

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Eric Pedersen, Acting Chair

September 24, 2024

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Acting Chair Pedersen

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

II. ROLL CALL

Eric Pedersen, Acting Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Planning Commission (PC), held in Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, virtually via Zoom Webinar, and telephonically, to order at 7:02 p.m.

Commissioners present via video conferencing: Erik Pedersen, Acting Chair; Mandy Cole, Chair; Travis Arndt, Clerk; Matthew Bell, Assistant Clerk; Adam Brown; Nina Keller; David Epstein, Jessalynn Rintala, Lacey Derr

Commissioners absent: **None**

Staff present: Scott Ciambor, CDD Planning Manager; David Peterson, Planner II; Jason Larson, Planner II; Nicolette Chappell, CDD Administrative Coordinator; Sherri Layne, Attorney III; Kevin Allen, Meeting Clerk

Assembly members: Paul Kelly

III. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA- None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 27, 2024, Draft Minutes, Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Mr. Arndt to approve the August 27, 2024, Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes.*

The motion passed with no objection.

V. **BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION- by Chair Cole.**

VI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS- None.**

VII. **ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION- None.**

VIII. **CONSENT AGENDA- None.**

IX. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS- None.**

X. **REGULAR AGENDA**

SMF2024 0002: Final Plat approval for the ten (10) lot Silver Acres Subdivision in accordance with the conditions outlined in SMP2024-0002.

Applicant: Shawn Kantola

Location: Silver Street

Director's Report

The Preliminary Plat was approved with conditions with the Notice of Decision for case SMP2024-0002, signed by Chairperson Mandy Cole on August 5, 2024.

The applicant has requested approval for the Final Plat of the Silver Acres Subdivision. Property taxes and bonding for required improvements are still pending. The revised final plat complies with all other conditions outlined in the Notice of Decision for SMP2024-0002.

Conditions for approval:

- Full payment of property taxes for the remainder of the calendar year. – In process, property taxes

will be paid in full prior to final plat recording.

- Submission of construction drawings to facilitate the bonding estimate. – Complete, See Attachment C.

- Completion of required improvements or provision of a financial guarantee. – Bonding estimate is in process with CBJ GE.

- Development of a plat note to preserve the walking path along the CBJ sewer and drainage

easement. – Completed, see note 17.

- Addition of eight new plat notes. – Complete, All requested notes have been added. See Attachment B, plat notes: 11-17.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the Final Plat, with the conditions that full payment of property taxes and the construction of, or establishment of bonding for improvements prior to final plat recording.

Shawn Kantola, applicant, discussed changes and work they have done since the last meeting, including widening the access on lot 1, tweaking a few property lines, going through all the engineering and drainage and the report needed for it, and paid taxes.

Ms. Cole asked if they spoke to any of the neighbors about their concerns or anything ongoing they should know about that.

Mr. Kantola responded that he has talked to a couple neighbors, but they did not express any concerns recently.

Ms. Keller asked if there still including access to the trail and it to be maintained.

Mr. Kantola answered that was one of the plat notes required that access will not be blocked.

Ms. Keller asked if they looked into the comments on the wetlands and trying to maintain them.

Mr. Kantola said they had a wetland delineation done this past spring and are currently working through the permitting process with the Corps of Engineers.

Chair Pederson opened public testimony.

Michael Scott asked how the public access is related on the plat. He wanted to know if it was a dedicated trail or something they can access along somebody's driveway. He noted that the access gets a lot of use now.

Chair Pederson closed public testimony.

Mr. Kantola stated he did not remember exactly what the plat note said regarding pedestrian access, but it is written in there and is what the CBJ Department agreed on for the plat note.

Mr. Ciambor read Plat Note 17 that discusses the access, which states that it provides pedestrian access within the easements to nearby trails and they will continue to be available unless a suitable alternative is created, and no structure or barricades are permitted within the easements that would block pedestrian access.

Ms. Rintala spoke in support of this. She said it seems that the applicant has met all the conditions they discussed previously, and she feels assured the plat note guaranteeing public

access to the trail accomplishes what they asked for.

MOTION: *by Ms. Cole to accept staff's findings, analysis, and recommendations, and approve SMF2024 0002.*

The motion passed with no objection.

CSP2024 0002: City/State Project and Land Action Review Application for installation of roundabout

Applicant: State of Alaska

Location: Mendenhall Loop Road-Valley Boulevard-Mendenhall Boulevard

Acting Chair Pederson, Commissioner Derr, and Commissioner Epstein recused themselves from the item due to conflict of interest.

Ms. Cole took the gavel back for this item. She asked Attorney Layne what they need to do in order to pass a motion with three commissioners recused.

Ms. Layne responded that a quorum is still required for the vote to pass; however, the law states that for every two commissioners that are recused, the number of required votes is reduced by one as long as all of the recused commissioners remain present at the meeting location. In this instance, a minimum of four "yes" votes are required for the motion to pass.

Director's Report

The applicant requests a State Project Review to replace the signalized intersection of the Mendenhall Loop Road-Valley Boulevard-Mendenhall Boulevard with a single lane roundabout.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the Director's analysis and findings and approve City/State Project CSP2024 0002.

Connor Brown, DOT Environmental Impact Analyst, explained the goal of the project is putting a single lane roundabout at the Intersection of Mendenhall Boulevard, Valley Boulevard, and Mendenhall Loop Road to improve safety by reducing the impact of collisions, increasing driver engagement. He stated they would also be proposing to move certain utilities around the roundabout, shift the position of certain storm drains, and placing an island in the center of the roundabout to partially block vision.

Ms. Rintala asked Mr. Brown to speak to any recent collision or accident history that is being addressed with the roundabout.

Mr. Brown said they based the project on a series of previous incidents found in the roundabout. He noted they did a study on pre-existing crashes primarily based on two-way collisions and crashes from the intersection.

Ms. Rintala asked what they are doing in regard to the comments they received on safety needs. She also wanted to know if there is any data on improvements of safety within the last 10 years of nearby roundabouts to see if they have helped.

Mr. Brown did not have access to any of those studies.

Mr. Arndt inquired on how the earthen fill in the middle of the roundabout compares in height with other roundabouts. He also asked for the reason why that height was chosen.

Mr. Brown responded that roundabout center is shorter than the two previous roundabouts. He said the height is due to concerns about vision obscuring of pedestrians and oncoming cars on the far side of the roundabout and to avoid oncoming cars traversing over the center of the roundabout. He shared the current plan is to set the roundabout at a height that is partially visible through and install certain features to discourage drive overs.

Ms. Rintala asked what roundabout experts say about the sufficiency of the stopping sight distance and speed through there.

Mr. Brown said they were initially based on the plan geometry and circulating speeds and what they believe to be the adequate stop distance.

Chair Cole opened public testimony.

Ilsa Lund stated she is a staff member of the Community Development Department, but her comments are her own personal views as a resident impacted by the proposed development. She is in favor of the proposed roundabout because the drainage in the area causes ice build-up in the winter making stopping and starting at the light in Mendenhall Boulevard hazardous. However, she is opposed to the large mound in the roundabout, but glad to hear there are plans to address those concerns. She likes the idea of lighting being added to the intersection for pedestrian safety.

Chair Cole closed public testimony.

Mr. Brown said they have discussed proposed features with various nearby communities and attempted to contain the frame of the roundabout to hopefully allow full access to the pre-existing driveways and pre-existing bus stops around there.

Mr. Ciambor noted that if the Commission approves the project, they will issue a notice of decision, have the Chair sign it, and then the case will complete. However, if the Commission denies the project, a notice of recommendation with a resolution will go to the Assembly for their consideration to make the final determination. He said the timeline for review process is 90 days.

Mr. Arndt voiced that he thought it went to the Assembly no matter if they vote yes or no.

Mr. Ciambor explained that section of the code is worded a little differently, but if a recommendation is made for approval tonight, then a notice of decision is issued, and it is done.

Ms. Keller commented that she read threw the comments and saw the concerns, but there were also comments in support. She stated that she finds roundabouts the safe option and a good development for better traffic flow.

Chair Cole asked if they could provide any guidance to DOT with the recommendation, mostly with line-of-sight issues, and if it would be able to be forwarded with the approval?

Mr. Ciambor answered that he is not clear on that.

Ms. Keller asked if they had the option to wait and vote on this at a later date to get more detailed answers from the project manager instead of denying it today.

Chair Cole responded that is unlikely, due to the timeline they have right now, but the Assembly does not meet again until October 21st, so if they issue a denial and able to schedule it for October 21st, they may just barely make the timeline, but if they table it, they probably would not be able to get that scheduled in the timeline.

Mr. Arndt said if there are things that need to be modified, they can put them in the permit. He said he has had both positive and negative phone calls on this item. He added that this is data driven and DOT is doing it because it's safer. He commented that he likes they are taking the concern about the height in the middle into account.

Ms. Rintala expressed that she came in tonight fully prepared to approve this project and she is all for increasing the safety of Juno's roads but feels like there are a lot of unanswered questions. She stated she is not sure what the conditions or modifications are, but would love to see this move forward, but wanted those questions addressed, especially the stopping sight distance.

Ms. Keller asked if it would be an option to add something to the motion as a comment requesting the project manager look more into the stopping sight distance.

Chair Cole stated they can definitely make a recommendation but does not know if they can condition it upon getting it back to them, and it might be difficult timeline wise.

Mr. Ciambor suggested in the case of an approval, to have some language that suggests DOT meet sight distance standards that the Commission deems acceptable.

Commissioner Brown's connection to the meeting was dropped just before the roll call vote.

MOTION: *by Mr. Arndt to accept staff's findings, analysis, and recommendations, and approve CSP2024 0002.*

Chair Cole stated that she will support the project but is slightly disappointed they could not talk to the project manager to answer their questions. However, she believes the project was

designed with improving safety in mind and they need to trust DOT's math. She is invested in ensuring the comments about the safety of pedestrian and sight lines are addressed.

YES- Cole, Bell, Keller, Arndt

NO- Rintala

RECUSED- Pedersen, Epstein, Derr

ABSENT- Brown

MOTION PASSES: 4-1 (in accordance with special recusal rules.)

Mr. Pedersen took back the gavel.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS- None.

XII. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Ciambor said their meeting on October 22nd will be full of rezone conversations, and 6 of the 8 rezone public information meetings have already taken place, with two more this week. He stated Blueprint Downtown was heard for the Assembly in September, and it passed with a recommendation to pass by ordinance at the Full Assembly on October 21st. Staff has reached out to Downtown Douglas/West Juneau to take a look at a draft plan, and the Comprehensive Plan RFP should be live and out pretty soon. He expressed they are heavy on grant season at CBJ and had a Community Development Block Grant for the Douglas Indian Association Project to forward an application through the state competition. Mr. Ciambor said the Juneau Coordinated Transportation Coalition selected a project for sale to go through the state competition and they are working with them to get final resolution passed by the Assembly. He noted that the Juneau Affordable Housing is currently in its project review phase with four applications for the year, and they are targeting a November Lands, Housing, and Economic Development Committee Meeting with a recommendation on the applications. He added that staff is putting in a late submission for a HUD grant, the Pro-Housing Grant.

XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Cole stated there is a Governance Committee Meeting scheduled for the 2nd.

XIV. LIAISON REPORTS

Assembly Member Kelly expressed that at the last regular meeting they amended the parking requirements of the Land Use Code by extending the no parking requirements to include the Telephone Hill area. They were presented with an appeal of one of the

Planning Commission's decisions from Hali Duran, on the grounds that only six members were present, and she wants to be heard with a full Commission. He noted having only six members present is not grounds to appeal, so they rejected it, but she is free to reapply. He said they passed two ordinances at their Special Assembly Meeting yesterday, a \$3 million match for the Army Corps Glacier Outburst Flooding Investigation Study and \$100,000 to update the maps and hydrological modeling of the Mendenhall River. He added that the manager gave an extensive update and talked about some HESCO barriers to act as a short-term remediation if something should happen. Mr. Kelly shared that he was able to bring up Commissioner Epstein's inquiries about water flowing out of the storm drains after the flood with Manager Koester, and she came back with some possibilities, including a duck bill that was dislodged or because draining of the storm drains are not designed to drain very fast.

XV. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS- None.

XVI. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Epstein asked CDD if they have any idea when they should resume meetings in person in the Assembly Chambers.

Mr. Ciambor said the Assembly is meeting in the chambers, so it is now an option, but they scheduled two Zooms in a row to just make sure they didn't have to re-shift gears if it was not cleaned up in time.

Ms. Cole added that they should be back in Chambers next time.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION- None.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT 8:25pm