

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Mandy Cole, Chair

January 28, 2025

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Read by Ms. Rintala.

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

Mandy Cole, 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 6 p.m.

Commissioners present: Commissioners present in Chambers – Mandy Cole, Chair; Erik Pedersen, Vice Chair; Matthew Bell, Assistant Clerk; Adam Brown, Nina Keller, Jessalynn Rintala, Lacey Derr, Douglas Salik

Commissioners present via video conferencing – None

Commissioners absent: David Epstein

Staff present: Jill Lawhorne, CDD Director; Irene Gallion, CDD Senior Planner; Daniele Gaucher, CDD Administrative Officer; Madeline Carse, CDD Administrative Assistant; Sherri Layne, Attorney III; Jeffery Hedges, Building Official; Jason Larson, CDD Permit Center Manager; Scott Ciambor, CDD Planning Manager; Ilsa Lund, CDD Planner I

Assembly members: None present

III. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Pedersen moved to strike the first item under Other Business, Downtown Douglas West Juneau Area Plan and Steering Committee Appointment, as they do not have anyone to appoint.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. August 13, 2024, Draft Minutes Regular Planning Commission
2. November 12, 2024, Draft Minutes Regular Planning Commission
3. December 10, 2024, Draft Minutes Regular Planning Commission

MOTION: *by Ms. Derr to approve the August 13, 2024; November 12, 2024; December 10, 2024, Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes.*

V. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

VII. ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. REGULAR AGENDA

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

4. Downtown Douglas/West Juneau (DD/WJ) Area Plan Steering Committee Appointment
5. Community Development Department Presentation & Overview

Director Lawhorne gave a quick overview of the Community Development Department.

Scott Ciambor, Planning Manager, stated they have a great staff right now and are taking on a lot of great projects. He gave descriptions and duties of the Short-term and Long-term Planning teams. He noted that they are under contract for the Comprehensive Plan and the internal kickoff meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. He talked about the Housing Program and the Community Development Grant Programs, including the Community Development Block Grant, Juneau Coordinated Transportation Grant, and a Certified Local Government Grant, and briefly discussed flood. He expressed that they are looking for two positions right now in regard to staffing and are

working on improving their systems in terms of training. He noted that the Downtown Douglas West Juneau Plan is going great. He discussed the Housing Action Plan and current activities, which include the Comprehensive Plan, Juneau Affordable Housing Fund, Title 49 Rewrite, CBJ Lands Division Rezone Initiative, Telephone Hill Property Management and Redevelopment Master Plan, Pederson Hill Development, Tyler Tech Permitting Software and Questica Budget Software, and Short-Term Rental Taskforce. He also explained how area median income works in regard to housing.

Chair Cole noted that she asked Mr. Ciambor to talk about area median income and affordable housing because they had questions on that in the fall, as people tend to confuse the term affordable housing, that has a specific meaning with HUD, as just inexpensive or low cost housing.

Mr. Ciambor added that both affordable and workforce housing are eligible for the Housing Fund. He noted that currently there is not any language in the Land Use code on policies and strategies that could be added to the code to have the affordability component to be part of it.

Jeff Hedges, Building Code Official, explained that their role is doing the plan review that covers every aspect of the building and then do the inspections. He noted that the most important part of their job is to educate, and they are currently working on a code update for Title 19. He stated that Department of Labor is adopting the 2023 National Electrical Code and the 2024 Uniform Plumbing Code, and have been working on getting local and state modifications incorporated in.

Director Lawhorne went over the administration division staff. She discussed the GIS Team, which have been analyzing changes in the imagery in the Mendenhall River due to Glacial Outburst Floods, ensuring data for E911 services is up-to-date and accurate, converting CBJ Water Division data from paper maps to digital, updating Wastewater Division data, and completing map requests and collecting data for other CBJ departments. The administrative team prepares and manages budget, training, meeting coordination, provides public support, staffs the Planning Commission and other committees, and assists with overall organization and implementation of CDD initiatives.

Jason Larson, Permit Center Manager, spoke about the CBJ Permit Center Hub. They process permits and inspections for CBJ and service CDD, EPW, CCFR, P&R, JPD, state and federal agencies, and the general public. He stated that the PCH staff is made up of four people. He noted that the planners do a great job of answering the planner on-call questions. He discussed what they are doing right now and the three goals they have set for this year, which include providing outstanding customer service, improving processes, creating policies and procedures, and establishing roles for natural disaster events.

Chair Cole thanked the CDD staff for their presentation.

6. Planning Commission Important Topics & Training

Sherry Layne, Attorney, presented on the Planning Commission important topics and training. She went over the Open Meetings Act and best practices. Planning Commission best practices include minimizing private discussions, no group messages about meeting topics, no texting more than two other members at a time, avoiding reply all in emails, and reasonable notice of meeting. She added that if someone violates the Open Meetings Act, they can cure it by bringing whatever they did to the public within six months.

Ms. Rintala asked if she could have a one on one conversation with any other member of the Commission on issues brought in front of the Planning Commission or would they need to disclose that at the meeting where they discuss the issue.

Ms. Layne answered that they are allowed to talk to two others but the key is to not play telephone and talk to somebody else about that topic.

Mr. Pedersen asked for confirmation that he could talk to one commissioner about a certain matter, but then talk to two other commissioners on a completely separate agenda item.

Ms. Layne confirmed that is okay.

Ms. Layne then went on to talk about conflict of interest, and stated that they are prohibited from taking action, discussing, or being a part of something that they will have a personal or financial interest in. She recommended completely stepping down if there is any conflict of interest, as they would not be able to vote or be a part of the discussion. She added that if a commissioner gets advice from an attorney that says there is no conflict and the commissioner acts on that advice, they are covered if someone files anything against them regarding that.

Chair Cole added that it is important to check in advance with Attorney Layne if there is a question. She expressed that if a commissioner is associated with something but do not think there is a conflict, the Chair can ask the commissioners and public of their opinion, and if no one says anything, the commissioner can stay up there.

Ms. Layne voiced that appearance of conflict is sometimes also important to think about.

Mr. Pedersen asked what the proper procedure, timing, and verbiage would be for someone to disclose a potential conflict of interest in a meeting.

Ms. Layne responded that it is best to declare it right before the item that the conflict is for and state a general reason for the conflict.

Mr. Bell asked what happens if a conflict is declared, but they do not have the necessary amount of votes to proceed on an item.

Ms. Layne reiterated that if someone has a conflict, they cannot participate, because they do not want a member of the public or applicant who is watching to appeal that. She added that is also

why it is important to let Chair Cole or the law department know beforehand so they do not get to that point in the meeting and an applicant cannot have their item go forward.

Chair Cole asked if it reduces the quorum threshold if someone is recused.

Ms. Layne answered it depends. She explained that in the CBJ code, they can reduce the number of people you need to move an action forward by one for every two people that are recused as long as they stay at the meeting.

XII. STAFF REPORTS

Director Lawhorne updated that the senior planner position closed last Friday, and they have two candidates to interview this week. The recently vacated Planner I and II position closed and they have six candidates so far, but have not reviewed those yet. She added that they continue to work closely with Commerce and Economic Development, FEMA, and Department of Natural Resources, and are still working on permitting the HESCO Barrier Project. There is a meeting on the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update tomorrow, and the public meeting for that will be happening soon. She noted there was a Committee of the Whole last night and a Lands Meeting. They discussed Eagle Crest, and Title 49 Rewrite Phase I, Wave I, which went smoothly through the Committee of the Whole last night. It is scheduled for introduction at the Assembly on February 3rd, and it will then start a 60-day clock for the Commission to comment on the draft. Director Lawhorne stated they are aiming to have the rewrite public hearing before this Commission on February 25th.

Chair Cole asked if the meeting with the Comp Plan contractor tomorrow will yield a process document.

Director Lawhorne answered somewhat. She said it is the first internal meeting, and they are trying to figure out the process. She voiced that they are looking to move through it quite expeditiously, but she is not sure what all the meeting will entail. She noted there will be an advisory committee created and they are aiming to have an internal team of CBJ staff of decision makers to have input into the process.

Chair Cole inquired if there is anything preventing her from saying they are reestablishing the Title 49 Committee that has no current meeting schedule yet, and to appoint herself as the chair for now until they figure it out if they need it.

Ms. Layne stated yes, and that they could also do a Committee of the Whole at various times if they wanted to or re-establish it and the Chair could appoint people to it.

XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Derr gave an update for the Lands, Housing & Economic Development Committee. She said they met yesterday. She stated that Public Works and Facilities put out a solicitation for proposals in the Summer of 2024 for the use of Floyd Dryden and ranked those solicitations as they came in, with Tlingit & Haida Early Education coming in at number one. She said they are looking to lease up to two-thirds of Floyd Dryden. The number two applicant was UAS, for their educational program to lease the remaining one-third. There is a daycare currently in there with an emergency order that will expire in March. She said Lands moved it forward for the Assembly with a recommendation to work directly with lease holders. Ms. Derr expressed that the other item was the Juneau Animal Rescue, who are looking at a piece of property close to the Southeast Alaska Foodbank, but they do not want to move forward with more planning until they know if CBJ is interested in leasing the land. The Committee recommended support for the Assembly to lease the property to Juneau Animal Rescue, and they will discuss it at the next Committee of the Whole.

XIV. LIAISON REPORTS

XV. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Derr noted for everyone to do their taxes and public reporting.

XVI. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

The January 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.