

**Minutes of Planning & Zoning Commission
Held on January 22, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 am

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Kat St. Clair, Chair Terri Henson, Gary Watkins, Jillian Privett, Apryl Hutchinson

STAFF: Kate Thomas, JR Meek

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: None

4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) Approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission regular meeting minutes from November 4, 2025.**
- b) Approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission regular meeting minutes from December 1, 2025.**

M/S: Hutchinson/St. Clair

Motion passed unanimously.

6. DIRECTORS REPORT:

Tuesday, January 27 @ 6:00 PM: Work Session & Borough Assembly Meeting

- The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate a 60-minute presentation to the Borough Assembly and the community providing a high-level overview of the EDA Grant Program and the three project components, including key project and grant development milestones. The public will have opportunities to provide input through official meetings as Persons to Be Heard, digital surveys, and public engagement activities, including the February 17 town hall.

Tuesday, February 10 @ 6:00 PM: Work Session & Borough Assembly Meeting

- The Borough will hold a work session of the Borough Assembly to review and discuss the Preliminary Engineering Reports for the Deep-Water Port Redevelopment, Waterfront Expansion, and Flume Replacement Projects. All three projects will be included in CBW's application for the EDA Disaster Supplemental Grant for Industry Transformation.

Tuesday, February 17 @ 5:30 PM: Community Town Hall

- The Borough will host a community town hall facilitated by Corvus Design and Rain Coast Data. The town hall will provide the public with clear, accessible information on

the Waterfront Expansion, Deep Water Port Redevelopment, and Flume Replacement projects, along with a high-level overview of anticipated economic impacts and other considerations relevant to everyday residents. Facilitators will lead interactive activities designed to gather community input and better understand public perspectives, concerns, and priorities related to the projects and their potential economic outcomes.

7. CORRESPONDENCE: None

8. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

Jim Anderson provided comments regarding the construction and development industry in Wrangell. He stated the importance of conducting additional community studies to gather resident feedback and encouraged transparency when engaging with outside entities seeking to develop industry within the Borough. Anderson also requested from the Borough for clarification regarding industrial landownership and future control of development sites.

Bruce Smith Jr. spoke specifically on Item 9c – GreenSparc, raising several concerns related to the electrical capacity of Wrangell's utility system (Tyee Capacity). He questioned how the proposed data center would utilize electricity in connection with the broader community and expressed concern over the potential for increased utility costs to residents. Mr. Smith also asked for clarification on the role of the third generator, including whether it could adequately support the additional power load, and what liability the City might assume as a result. He requested that the City provide supplemental materials outlining the expected impacts of the data center project and called for a clearer explanation of why 6-Mile was chosen as the preferred site.

Jim Freeman also addressed the Commission regarding the GreenSparc proposal. Mr. Freeman highlighted the importance of proceeding cautiously and responsibly, even when projects appear promising. He voiced support for GreenSparc but asked the Commission to evaluate whether the available space at 6-Mile would be sufficient for multiple industries, and requested further studies from GreenSparc explaining why Wrangell, Alaska is the most suitable location for the project. He echoed concerns regarding rising energy costs and their potential impact on the local community, reiterating his general support for both AML, JAG and data center development, but with a measured and cautious approach.

DJ McConachie also shared his support for prior comments and focused primarily on concerns about the siting of the data center at 6-Mile. He suggested that future business development should aim to be complementary to JAG operations in the area. Mr. McConachie voiced concern about the anticipated power consumption of the data center and inquired about the battery backup systems, particularly whether they would include lithium-based components, which may not be accepted by JAG for processing or disposal.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) (PH) Preliminary Plat review of a Subdivision of Lot 6 (APN 03-011-150) and Lot 7 (APN 03-011-152) of USS 3534; and, Lot 10 (APN 03-010-216) and Lot PSS (APN 03-010-214) of USS 2589, and USS 3000 (APN 03-011-100), according to Plat No. 29-20, creating Lots A, B, C of the CBW Deep Water Port Subdivision, zoned Waterfront Development, owned by the City and Borough of Wrangell and requested by Tideline Construction.**

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Move to approve findings of fact and the preliminary plat for the CBW Deep Water Port Subdivision, creating Parcels A and B, as requested by the City and Borough of Wrangell in partnership with Tideline Construction, subject to the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Public Hearing Opened

No comment.

Public Hearing Closed

Staff provided an administrative report. The preliminary plat is a result of the Borough subdividing portions of the southern parcels which will be sold to Tideline Construction. The Borough consolidated all remaining lots into one parcel, thus creating Parcels A and B.

Staff recommended one condition of approval. An easement will need to be created between Parcel A and the Zimovia Highway Right of Way to carry utilities and access from Lot 20 to the southern tideland parcel. This is to preserve future access and utility construction.

Commissioner Watkins inquired about Parcel C and asked if it is still included in the proposed plat. Staff clarified that Parcel C no longer exists as an individual parcel, as it has been consolidated into the broader subdivision planning and is not included in the present motion.

Polled Vote – All in Favor

- b) (PH) Preliminary Plat review of a subdivision of Lot 5A, Block 61 (APN 02-028-204) of the Industrial Park Subdivision, according to Plat No. 2001-7, creating Lots 5A-1 and 5A-2 of the Woodbury Subdivision, zoned Industrial, owned and requested by Brett Woodbury.**

M/S: Hutchinson/St. Clair

Move to approve findings of fact and the preliminary plat for the Woodbury Subdivision, a subdivision of Lot 5A, Block 61 of the Industrial Park Subdivision, according to Plat No. 2001-7, creating Lots 5A-1 and 5A-2, as requested by Brett Woodbury, subject to the condition outlined in the staff report.

Public Hearing Opened

No comment.

Public Hearing Closed

Staff provided administrative overview. Applicant is seeking to subdivide the existing lot into two parcels. Staff reported that there are no specific restrictions affecting the subdivision beyond the requirement to obtain a driveway permit along Bennet Street.

Polled vote – All in Favor

- c) (PH) Request from GreenSparc to lease Borough-owned real property identified as Lot 6B, USS 2589 (APN 03-10-129) of the Mitchell-Buhler Subdivision, according to Plat No. 2015-13, zoned Waterfront Development.**

M/S: St. Clair/Watkins

Move to approve the findings of fact and recommend that the Borough Assembly approve the request from GreenSparc to lease Borough-owned real property identified as Lot 6B, USS 2589, at the Six-Mile-Deep Water Port, based on consistency with Waterfront Development zoning and adopted Borough plans, subject to the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Public Hearing Opened

Joan Sargent spoke on Item 9c. Sargent asked the Commission to consider community concerns surrounding the proposed GreenSparc development. She stated that she is neither for nor against the project but strongly encouraged the Borough to hold additional public meetings to increase transparency and explain the rationale behind the City's support for the project. Sargent asked questions about how the data center may affect the community, particularly regarding rising energy costs and infrastructure strain. She referenced her own research on the construction and operation of data centers and cited a Wrangell Sentinel article noting that the hydropower system at 6-Mile is currently at maxed capacity and may require a third generator to meet demand. She also mentioned that SEAPA has been approved for grant funding but that the funding had not yet been disbursed, causing a possible delay for additional turbine construction to be expected in December of 2027. Sargent stated that she has concerns about the community's ability to balance growth demands between new residential housing needs if JAG Marine Group develops at the site, and question how utility demands would be met with a large consumer like GreenSparc. Additional concerns include water consumption, noise pollution, and emissions associated with the proposed facility. Sargent asked the Commission to consider other, more suitable locations for the datacenter. Sargent also highlighted the need for local workforce development and vocational training opportunities, especially for youth for these developments. Sargent requested that the city to host additional meetings and Q&A sessions with the public for future economic development projects. She requested that the Commission table the item until further information is made available to the public.

Jim Freeman spoke on the community's desire for thoughtful planning. He stated cautious support for the project, provided that the City exercises due diligence in its decision-making process. Freeman spoke about the importance of strategic planning, ensuring that the right

projects are developed in the right locations and at the right time. He also suggested the creation of a vocational training program to prepare local residents and youth for jobs in 6-Mile which may include the data center, with the goal of retaining local population in Wrangell.

Jim Andersen briefly stated that additional documentation would be valuable for understanding the broader implications of the proposal.

Sam Enoka, representing GreenSparc, joined via Zoom to provide background on the company and responded to public concerns. He explained that GreenSparc was established as an alternative to traditional data centers, aiming to address sustainability and adaptability in an increasingly digital world, including the evolution of artificial intelligence. He also referenced established relationships with utility management and understanding energy demands for other larger data centers. Enoka stated the company's goal of bridging the digital divide while remaining conscious of the global demand for energy and the localized impact on host communities. He provided examples of GreenSparc's prior work in Alaska, including a 30-day deployment in Anchorage in 2023 and subsequent work in Cordova in 2024, where the company collaborated with local stakeholders and utility management to analyze electrical systems for best fit. He stated that conversations with the Borough Manager in early 2025 sparked the idea of GreenSparc locating in Wrangell. Enoka stated that conversations with utility executives enable the decision for best placement and minimum draw on energy resources. He reaffirmed the company's intent to remain responsive and transparent, and to answer all questions raised by the community.

Commissioner Hutchinson inquired about GreenSparc's timeline and integration process in Cordova. Mr. Enoka responded that the initial deployment took approximately 30 days, and due to the success of the project, partners in Silicon Valley took interest in its replication. He added that the Cordova project has since entered its expansion planning phase, which has been underway for several months.

Public Hearing Closed

Staff provided administrative report. Staff noted that the Economic Development Board previously reviewed the proposal and issued an advisory report that included stipulations for further consideration. The Port Commission elected to table the item pending additional information.

Staff stated that conversations are ongoing with GreenSparc in consideration of the broader EDA Grant planning efforts including other prospective tenants of the site. Staff stated projected water consumption for the data center is approximately 48,000 gallons, which was described as comparable to a household running a garden hose continuously throughout the day. Enoka added further clarification, explaining that the facility's cooling system does not draw high demands from the community's water supply, and is structurally different from traditional large-scale data centers. He emphasized that their system will require a water source to use as coolant for the data center.

Staff explained Wrangell's has excess energy during periods of the year. There are times in the winter, when demand is high and diesel generation is used to offset the energy demands. Staff stated that part of ongoing conversations will include determining protocols for addressing potential water or power shortages and which party would bear responsibility during such events.

Enoka stated that GreenSparc does not request special treatment and that its priorities are not above the community's needs. Company's goal is not to make renewable energy systems worse for residents, but rather to improve system resilience. Enoka discussed how data centers can serve as productive outlets for excess energy, giving utilities a beneficial load to redirect unused power.

Staff reported that the project is anticipated to generate approximately \$800,000 annually in electricity revenue, which would directly contribute to the Borough's electric reserve fund. Regarding emissions, staff confirmed that any lease requirements would include full compliance with State and Federal regulations. Staff stated that these details will be included in the full lease agreement and subject to negotiation.

Staff stated that the Borough is developing a fact sheet and educational materials that will be shared with the community once the economic and utility impact assessments and supporting documentation are complete.

St. Clair recommended a motion to table the item. Chair Henson opened the floor for discussion with commissioners.

Privett stated general support for the project but raised concerns about the proximity of the proposed location to the waterfront development area. She encouraged the City and GreenSparc to host public workshops and consider alternative sites that may offer more community benefit or fewer conflicts with other land uses.

Hutchinson asked whether GreenSparc had actively considered other locations. Enoka responded that site selection is heavily dependent on the utility provider, which helps determine viable connection points based on existing distribution infrastructure. He explained that the waterfront site was chosen not just for its energy availability, but because the infrastructure exists to deliver that energy. However, he reiterated GreenSparc's openness to relocating if another location better serves the community.

Watkins inquired about the facility's power load and whether it would operate with a continuous 24/7 demand. Enoka confirmed that it would. Watkins referenced instances when the Borough issued notices for the community to conserve power during diesel generation runs. Watkins stated this should be considered so the project does not compromise local energy availability for existing rate payers.

Chair Henson stated that the site is compatible with the purpose and uses, noting that the area consolidates industrial uses, which helps contain noise and emissions. As energy demand grows, the City would be positioned to pursue power infrastructure upgrades. She emphasized her preference for keeping the data center within the existing industrial zone,

also noting that it is setback from the physical waterfront as it does not require that level of access.

Light & Power Director David McHolland (via text communication) stated that it is a preferred site because it has its own designated circuit, so it does not impede the Boroughs current transformer at the switchyard in town or overload any of our feeders in town. It maintains the ability for the Borough to pick up town in a cold snap with the generators in town at the current power plant.

Staff provided a visual concept map illustrating the current infrastructure layout and planning for the 6-Mile waterfront development area. The map lists AML, barge loading/off-loading, JAG, and GreenSparc locations and boundaries.

Commissioner St. Clair motioned to table the item. No second was called. Polled Vote proceeded on the original motion.

Polled Vote - Motion passed by majority vote. Privett, Hutchinson, and Chair Henson voted yes. Watkins and St. Clair voted no.

d) (PH) Request from JAG Marine Group to lease Borough-owned real property identified as Lot 5 (APN 03-010-218), Lot 6 (APN 03-011-150), Lot 9B (APN 03-010-135), Lot 10 (APN 03-010-216), and Lot PSS (APN 03-010-214) of Plat No. 29-20, and Lot 20; and borough-owned tidelands identified as ATS 1249 (APN 03-011-200) of Plat 83-13, and ATS 1143 (APN 03-010-300) of Plat No. 80-10, zoned Waterfront Development.

M/S: Watkins/St. Clair

Move to approve the findings of fact and recommend that the Borough Assembly approve the request from JAG Marine Group to lease Borough-owned real property and tidelands at the Six-Mile-Deep Water Port, based on consistency with Waterfront Development zoning and adopted Borough plans, subject to the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Public Hearing Opened

No comment.

Public Hearing Closed

Staff provided an administrative report. The staff written report stated all relevant parcels that may be included in the lease. Further evaluation must take place to identify the final footprint for the JAG lease area. Staff stated that infrastructure upgrades will be necessary to support the proposed development, including improvements to utility access, the power grid, and general site feasibility.

JAG's operational demands and long-term growth potential were cited as key factors in selecting Wrangell, Alaska as the company's next strategic location for a new shipyard facility.

In addition, staff highlighted JAG's stated interest in local workforce development opportunities in partnership with the Borough and school district.

Staff added that JAG is also pursuing third-party partnerships related to housing development, with the goal of securing additional residential units prior to increasing on-site staffing, ensuring workforce housing needs are addressed as the project progresses.

Polled Vote – All in Favor

- e) (PH) Request from Frank Warfel Jr. to purchase Borough-owned real property identified as a portion of the A Street (vacating a portion of public right of way), USS 1593, according to Plat No. 2003-8. ("A" Street is adjacent to Lot 1, Block 1, and Lot 16B).**

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Move to approve the findings of fact and recommend that the Borough Assembly approve the request by Frank Warfel Jr. to vacate a portion of the A Street public right-of-way and to proceed with consideration of disposal of Borough-owned property, subject to applicable subdivision, platting, appraisal, and conveyance requirements.

Public Hearing Opened

Frank Warfel Jr. explained the reasoning behind his request. He shared that he had recently purchased Lot 16B from a neighboring property owner and proposed that the A Street right-of-way be vacated. Warfel explained that the vacation would allow him to consolidate the property and secure access to three other properties that he owns upland. He confirmed that he is willing to purchase additional property from the Borough and cover the cost of any required surveys.

St. Clair inquired about the Cassiar Street right-of-way, which appeared on the map in pink, and asked why it was being excluded from the proposal. Warfel responded that Cassiar Street is situated on a steep slope and had previously been brought before the Assembly approximately 12 years ago, at which time it was deemed undevelopable.

Public Hearing Closed

Staff provided an administrative report. Staff identified the lots owned by Mr. Warfel and the adjacent parcel by the Biastoch, which had since been sold to him. A portion of the A Street right of way was vacated in 2003, due to the fact that the Biastoch house was constructed within the right of way.

Staff explained that Cassiar Street remains undeveloped due to extensive bedrock and the high cost of site development, which has discouraged improvements to the area for decades. Staff provided a summary of the 25-year history of unresolved property access issues in this area (2003, 2008, 2012, 2022, and current request in 2026).

Staff spoke with neighboring property owner Richard Kerr, who was in opposition to the proposal. However, following Warfel's modifications to the request, Kerr reportedly withdrew

his objection. Staff also spoke with Rob Marshall, another adjacent property owner, who stated no opposition but requested an opportunity to purchase the right-of-way along the road centerline if Cassiar is ever vacated along his property line.

Chair Henson stated that one of her primary considerations was ensuring that A Street would still allow for some level of access and not be entirely cut off. She asked whether any portions of A Street could be vacated in a way that maintains consideration to adjacent property owners.

Chair Henson also commented on a potential land swap with Richard Kerr, asking whether vacating and reconfiguring parcels might benefit both parties. Staff stated that a land swap is potential, however it had not been discussed with the Borough Manager and/or property owners at this time.

(Back-up recording failed due to storage capacity limit. Recording ended in 2 hours, 30 minutes, 42 seconds. Record of the meeting is provided in the meeting minutes.)

Commissioners asked Warfel if he would be interested in selling the portion of the A street right-of-way back to the Borough as an alternative. Warfel stated that he is not in favor of returning the vacated right-of-way to the City, explaining that, based on historical development challenges in the area, the City might be unable to reliably provide utility or easement infrastructure. His intention is to develop the land independently, without relying on future improvements from the City. The structure that was encroaching the right of way has since been demolished.

Chair Henson requested further review and counsel of any legal ramifications that may arise if the vacation of A Street eliminates Mr. Kerr's access, particularly where it may cause a bottleneck in access to lots surrounding Warfel's properties and place the Borough in a difficult situation.

Chair Henson makes a motion to table the item. St. Clair seconds.

Polled Vote - Amendment Motion to table failed by majority vote. Watkins, Hutchinson, and Privett voted no. Chair Henson and St. Clair voted yes.

Polled Vote – Original Motion passed by majority vote. Watkins, Hutchinson, and Privett voted yes. Chair Henson and St. Clair voted no.

f) (PH) ORDINANCE NO. 1089 OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, ALASKA, AMENDING THE ZONING MAP TO ESTABLISH A ZONING DESIGNATION OF TIMBER MANAGEMENT FOR THE EARL WEST SUBDIVISION (ENTITLEMENT LANDS)

M/S: St. Clair/Hutchinson

Move to approve the findings of fact and recommend that the Borough Assembly adopt an ordinance establishing Timber Management zoning on designated Borough entitlement lands, identified as Earl West, recognizing this action as the initial zoning

designation of these lands and consistent with the Wrangell Comprehensive Plan and long-term land management objectives.

Public Hearing Opened

No Comment

Public Hearing Closed

Staff delivered a brief report, clarifying that the zoning action pertains specifically to the Earl West Subdivision and not to all Borough entitlement lands. Staff provided background on the development of the Timber Management zoning ordinance, referencing past meetings and stakeholder discussions that contributed to the framework.

It was noted that the Timber Management zoning designation does not preclude recreational use or the execution of timber contracts, but any such contracts would require approval from the Borough Assembly prior to implementation.

Staff stated that the State of Alaska Division of Forestry owns land in the immediate area and has timber harvest scheduled on their 5-year management plan. Staff reviewed land ownership in the immediate area utilizing the map as reference.

Polled Vote – All in Favor

g) Nomination and Appointment of Officers

Jill Privett nominated Terri Henson as Chair and Jill Privett as Vice Chair.

All in favor.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

11. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

12. ADJOURNMENT: 8:50 PM

ATTEST: _____

J.R. Meek, Secretary

Terri Henson, Chair