

CALL TO ORDER

Session 25-09, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:31 p.m. on May 7th, 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, S. SMITH, CONLEY & STARK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS SCHNEIDER & H. SMITH (BOTH EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER FOSTER & 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.

BARNWELL/CONLEY 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

Jan Keiser, city resident, offered a correction to the April 16th, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Specifically, the fourth sentence of the third paragraph on page 6 of the minutes. She noted that for future clarification, the sentence should read “She continued, reasoning that the City needs to have projects that it’s interested in listed in the Borough Safety Action Plan in order to submit them for funding.”

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Revised Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025
- B. Revised Unapproved Special Meeting Minutes of April 29, 2025
- C. Utility Easement Vacation Paradise South Belieu Fabian 2025 Replat, Memorandum 25-22
- D. Jack Gist Subdivision No. 3 Phase 2 Extension Request, Memorandum 25-23

BARNWELL/CONLEY MOVED TO MOVE ITEM A UNDER THE CONSENT AGENDA TO NEW BUSINESS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

BARNWELL/CONLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

A. Kyra Wagner Bluff Presentation

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Kyra Wagner, District Manager of Homer Soil and Water Conservation District. Ms. Wagner covered the following items throughout her presentation:

- Defining “ground truthing”
- Types of slides, types of flows, and types of slope failures
- Notable slope failures around the greater Homer area
 - Fritz Creek Valley Road flow
 - Channelized debris flow – February 2025
 - Rotational slide – February 2025

Other topics discussed consisted of the inclusion of “ground truthing” into the Comprehensive Plan and the suggestion of a rate of erosion analysis for developing at-risk properties.

B. Update on Title 21 Rewrite Process

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck. The following items were discussed:

- Development of a background report and completion of the code audit (HomerT21CodeUpdate.com)
- Review of stakeholder engagements and individual one-on-one conversations with Councilmembers
- Next steps for the process

REPORTS

A. City Planner’s Report, Staff Report 25-24

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

- Comprehensive Plan update

- Building Code Building Resilient Infrastructure & Community (BRIC) Program update
- Next Regular Meeting is May 21, 2025
 - Title 21 Worksession at 5:30 p.m.
- Next Commissioner Report to Council on May 12, 2025 (Commissioner Stark)

There was brief discussion regarding the City's plan to move forward with development of building code and code enforcement in general.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

- A. Foss Acres 2025 Addition Preliminary Plat, Staff Report 25-25
Additional Public Comment Received
Stream Drainages & Wetlands Map

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 invited the Applicant to speak to their application. Tyler Kaneshiro noted that he was the Applicant and made himself available for any questions. Chair S. Smith then opened the public comment period.

Tammaron Baxter, city resident, stated that her driveway is located at the bottom of Tundra Rose Road and alluded to concerns she has regarding the steepness of the road. She recommended extending Jeffrey Avenue to Tundra Rose Road, reasoning that Jeffrey Avenue doesn't face the same elevation issues and would provide safe access to and from the subdivision. She also shared concerns she has regarding wetlands on the lots and the absence of year-round streams depicted on the plat.

Catie Bursch, city resident, spoke to the issue of connectivity. She emphasized her desire for new subdivisions to consider trail easements prior to plat approval. She urged the Commission to address the water issues with these lots before it's too late.

Helen Armstrong, city resident, read comments on behalf of Kim and Steve Smith. She relayed their worries about road steepness and issues with drainage, and suggested that the City should exercise its requirement to reconstruct and realign the road to City standards. She recommended that the design of the plat include non-motorized facilities. Ms. Armstrong reasoned that the extension of Jeffrey Avenue to connect to Tundra Rose Road will be a requirement of the Borough, and stated that it should be a requirement of the City as well. She requested the Commission to address the runoff of the wetlands.

Ole Andersson, city resident, shared that he lives below the proposed subdivision. He voiced concerns he has about constructing Tundra Rose Road to City standards, adding that he sees the need for year-round maintenance of this road. He emphasized the need for an engineer survey of the road, and advocated for a performance bond for building the road in case the road isn't developed.

Jinky Handy, city resident, shared concerns she has regarding the steepness of Tundra Rose Road and drainage issues associated with the wetlands.

Deb Lowney, city resident, advocated for the importance of trails, sidewalks, wildlife corridors, and overall connectivity in the City of Homer. She encouraged the Planning Commission to implement a requirement for green space and connectivity within subdivisions, speaking in regards to this plat specifically. She highlighted the need for access in all directions.

Rika Mouw, city resident, voiced concerns she has about Tundra Rose Road and lot lines that don't follow natural drainages that require buffers. She recommended that Tundra Rose Road is better relegated as a pedestrian trail given the challenge of developing the road and the associated costs that would be passed along to the residents of Homer.

Jan Keiser, city resident, echoed previous concerns regarding the drainage and access issues. She highlighted drainage, contour information, stream identification and suitable buffers as areas that she deemed lacking useful information. She noted that this plat will require on-site septic systems since there are no existing municipal utilities. She added that on-site septic systems don't work well in high groundwater situations or wetlands.

Kyra Wagner, city resident, pointed out that the platted area is situated in a red emergency slope zone as indicated during Barrett Salisbury's Landslide Hazard Susceptibility Mapping presentation to the Commission back in early March. She recalled a washout in 2005 in the Woodard Creek area that was a result of a property owner developing steep roads.

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

Commissioner Barnwell questioned Mr. Kaneshiro if he had personally walked the property, to which Mr. Kaneshiro answered that he has not.

There were other discussions regarding drainage easements, wetlands, and a general lack of information to make an educated decision.

Chair S. Smith called for a 10-minute recess at 8:50 p.m.

Chair S. Smith called the meeting back to order at 9:01 p.m.

BARNWELL/STARK MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-025 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOSS ACRES 2025 ADDITION PRELIMINARY PLAT, WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE DEVELOPER WILL NEED TO ENTER INTO A SUBDIVISION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY:
 - a. CONSTRUCT TUNDRA ROSE ROAD AND THE DEDICATED CUL-DE-SAC OFF JEFFREY AVENUE TO A CITY STANDARD ROAD.
 - b. PROVIDE POWER AND GAS TO ALL LOTS.
 - c. DEDICATE A 40' WIDE ROAD ACCESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT TO PROVIDE LEGAL ACCESS TO THE UN-SUBDIVIDED REMAINDER TO THE EAST.
 - d. CONSTRUCT A HAMMER HEAD AT THE END OF TUNDRA ROSE ROAD WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY AND MAINTENANCE TURNAROUND.
 - e. THERE IS A 10' UTILITY EASEMENT ALONG THE PROPERTY BOUNDARIES OF TRACTS B2, B3, A PORTION OF B4, AND B5. CHANGE THE LANGUAGE OF THE UTILITY

EASEMENT TO INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FOR A FUTURE TRAIL AND
RECREATIONAL CONNECTIVITY.

2. HOMER PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS APPLICANT PROVIDES DETAILED SURVEY
WITH TOPOGRAPHY, CURRENT WETLANDS STATUS, DRAINAGES, AND CONTOUR LINES:
 - a. DOWNSTREAM WATER IMPACT.
 - b. EVALUATE ROAD ACCESS FROM JEFFREY AVENUE.

There were brief conversations regarding utilities in the area and whether or not it's in the Commission's purview to require a performance bond.

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

VOTE: YES: BARNWELL, S. SMITH, CONLEY, STARK.

VOTE: NO: VENUTI.

Motion carried.

CONLEY/BARNWELL MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING BY ONE HOUR.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Jack Gist Subdivision 2025 Replat Preliminary Plat, Staff Report 25-26

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.

Commissioner Venuti declared a potential conflict of interest, noting that the Applicant is a friend of his and a valued client.

CONLEY/BARNWELL MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER VENUTI HAS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST ON THE REVIEW IN FRONT OF THE COMMISSION.

Commissioner Conley questioned Mr. Venuti if he would financially benefit or gain from the approval of this plat. Mr. Venuti answered that he works with the client on a regular basis.

Chair S. Smith asked Mr. Venuti if he had the potential to earn money from this specific plat, to which he confirmed was a likely possibility. He was then asked by Mr. Conley if he was expecting to earn in excess of \$1,000, to which Mr. Venuti stated the answer was no.

Mr. Conley then asked Mr. Venuti if he would be biased in the decision he would make, to which he answered that he would likely be biased.

VOTE: YES: S. SMITH, CONLEY, STARK, BARNWELL.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti was removed from the Zoom Webinar Meeting Room.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for the Applicant. With no Applicant present, he opened the public comment period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, noted that both of the lots are served by water and sewer, and questioned why sewer abandonment was not included as part of that. She recommended that one water and one sewer service both be abandoned at the main.

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 and comments from the Commission.

Addressing Ms. Keiser's concerns about water and sewer, City Planner Foster noted that the comments provided came directly from Public Works. He added that he could ask for a follow-up question as to whether or not the note from Public Works should include sewer.

Seeing no other questions from the Commission, Chair S. Smith requested a motion and second.

CONLEY/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-026 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE JACK GIST SUBDIVISION 2025 REPLAT PRELIMINARY PLAT, WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE DEVELOPER SHALL EITHER ENTER INTO AN INSTALLATION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY TO ABANDON ONE WATER SERVICE AT THE MAIN, OR COMPLETE THE ABANDONMENT PRIOR TO RECORDING THE FINAL PLAT.
 - a. WHEN THEY ABANDON THE ONE WATER SERVICE THEY ABANDON THE SEWAGE AS WELL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Revised Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Deputy City Clerk Pettit for an explanation. Mr. Pettit noted the changes to the minutes as follows:

- Fourth sentence in the third paragraph on page 6 of the April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes should be stricken through and inserted in its place should read, "She continued, reasoning that the City needs to have projects that it's interested in listed in the Borough Safety Action Plan."

BARNWELL/CONLEY MOVED TO AMEND THE UNAPPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2025 AS PRESENTED BY THE CLERK.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2025 Planning Commission Calendar
- B. 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Dates and Submittal Deadlines

Chair S. Smith noted the informational materials. City Planner Foster requested the Commissioners inform the City Clerk of their availability regarding the joint worksession with Council.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Jan Keiser, city resident, thanked the Commissioners for their service. She insisted that the decision the Commission made on the Foss Acres 2025 Addition was based on incomplete or wrong information. She cited sections of Homer City Code that require certain features to be illustrated on a plat, claiming that the plat failed to indicate any of these items. She stated that decisions and recommendations that are passed along to the Borough should be made on the basis of complete and accurate information.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

City Planner Foster thanked everyone for a good meeting.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBER (If Present)

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Venuti noted that it was an interesting meeting, and thanked his fellow Commissioners for serving tonight.

Commissioner Stark thanked City Staff, Ms. Keiser for her public comments, and Chair S. Smith for his work tonight. He noted that the Borough Planning Commission is very thoughtful and thorough, adding that Mr. Venuti is the local representative for Homer.

Commissioner Conley noted that some meetings are harder than others. He thanked Ms. Keiser for attending the meeting tonight, adding that he's seen the Foss Acres property for himself, and that it's not easy to make a decision with the information presented versus what is actually out there. He commended Chair S. Smith on running a good meeting, and hoped for everyone was enjoying their summer.

Commissioner Barnwell echoed comments made by Ms. Keiser, noting that it's the Commission's duty to review plats with the official information in hand. He presumed that the Foss Acres plat will get approval from the Borough. He thanked his fellow Commissioners and City Staff for their hard work.

Chair S. Smith noted that the Foss Acres 2025 Addition was a tough plat to process. He noted that it's always preferred when the Applicant attends the meeting in-person. He stated that he's eager to see the revisions of Title 21, adding that the standard has got to go up. He thanked Ms. Keiser for her public comments, and he thanked his fellow Commissioners for their time.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Scott Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:46 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 21st, 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:_____