

**Minutes of Planning & Zoning Commission  
Held on June 13, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Call to order at 5:33 PM.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Gary Watkins, Kathy St Clair, Chair Terri Henson, Apryl Hutchinson

**ABSENT:** Jillian Privett

**STAFF:** Kate Thomas, Matt Henson

**3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

*M/S KS/AH move to strike the language of item 8D and replace it with the following:*

*Request from Brett Woodbury to purchase Borough Real Property (8 lots) identified as;  
Lot 5A, Block 61, Industrial Park Subdivision II, according to Plat No. 2001-7, zoned  
Industrial*

*Lot 8, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 7, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 9, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 10, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 11, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 12, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Lot 13, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial*

*Approved by all in favor.*

**4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Chair Henson states she may have a conflict with item 8a as there is a family connection.

Commissioners decided that she does not have conflict as there is no financial gain for Henson and may discuss and vote on the item.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Approval of the minutes from the Planning and Zoning regular meeting held on April 11, 2024.

*M/S AH/KS move to approve the regular meeting minutes from the Planning and Zoning regular meeting held on April 11, 2024.*

*Approved unanimously by polled vote*

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

Letter from Willie and Deveril Bloom regarding item 8a read into record.

Letter from Catherine White regarding item 8d read into record.

- a. April and May Economic Development Department Report.

Director Thomas provided report.

## **7. PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

Bruce Smith Jr. - Item 8a - Adjacent landowner. Opposed to rezone. Projects have already intruded in the area. Light industrial activity is already in the middle of a residential area. Requested that if the commission proceed that it be done through a conditional use agreement and should mirror other agreements in the area. He stated that he does not want to see open storage such as the location at 6 mile.

Brett Woodbury - Item 8d - He stated in the past he wanted to trade his time and labor of building the road leading to the lots for the lots themselves. The Borough has declined this offer every time. He then stated that the intent of his request is to build and develop the lots as a subdivision and then sell the lots he does not want.

Lynda Nore - Item 8c - She stated that she is interested in purchasing a lot adjacent to the current property. Her family purchased their current location after hearing that the proposed land would be available for purchase in the future. She stated that if this land goes to public auction, there would need to build a road built leading to the lot.

Phillip Mach - Item 8a - The purpose of their storage unit building would not be boat and vehicle storage but professional storage units. He stated he is trying to fill a need for personal storage due to the lack of storage options and the forthcoming condo development. Unit sizes will vary from 10x10 to 10x30. He stated that he would plan to create a professional atmosphere with security systems and restricted access throughout the day. He also stated that there are other light industrial lots zoned the same in the vicinity and his would be a similar use. He acknowledged adjacent homeowner concerns and stated that he hopes to be a good neighbor. He also stated that contractual re-zoning poses an issue due to approval time frames and the potential seizure of the building. Stated that it also takes a large amount of capital to build this building but that it would benefit the city by becoming a tax revenue generator.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. (PH) Petition to Rezone remainder of Lot A-2, Torgramsen-Glasner Subdivision, according to Plat 2017-1, zoned Single Family Residential changing the zoning district from Single Family (SF) to Light Industrial (LI) requested by Phillip Mach.

### ***Public Hearing Opened***

Bruce Smith - asked if the property is still a single-family residence. Henson stated yes.

Phillip Mach - many lots in the area are being contractually rezoned.

### ***Public Hearing Closed***

***M/S GW/KS move to approve the findings of fact with a recommendation to the Borough Assembly to approve a Contract Zoning Agreement for the specific use requested by Mr. Phillip Mach as per the application with the following conditions:***

- 1) Site obscuring vegetated buffer of at least 25 feet must be maintained pursuant to WMC 20.52.200 to adjacent residential properties; and,***
- 2) Lighting at the facility should be angled downward and guarded from the sides so as not to disturb adjacent residences; and,***

**3) Operating hours should be restricted to between 10 PM and 7 AM, limiting impacts during the night hours.**

Director Thomas provided the administrative report.

Henson asked when the other storage unit contract zones were done, she was not happy to approve that. It initially was made to be a buffer zone between residential and other zoning types. Regarding the WCA property, their approval was meant to be a buffer area between their business and residential as well, but it has since scaled larger in size and operation than anticipated. She stated that she is not in favor of either the rezone or contract rezone. She acknowledged that there is a shortage of lots to do this business, but stated this is not the place to do so. She also stated that this type of spot zoning creates a bad precedent.

Watkins asked if the lots across the street were contacted. Thomas stated that anyone within the 300 ft radius was contacted. Watkins asked if this went to the assembly and if there would be another chance to publicly discuss this item. Thomas stated yes.

Hutchinson asked if Mr. Mach knew that the lots were zoned residential when he purchased the property. Mr. Mach stated yes. Henson stated that looking down the road, this opens an issue with newer subdivisions in town and sets the stage for spot zoning issues in the future.

Hutchinson asked Mr. Smith if the development of the WCA building was at all irritating. He started with how it was built, no it isn't. Mr. Mach stated that the plan he presented to Mr. Smith shows that his business would not affect Mr. Smith's daily life. He also stated that this is already up against the highway and near higher traffic zones. Hutchinson asked if there is a grade to the lot. Mach stated yes and that only two acres of the property are usable of the 3.6 within the parcel boundaries.

Thomas stated that it might have been easier to rezone the whole area but there is residential development already in progress, so that was not a productive angle to approach the item.

***The motion failed unanimously by polled vote. All 4 Commissioners voted no.***

- b.** (PH) Conditional Use Permit application request for a cottage industry business within Lot 7, Block 62 of the Wrangell Townsite, zoned Single Family Residential, according to Plat No. 2008-4, requested by Wesley Seward.

***Public Hearing Opened***

Wesley Seward - AK Hobby Rocks is a hobby retail shop. He stated that he is working to become a zoned retailer to expand product offerings.

***Public Hearing Closed***

***M/S KS/AH move to approve the findings of fact and the conditional use permit request submitted by Wesley Seward to operate a hobby store which includes a space for clients to play games and cards purchased at the shop under the following conditions:***

- 1. Two off-street parking places must be provided; and,***
- 2. Business must be conducted during semi-normal business hours (e.g. 8:00 AM-10:00 PM)***

Hutchinson asked where the two spots would be located. Seward stated that there is ample room on his property for upwards of eight cars. Henson asked what the potential max capacity would

be. Seward stated that there are 5-10 people throughout the day, for special events, there might be 10-15 people. Henson asked what hours are being kept. Seward stated that it is typically evening hours ranging from 3:00 PM and 10:00 PM, sometimes as late as 11:00 PM. Watkins asked if the business is currently open. Seward stated yes and that his neighbor also runs a home business. Watkins stated his concern is the availability of parking. Seward stated that there is already a lot of traffic in the area and stated that there is ample room for parking. Seward also stated that if the business continues to expand, he is looking to move downtown. His goal is to be the biggest retailer of this hobby in southeast Alaska.

Thomas stated that the Seward family was not aware of the needed conditional use permit and thought a business license was sufficient. She also stated that 2nd Ave is very busy, and the borough is considering developing a sidewalk due to young pedestrians walking along the road which would greatly reduce the available parking Mr. Seward currently has.

Henson stated that the proposed operating hours by Mr. Seward may pose an issue as they pass the stated 10:00 PM cut-off. Hutchinson asked if the lighting is good on the street. Seward stated it is not good and extremely dark in the winter.

***Motion approved unanimously by polled vote. All Commissioners voted yes.***

- c. Request from Steve Thomassen to purchase Borough Real Property identified as Lot 2, Block 63A, Industrial Park Subdivision II, according to Plat No. 2000-9, zoned Holding.

***M/S AH/KS move to recommend approval of the application to purchase the Borough-owned real property identified as Lot 2, Block 63A, Industrial Park Subdivision II, according to Plat No. 2000-9, zoned Holding, requested by Steve Thomassen with the following conditions:***

- 1. A request to withdraw the lot from "Holding" and subsequent rezoning to "Industrial" shall be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission for a recommendation for approval or denial of the request to the Borough Assembly to amend the zone prior to the procedures of disposal.***
- 2. The withdrawal from the "Holding" zone and subsequent rezoning to "Industrial" shall comply with the procedures outlined in the Wrangell Municipal Code Section 20.***
- 3. The sale of the aforementioned lot shall have "Construction as condition of sale - Construction completion terms for industrial development" as per WMC 16.12.150. All terms of the Wrangell Municipal Code from Title 16 and Title 20 shall apply to development of the requested lots***

Director Thomas provided the administrative report. Thomas stated that by approving this item, a precedent would be set to remove lots from holding and rezone them to industrial. A rezone petition will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

***M/S AH/KS move to table item 8c until the next regular meeting.***

***Motion to table approved by all in favor.***

- ~~d. Request from Steve Thomassen to purchase Borough Real Property identified as Lot 2, Block 63A, Industrial Park Subdivision II, according to Plat No. 2000-9, zoned Holding.~~

***M/S KS/AH move to recommend to the Borough Assembly approval of Mr. Brett Woodbury's request to purchase Borough Owned Real Property identified as:***

***Lot 5A, Block 61, Industrial Park Subdivision II, according to Plat No. 2001-7, zoned Industrial***

***Lot 8, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 7, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 9, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 10, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 11, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 12, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***  
***Lot 13, Block 66, Wrangell Industrial Park, according to Plat No. 92-9, zoned Industrial***

***The sale of the aforementioned lots shall have "Construction as condition of sale - Construction completion terms for industrial development" as per WMC 16.12.150. All terms of the Wrangell Municipal Code from Title 16 and Title 20 shall apply to development of the requested lots.***

Director Thomas provided the administrative report. Thomas stated that there is other interest in the properties stated in this item. Staff's recommendation is to not approve the motion since construction for Fifth and Sixth Avenue is currently out to bid for competitive proposals. The construction project intends to construct the right-of-way that will allow access to the lots of interest. St Clair asked if Mr. Woodbury were to purchase the lots if he would complete the right of way. Mr. Woodbury stated that he would.

Thomas reminded the Commissioner that the decision to sell the lots should remain a separate discussion item regarding the construction of the roads, specific to whether Mr. Woodbury would construct the roads. There is no guarantee or agreement in place for Mr. Woodbury to construct the roads in exchange for the lots (trade).

Thomas stated that when the lots become available for bidding, Mr. Woodbury, like anyone, can bid and develop the land. St Clair asked if there have been any other parties interested in purchasing or bidding on the lots. Thomas said that there have been other interests. Henson stated if there was no other interest in the lots, the Commission would recommend to sell the lots.

Watkins asked if these are the last lots left in the industrial park. Thomas stated yes, under the current plans. Watkins stated his concern is giving control of the land to one person. Mr. Woodbury stated that he plans to build a subdivision and sell it to others. Secretary Henson re-read the letter from correspondence from Todd and Katherine White into the record. Mr. Woodbury stated that he has been attempting to purchase this land for over 10 years.

Henson stated that she doesn't believe that Planning and Zoning should have the authority to change what the Assembly has put in motion. Watkins asked if the land has been appraised as an inaccessible lot. Thomas stated that would be factored in on the appraisal, although the appraisal has not yet been completed.

***M/S AH/GW motioned to table the item until the next regular meeting in July.***

***Motion to table approved by all in favor***

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE.**

**10.COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**11.ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Next scheduled meeting is July 11th, 2024, at 5:30 PM

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Henson, Secretary

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Terri Henson, Chair