

Session 21-13, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:35 p.m. on May 19, 2021 at Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, via Zoom Webinar. One Seat remains vacant.

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

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER CONLEY (EXCUSED)

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

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Smith 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.

Commissioner Highland joined the meeting at 6:39 p.m. after a brief technical issue was resolved.

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

**RECONSIDERATION**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of May 5, 2021
- B. Decisions and Findings for Conditional Use Permit CUP 21-04 to expand the Safeway grocery store at 90 Sterling Highway
- C. Dedication of Roadway easement for Easy Street on City Properties

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

VENUTI/BENTZ – MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON- OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

## **PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS**

### **REPORTS**

#### **A. Staff Report 21-29, City Planner's Report**

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and requested City Planner Abboud to present his report to the Commission.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 21-29 for the Commission. He commented on the Ordinance 21-27 waiving connection to city sewer, noting that he requested to see a map of the properties that this would affect. He reported that it was nice to hear a compliment from a visiting company on their signage and to know that the city is doing right with the sign code.

Chair Smith offered to write a written report as he was not sure that he would be able to provide a verbal report.

Commissioner Bentz asked about the discussion on trees and shrubbery as replacement, and including species that can assist with erosion and drainage issues that are non-native species since there are so few native species; then developing a list that can be distributed to developers as a preferred recommendation.

A brief discussion ensued on landscaping requirements in or near parking lots and easements next to roadways.

#### **B. Public Works Campus Task Force Report – Commissioner Barnwell**

Commissioner Barnwell provided an update on the Task Force progress noting the following:

- Two council members opposed the use of funds
- Task Force members agreed that there is a risk but that risk cannot be quantify
- Some Council members felt that they are under the same risk and nothing has happened
- Reviewing potential sites since the opportunity may not be available in the near future
- The Public Works Facility is a critical infrastructure and provides essential services to all departments within the city
- The existing facility is old and really needs to be updated even outside of the risk of tsunami

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **A. Staff Report 21-30, Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 21- 05 to expand a deck for outdoor seating at the Harbor Grill restaurant at 4262 Homer Spit Road.**

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title. He invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 21-30.

Chair Smith confirmed with the Clerk that an applicant was not present.

Chair Smith opened the public hearing. Seeing no one in the public wishing to provide testimony, he closed the public hearing.

City Planner Abboud noted for the record that they do have the application signed by the City Manager as the owner of the property, it just did not make the packet.

Chair Smith opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion and answered questions on the issue of Spit parking; while it may not be too much of an issue with this project, it still will reduce the availability of parking.

Chair Smith, hearing no further questions, requested a motion.

VENUTI/BENTZ MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 21-30 AND APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 21-05 WITH FINDINGS ONE THROUGH TEN.

There was a brief discussion on the economic reason for doing this project.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report 21-31, Draft resolution recommending adoption of the updated Community Design Manual to the City Council.

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and requested City planner to provide his report.

City Planner About reviewed Staff Report 21-31 for the Commission noting the amendments that were made to the document.

Chair Smith opened the public hearing. He noted there was no public wishing to provide testimony and closed the public hearing, then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion and provided responses to questions on the following:

- The recent experience regarding a connex and how this issue would fit into the Community Design Manual.
- Having a public conversation on the use of connex in Homer as homes.
- Providing more examples in the CDM may not be accepted in the future as what is acceptable changes over time.
- The CDM is used or applied in the CBD when a CUP is triggered and a zoning permit application does not trigger the CDM.

- Review of the CDM our recent project such as the police station does not use the recommendations outlined in the CDM.
- The difference between a large rectangular building with a flat roof and a small rectangular building with a flat roof relates to scale in comparison to existing buildings.

Further discussion ensued on the use of connexes as prefabricated homes and tiny homes, review of the CDM to make sure that those discussions happen, and potentially scheduling a worksession to discuss the design and exterior of those as homes.

BENTZ/BARNWELL MOVE TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED STAFF REVISIONS TO THE DESIGN REVIEW GOALS AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW SECTIONS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

BENTZ/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 21-31 AND FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE AMENDED COMMUNITY DESIGN MANUAL.

There was a brief discussion on including, not in the CDM, but a list of common plants or site assessment for landscaping for the homeowner or developer to access as a resource.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PLAT CONSIDERATION**

A. Staff Report 21-32 Skyline Drive Subdivision No. 7A Preliminary Plat

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and yielded the floor to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 21-32.

Mr. Gary Nelson, Surveyor and representing the applicant was available for questions.

Chair Smith opened the public comment period and seeing there were no members of the public present he opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Chair Smith requested a motion having no questions from the Commission for the Applicant or City Planner.

VENUTI/BENTZ MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 21-32 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENT: INCLUDE A PLAT NOTE STATING PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD CONTACT THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRIOR TO ANY ON SITE DEVELOPMENT OTR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO OBTAIN THE MOST CURRENT WETLAND DESIGNATION (IF ANY). PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL REQUIRED LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PERMITS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Staff report 21-33 Planning Commission Election of Vice Chair

Chair Smith introduced the item and opened the floor to nominations from the Commission.

Commissioner Bentz nominated Commissioner Barnwell.

Commissioner Barnwell declined the nomination stating that he did not have enough experience and nominated Commissioner Bentz as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Bentz declined noting the difficulty in conducting a meeting, and she is has served as Vice Chair before.

Commissioner Venuti nominated Commissioner Highland.

Commissioner Highland responded that she was willing to serve as Vice Chair until August.

Chair Smith requested the Clerk to perform a roll call vote.

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

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. Manager's Report for April 26, 2021 City Council Meeting
- B. Kenai Peninsula Borough Notice of Decisions (None received)
- C. Planning Commission Calendar

Chair Smith opened the floor to questions or comments from the Commission on the informational materials. There were none. He then asked if City Planner Abboud had any comments on the calendar.

City Planner Abboud provided a review and status of upcoming meetings and encouraged the Commission to submit any topics that they think would be good worksession matters.

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

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

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented that it was an interesting meeting with a variety of topics.

City Planner Abboud stated that he has attempted to provide a bit more thorough review of the CUP applications, focusing on the alignment with City Code and the Comp Plan.

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

Commissioner Highland thanked everyone and reminded the Commission that they needed to recruit another Commissioner.

Commissioner Bentz commented on the CUP reports and stated that she appreciates the mapping or diagraming that the Planning department provides since it assists in visualizing what is going on, even though they read the reports, it helps to have those maps for illustrative purposes.

Commissioner Venuti thanked Commissioner Highland for stepping up, and expressed his appreciation for the City Planner and the Clerk.

Commissioner Barnwell commented on his appreciation for having the added documentation for the CUP application, especially maps and GIS information; the better in his mind. He echoed his appreciation for the Planning Department and Clerk.

Chair Smith echoed his appreciation for the Planning Department and working through the COVID restrictions, dealing with absences and remote working schedules. There has not been a hiccup on their end, which shows the leadership in the Planning Department and the clerical leadership by our Clerk. He additionally expressed his appreciation and honor of working with the Commissioners, recognizing their volunteerism on this commission and other groups. He announced that he may have some upcoming time away from the Commission in June and July for family medical reasons, but if he is able to attend via Zoom he plans to do that.

#### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. Next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. A worksession is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. All

PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 19, 2021

BOOK 20 - PAGE | 101

meetings 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  
RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: June 2, 2021