director of Public Works/Acting City Engineer

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava introduced the item by reading of the title and invited Public Works Director Keiser to speak to the Commission.

Public Works Director Keiser provided a brief update on the design process for the Main Street Sidewalk project noting the following:

- Each design represented a singular 5 foot wide sidewalk on the west side of the road
- Each design reflected curb and gutter with connections to the Main Street Storm drain
- One design shows a 4 foot shoulder on the east side , which could be paved and striped to allow a bike path
- The intent is to have the possible bike path as an alternative and depending on the pricing when the bids come in and funding they could construct the project with the alternative
- Requested input from the Commission on which design they would prefer to see and a recommendation to Council.
- Project will be presented to the EDC, PARC Advisory Commissions and City Council
- If all aligns and funding source is found it is planned to have this project ready for the 2021 Construction season

Commissioner Venuti inquired about issuing the invitation to bid without the cost of the project.

Public Works Director Keiser responded that once they reach 65% design they would have a better idea on the overall costs of the project and would not issue an Invitation to Bid until the funding source was secured.

Commissioner Bentz expressed excitement at the prospect of the construction of this project since it has been a priority and in the CIP for such a long time for the city. She then noted the links to the various plans that the city has and appreciated the presentation on this project and similar ones being considered by the city as time goes on.

A brief discussion ensued between the Commission facilitated by the City Planner and Public Works Director on a working group established to update the Transportation Plan; updates to the Homer Non-motorized Transportation Plan and relevant city code language and the likelihood of the southern portion of Main Street getting a sidewalk while it may be needed as badly as the upper portion.

## **REPORTS**

### **A. Staff Report 21-01, City Planner's Report**

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava introduced the item and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report to the Commission.

City Planner Abboud reviewed Staff Report 21-01 for the Commission commenting on the following:

- Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan Committee
- Lampert Lake and property conservation and public use easements
- Donation for improvements to Woodard Creek Nature Trail in Karen Hornaday Park
- Salmon Sisters leasing old Auction Block facility on the Spit
- City is still under Code Red so limiting the number of staff in office
- Significant development is being proposed in the center of town and will be coming before the Commission

Commissioner Highland volunteered to report at the upcoming January 11<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **A. Staff Report 21-02, Conditional use Permit (CUP) 2021-01, for more than one building containing a permitted principle use at 1308 Lakeshore Drive**

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava introduced the item by reading of the title and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 21-02. Upon reaching the section of his report dealing with Zoning he stated that it would be a good time for any Commissioners to declare any conflicts.

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava declared she had a conflict.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER PETSKA-RUBALCAVA HAD A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava provided details on her conflict that she participated in the design of this project.

VOTE. YES. HIGHLAND, BENTZ, BARNWELL, VENUTI.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Petska- Rubalcava turned the meeting over to Commissioner Highland, turned her camera and mic off and did not participate in the proceedings.

City Planner Abboud continued providing a summary of Staff Report 21-02.

Acting Chair Highland invited the applicant to present to the Commission.

Stephanie and Forrest Greer, Applicant, Mrs. Greer stated they did not have a presentation but was available for questions. She requested clarification on the RV parking.

City Planner Abboud explained that city code does not allow the use of RV as housing for employees.

Acting Chair Highland opened the Public Hearing, after confirming with the Clerk if there were members of the audience wishing to provide testimony and hearing there were none, she closed the public hearing, opening the floor to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Barnwell requested clarification from the Applicant on the need for a RV space.

Mrs. Greer explained that the business is currently seasonal and as is common knowledge there is a lack of housing opportunities in the summer in Homer. They were going to use it as employee housing. She added that they initially intended to have two RV spaces one for Manager and the second for employee housing however they were told then they had to apply for an RV park permit so they downsized to the one space. Due to the seasonal nature of the business it did not make sense to build employee housing. They will need to review and adjust their plans and move forward.

City Planner Abboud stated that he was not prepared to analyze that at this time in response to Commissioner Barnwell's question regarding tiny homes.

Acting Chair Highland inquired about the requirements for a storm water plan seeing that the proposed project is on Beluga Lake. She expressed concerns on the transfer of dirt and debris from the project into the lake during construction and if the Commission can add requirements to accommodate that.

City Planner Abboud noted that the Commission could request additional requirements but reminded the Commission of the other activities that were allowed on the water such as internal combustion engines and that it was not a salmon stream. He then noted that the project would have to trigger additional requirements such as additional impervious surface or movement of large quantities of dirt.

Acting Chair Highland hearing no further questions from the Commission requested a motion.

VENUTI/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 20-02 AND APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 21-01 WITH FINDINGS 1-10 AND CONDITIONS 1 AND 2.

CONDITION 1: OCCUPANCY OF AN RV IS NOT PERMITTED

CONDITION 2: OUTDOOR LIGHTING MUST BE DOWNLIT PER HCC 21.59.030 AND THE COMMUNITY DESIGN MANUAL.

There was a brief discussion on amending the motion to require a development activity plan. There were no amendments offered.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava returned to the meeting.

## **PLAT CONSIDERATION**

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Staff Report 21-03, Main Street Sidewalk Project**

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava introduced the item and requested input from City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reminded the Commission on the information provided by Ms. Keiser and that they did not really have any discussion at that time. He can keep it on his City Planner's Report for the future or Commissioner Highland can report at City Council.

Commissioner Highland stated that a recommendation from Commission was requested and opined that they should at minimum discuss the options presented. She continued that normally they make a motion then discuss.

Deputy City Clerk Krause stated that the item had been introduced, which essentially put on the floor for discussion.

Discussion ensued on the additional impervious surface added to the project if the alternative design with the east side paved shoulder is used; creation of additional storm water runoff; the steepness of the road; building in resistant features to address storm water management; consideration that this is the primary route by emergency vehicles which would add safety concerns with non-motorized transportation; implementing the use of green infrastructure.

City Planner Abboud will forward the section of the minutes to Ms. Keiser so that the concerns of the Commission can be addressed as the design/project progresses.

### **INFORMATION MATERIALS**

- A. City Manager's Report for December 14, 2020 City Council Meeting
- B. Letter (Email) from Jason Pinsky dated December 28, 2020 re: Coal Burning

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava noted the materials provided and inquired if there were any comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Highland commented that the City Manager's Report was very thorough and interesting and expressed concerns with the burning of coal and if this would be an issue that the Commission could address.

City Planner Abboud stated that he would prefer to get direction from the City Council on this issue.

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

### **COMMENTS OF THE STAFF**

Deputy City Clerk Krause complimented Commissioners Petska-Rubalcava and Highland on conducting the meetings tonight stating that they conducted efficient and very effective meetings.

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Highland commented that they had very interesting meetings tonight. They are lucky to be back and not be arguing, compared to the phase that the United States seems to be going through right now. Thank you everyone.

Commissioner Barnwell complimented the City Planner on his report and appreciated the graphs, information and presentation from Ms. Keiser on the project. It was a pretty peaceful meeting compared to some very eventful crazy days. He then wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Venuti commented that it was an interesting meeting and complimented Commissioner Highland on conducting a great meeting as well as Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava. He then noted what happened earlier in the day in Washington, D.C. opining that it was a complete embarrassment. Commissioner Venuti recalled that as a youngster he joined the Marine Corps., and swore to uphold the Constitution for the betterment of America and what he

saw was not what he worked for and only hoped that the country can move past this. He continued stating that perhaps more rational thinking may occur in Washington, D.C.

Vice Chair Petska-Rubalcava thanked Commissioner Venuti for his service.

Commissioner Bentz apologized for the earlier internet issues. She commented that some days are better for virtual meetings than others. She commented that if they have another special meeting it would be beneficial if the Commissioners can review city code regarding the appeal process stating that she found it very helpful to her today especially if they are going to work on the Commission's role in determining procedures for appeal process. It may be a good place to start. She expressed excitement on the Main Street Sidewalk project moving forward and if there was a group or task force working on related issues around stormwater planning or non-motorized trails and things like that it would be great to see collaborative efforts.

Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava commented that she appreciated the Commission bearing with her internet issues earlier today, and Commissioner Highland willingness to step in during the Special meeting and again during the Public Hearing tonight. She hoped that everyone had really great holidays and a great start to the New Year despite today. She expressed her appreciation for all the work that City Planner Abboud and Deputy City Clerk Krause do to make these meetings run smoothly.

#### ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. A Worksession is scheduled 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.



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RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: January 20, 2021