

Minutes of Planning & Zoning Commission
Held on June 19, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER: 5:31 PM

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Jillian Privett, Apryl Hutchinson, Kathleen St. Clair, Terri Henson

ABSENT: Gary Watkins

STAFF: Kate Thomas, JR Meek

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Staff Planning Department staff recommend the removal of Item 9b (Request from Brett Woodbury to purchase Borough-owned tidelands) from the agenda due to potential conflicts with Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) navigation and docking operations. Staff will coordinate further with the applicant and the Borough Manager prior to rescheduling the item.

4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Chair Henson declared a conflict of interest regarding Item 9a. The Commission determined that Chair Henson did not have a conflict.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) Approval of the Planning and Zoning regular meeting minutes from May 8, 2025.

M/S: Hutchinson/St. Clair

- Approved

6. DIRECTORS REPORT:

- a) Wrangell Visitor Industry Report 2025

Staff provided an overview of the tourism sector's economic contributions to Wrangell, including shifts in visitor spending and travel behavior trends in recent years.

- b) OSU Resident Sentiment of Tourism Report

Staff presented findings from a collaborative survey effort with Oregon State University evaluating local perspectives on the impact of tourism. Results indicated a generally favorable perception among respondents. Staff highlighted the importance of conducting annual surveys to track community sentiment and engagement.

Additional points included: Record participation in this year's survey, opportunities to reinvest tourism revenues into public amenities (e.g., trash receptacles, public restrooms), emphasis on balancing cruise vessel sizes to optimize community benefit and mitigate public burden, discussion of Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) and recent hotline activity, including three logged calls and their respective resolutions.

7. CORRESPONDENCE: None

8. PERSONS TO BE HEARD: None

9. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **Final Plat review of a Replat of Lot B (APN 03-002-304) of the Torgramsen-Glasner Subdivision according to Plat No. 2016-2, and Lot C (APN 02-035-310) of the Health Care Subdivision, according to Plat 2010-4, creating Lot B-1 and Lot C-1, zoned Zimovia Highway Mixed Use, requested by the City and Borough of Wrangell on behalf of Wrangell Cooperative Association and Bruce Smith Jr.**

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Polled Vote – All in Favor

Move to approve the final plat for the replat of Lot B of the Torgramsen-Glasner Subdivision (Plat No. 2016-2) and Lot C of the Health Care Subdivision (Plat No. 2010-4), creating Lot B-1 and Lot C-1, as presented.

Staff noted a discrepancy in subdivision documentation - Lot B was previously recorded under Plat 2015-2, not 2016-2. Staff will coordinate with the surveyor to resolve this anomaly. Other monument and plat line errors were noted but did not necessitate amendments to the motion. The easement exhibit will be reviewed by the Borough Assembly during its next meeting.

- ~~b) (PH) Request from Brett Woodbury to purchase Borough-owned tidelands identified as; Lot 12, Block 12A (APN 02-003-254) and Lot 13, Block 12A (APN 02-003-258, 6624) of the Wrangell Townsite, according to Plat No 39-03, Zoned Waterfront Development.~~

M/S: Privett/St. Clair

Staff recommended deferral of this item (purchase request for Lots 12 and 13, Block 12A, APNs 02-003-254, 258, and 6624) due to incomplete documentation.

Move to postpone 9b for next agenda item.

M/S: Hutchinson/St. Clair

Polled Vote – All in Favor

- c) **(PH) Request from American Cruise Lines to lease a portion of Borough-owned tidelands identified as APN 02-024-600, of the Wrangell Townsite, zoned Waterfront Development.**

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Polled Vote – All in Favor

Move to recommend to the Borough Assembly approval of a tidelands lease agreement with American Cruise Lines, Inc. for the purpose of dock construction within Parcel 02-024-600, subject to final review by the Port Commission, conformance with the Borough's Waterfront Development standards, and the negotiation of lease terms consistent with Wrangell's planning and economic development objectives.

During the meeting, Eric with American Cruise Lines clarified that the proposal was in its initial stages and that the company was open to ongoing negotiation. ACL expressed a willingness to work closely with the Borough Manager to resolve concerns and refine the project scope.

Staff presented an administrative report explaining that the Borough Manager previously met with ACL representatives during a visit to the Sea Trade Convention in Miami, Florida. That meeting prompted ACL's formal interest in leasing Borough tidelands to construct a new docking facility, enabling ACL vessels to moor directly rather than anchor offshore as previously practiced. The revised docking strategy was described as part of ACL's broader effort to improve visitor experience and deepen their operational commitment to Southeast Alaska.

Staff directed the Commission's attention to page 80 of the meeting packet, which included a visual representation of the proposed dock footprint and ramp location. The proposed development area is more limited than the area originally identified by the applicant. The report also outlined the concept of shared moorage rights, where other cruise lines could utilize the dock during periods of non-use by ACL. This flexible use scenario, including provisions for revenue sharing, was identified as a benefit to the Borough's broader waterfront development strategy.

Additional discussion focused on the economic and operational advantages of the project. Staff emphasized that the lease would not constitute a sale or divestiture of Borough-owned lands but would retain public ownership under a long-term lease structure.

The Commission discussed ACL's vessel scheduling, noting that ACL typically anchors outside of the harbor when City Dock is occupied. Commissioners also raised questions regarding potential site preparation and construction logistics, including infill requirements, dock surface materials, and backfill.

Staff reported that engineering cost estimates were being developed by PND Engineers and that ACL would be responsible for all construction-related expenses.

Further deliberation included the potential repurposing of the old barge ramp. Staff stated that while the proposed dock is not suitable for full-sized vehicular traffic, it may serve as access for smaller service vehicles such as golf carts or utility side-by-sides, particularly for provisioning vessels. There have been discussions around repurposing the old barge ramp as a drive-down facility. This concept remains under consideration.

Commissioners expressed overall support for the ACL proposal. Privett and Chair Henson both acknowledged ACL's positive engagement with the community and the economic value brought by small cruise ship passengers. Staff provided context regarding the comparative economic impacts of large versus small cruise ships—highlighting that while large ships generate higher moorage fees, smaller ships tend to yield greater per-visitor spending in local shops and with tour operators. Staff also noted that ACL has received favorable feedback from local retailers.

In response to an inquiry from Hutchinson regarding future use of the dock by other vessels, ACL indicated they would retain management responsibilities for the dock schedule but did not seek exclusive use rights. Eric from ACL reiterated that priority would be given to Borough needs and that the company seeks to accommodate Wrangell's docking logistics. He also shared that ACL is actively expanding its fleet of smaller vessels, including the American Patriot, with new ships anticipated to be added by 2028.

- d) Preliminary Plat review of a Replat of Lot 38 of US. Survey 2673 (APN 05-039-100) of the Ketchikan Recording District, Zoned Remote Mixed-Use Meyers Chuck, creating Lots 39A and 39B of the Peavey Subdivision owned and requested by Melissa Peavey.**

Move to approve the preliminary plat for the Peavey Subdivision, a replat of Lot 38 of U.S. Survey 2673, creating Lots 39A and 39B, as requested by Melissa Peavey.

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Polled Vote – All in Favor

Staff presented an administrative report detailing the rationale for the replat. The reconfiguration is intended to address a property encroachment issue caused by an adjacent residential structure. Staff confirmed that the current platting arrangement is nonconforming for minimum lot size requirements. However, the reconfiguration does not increase the degree of nonconformity. It improves alignment with the zoning district's intent by establishing clear, functional boundaries for each lot. No conflicts were identified that would prevent approval of the proposed lot layout.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a) Ordinance No. 10XX An Ordinance of the Assembly of the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, adding Chapter 20.62 Planned Unit Developments and Amending Several Sections in Title 20 – Zoning, to Add and Reference Planned Unit Developments to the Wrangell Municipal Code.**

Move to recommend approval of Ordinance No. 10XX, adding Chapter 20.XX – Planned Unit Developments and amending relevant sections of Title 20 – Zoning of the Wrangell Municipal Code, as presented in the draft staff report, and to forward the ordinance to the Borough Assembly for consideration.

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Polled Vote – All in Favor

Staff provided a detailed staff report outlining the structure, intent, and regulatory framework of the proposed PUD chapter. This ordinance reflects substantial revisions from an earlier draft, which staff explained had relied too heavily on templates from other municipalities and did not appropriately account for Wrangell's unique planning environment. The updated version now reflects Wrangell-specific zoning practices and development needs.

The staff report emphasized that the new PUD code would allow for greater flexibility in land development while ensuring consistency with Borough planning goals. Two primary pathways for PUD applications were discussed: conditional use approvals and preliminary review processes.

The two-step review process is intended to provide clarity for both applicants and the Commission, mitigating confusion regarding subdivision versus zoning procedures.

Staff clarified that while PUDs are often associated with mixed-use developments, the ordinance is structured to allow for residential, industrial, or other dedicated-use PUDs, provided the development adheres to clearly defined standards.

The proposed ordinance includes purpose statements, application procedures, and minimum development standards. These include requirements related to lot configuration, lot size, subdivision regulations under Title 19, and criteria for deviations. Developers would be permitted to introduce private covenants and design restrictions, contingent upon the review and approval of relevant Borough entities, including the Fire Marshal. PUD applicants must submit a complete development plan, associated fees, and legal documentation for Commission review.

Staff noted that amendments may still be added prior to final adoption and indicated that other changes, such as including PUDs as a conditional use in the Zimovia Highway zoning district were still under discussion.

Chair Henson expressed interest in expanding PUD applicability to Rural Residential zoning districts, particularly Rural Residential 1, with provisions for fire marshal review in remote areas. Staff acknowledged these comments, but stated they were not yet prepared to recommend such expansions without further review.

During the discussion, Privett raised the question of whether PUDs should include language addressing water and sewer infrastructure. Chair Henson acknowledged the suggestion as potentially beneficial for future iterations, noting the possibility of separate classifications for utility-serviced and unserviced PUDs. The Commission agreed to revisit these issues later.

Staff concluded by clarifying that Ordinance No. 10XX proposes no amendments to Title 19 and that the overarching purpose of PUDs is to encourage planned, flexible, and economically beneficial development that aligns with the Borough's land use policies.

11. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next meeting is July 10th, 2025, at 5:30 PM.

12. ADJOURNMENT: 7:06 PM

ATTEST: _____
J.R. Meek, Secretary

Jill Privett, Vice Chair