

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-17, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on October 15th, 2025 in the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HARNESS, H. SMITH, S. SMITH, VENUTI, & WALKER

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL & SCHNEIDER (BOTH EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER FOSTER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER GROSS, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR KORT & DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair S. Smith read the supplemental items into the record. He then requested a motion and second to approve the agenda as amended.

H. SMITH/HARNESS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Penelope Haas commented regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the Title 21 Rewrite, stating that public feedback on the Comprehensive Plan indicated the Plan was slightly misaligned with public input. She encouraged the Commission to ensure that recommended code changes align with community feedback. Ms. Haas noted that a large-scale survey conducted by Agnew::Beck identified the community's top three priorities as affordable housing, year-round employment, and open space.

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2025
- B. Decisions and Findings CUP 25-02, 160 Crossman Ridge Road

HARNESS/H. SMITH MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

REPORTS

A. City Planner's Report, Staff Report 25-45

City Planner Foster provided a summary of his staff report in the packet, noting the following:

- Title 21 Zoning Code Rewrite Update
 - Public Open House on **November 6, 2025** at Kenai Peninsula College
- Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **November 5, 2025**
- Next Commission report to Council on **October 27, 2025** (Commissioner H. Smith)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. W.R. Benson 2025 Replat, Staff Report 25-48

Chair S. Smith 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.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for the Applicant.

Bill Certica noted that he was in attendance to represent the property owner and made himself available to answer any questions.

Chair S. Smith then opened the public comment period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, noted that she has no problems with moving the eastern property line. She encouraged the Commission to acknowledge the strip development that's starting to take place on the corner of Main Street and the Sterling Highway. She stated that the fence encroachment should not only be depicted but also addressed. Citing traffic concerns, she reasoned that the plat should show the driveway off Main Street.

With no other members of the public wishing to comment, Chair S. Smith closed the public comment period. He then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner S. Smith questioned if Item B. from the staff report should be included as one of staff's comments, highlighting that Item A. and Item B. differ from each other, but that only one is included as a comment under staff recommendations. City Planner Foster clarified that Item A. on page 15 corresponds with comment 1 whereas Item B. corresponds to comment 2.

HARNESS/VENUTI MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO GO BACK TO PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair S. Smith re-opened the public comment period.

Jerry Johnson noted that he was the Applicant with Johnson Surveying and made himself available to answer any questions.

Chair S. Smith then re-closed the public comment period and resumed with the comments and questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Harness asked if it was appropriate to provide comments about including the fence encroachment and the driveway from Main Street on the plat. City Planner Foster noted that the driveway shouldn't be included as it isn't part of the Commission's review. He said that it would be appropriate to include a comment about the fence encroachment, but that the decision ultimately lies with the Borough Planning Commission.

There was brief discussion regarding utility easements.

S. SMITH/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-48 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT, WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. A 15-FOOT UTILITY EASEMENT SHALL BE DEPICTED ALONG MAIN STREET.
2. THE WATER AND SEWER LINES ALONG MAIN STREET SHALL BE DEPICTED.
3. INDICATE HOW THE FENCE ENCROACHMENT WILL BE RESOLVED PRIOR TO THE FINAL PLAT APPROVAL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Draft Title 21 Zoning Code Review

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and noted the supplemental items that were included pertaining to this business item. He then opened the floor for Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck and Erin Perdu of Stantec. Together, they presented to the Commission covering the following items:

- Introduction and land acknowledgement
- Project schedule
- Process updates
- Areas of focus
 - Reorganization and development process
 - District consolidations
 - Housing changes
- Next steps and closing comments

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2025 Planning Commission Calendar
- B. 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Dates & Submittal Deadlines
- C. Landslide Hazard Flier

Chair S. Smith noted the informational materials included in the packet.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Jan Keiser, city resident, emphasized the importance of maintaining the Commission's authority to impose conditions on conditional use permits to protect community interests and public welfare. She opposed administrative adjustments, stating projects should comply with regulations or seek a variance, and expressed opposition to extending legal nonconforming uses, suggesting a sunset clause. She raised concern that allowing up to 10% expansion on lots could significantly impact neighborhoods. She commented that height limits alone do not protect views and recommended adopting view protection standards. She stated the Community Design Manual should be strengthened to better support architectural and aesthetic standards. She also noted that development in the Grubstake area reflects prior planning direction to promote business expansion and view the area as a neighborhood in transition.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Associate Planner Gross shared his appreciation for the slides that demonstrate some of the changes in Title 21. He added that he thinks it's smart to break the code into chunks to give a fair evaluation to each section.

Deputy City Clerk Pettit informed the Commission that tonight was his last meeting clerking for the Commission as he is preparing to move out of state at the end of the month. He noted that it's been a pleasure working with everyone.

City Planner Foster noted that Deputy City Clerk Pettit has been a great colleague and a great asset to the Planning Commission. He said that Planning Staff will be helping with staffing meetings during this transition period. He added that it was a great meeting with some great conversation.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Venuti noted that it was an interesting meeting. He stated that he's hopeful to have a full Commission the next time the Commission discusses Title 21. He bid farewell to Deputy City Clerk Pettit.

Commissioner Walker thanked the Commission, city staff, and those from the public who commented.

Commissioner Harness thanked Deputy City Clerk Pettit.

Commissioner H. Smith noted that it was a great discussion this evening and that he appreciated everyone's work. He wished Deputy City Clerk Pettit the best on his future endeavors. He stated that it's important to have the public involved with the Commission to temper decisions the best they can but highlighted the importance of balancing decisions in a way that can represent meaningfully.

Commissioner S. Smith thanked City Planner Foster for the training provided during the worksession. He shared his appreciation for Deputy City Clerk Pettit's work during his tenure with the Planning Commission. He thanked the rest of the Commission for a great meeting, noting that it was a great way to kickoff the Title 21 review.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair S. Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 5th, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** A Worksession is scheduled for 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.

Zach Pettit, Deputy City Clerk II

Approved:_____