

Session 16-07, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Stroozas at 6:30 p.m. on May 4, 2016 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BOS, BRADLEY, ERICKSON, HIGHLAND, STROOZAS, VENUTI

ABSENT: STEAD

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Stroozas called for a motion to approve the agenda.

HIGHLAND/BRADLEY SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Public Comment

The public may speak to the Planning Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit).

Reconsideration

Adoption of Consent Agenda

All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non-controversial by the Planning Commission and are approved in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a Planning Commissioner or someone from the public, in which case the item will be moved to the regular agenda and considered in normal sequence.

- A. Approval of Minutes of March 16, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Time Extension: Foothills Sunset View Estate Add. No. 2

Vice Chair Stroozas called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

HIGHLAND/BOS SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Presentations

Reports

- A. Staff Report PL 16-20, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Commissioner Bos agreed to attend the May 9th City Council meeting and Commissioner Stroozas agreed to attend on June 13th. Commission Bradley said she could attend on May 23rd if there is anything to report.

Public Hearings

Testimony limited to 3 minutes per speaker. The Commission conducts Public Hearings by hearing a staff report, presentation by the applicant, hearing public testimony and then acting on the Public Hearing items. The Commission may question the public. Once the public hearing is closed the Commission cannot hear additional comments on the topic. The applicant is not held to the 3 minute time limit.

- A. Staff Report PL 16-21 CUP 16-02 at 3936 Svedlund Street for more than one building and a combined square footage of more than 8000 square feet

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report. He noted letter provided as a laydown item from neighboring property owner John Mitchell.

Barb Smith, applicant, said she is here to answer questions and she invited Troy Jones who will be doing the dirt work for the project to help with questions as well. Her husband couldn't be here tonight. Mrs. Smith explained the work they have done over the last three years has improved the area, having cleaned up and removed some of the cabins. The rest of the old cabins will go and be replaced with new code compliant structures, and there will be fewer buildings on the property than are there now. She pointed out they have areas designated on their drawings showing where the water will be directed to be absorbed. They are also considering installing a French drain on the uphill side to help improve drainage.

Vice Chair Stroozas opened the public hearing.

Michael McGuire, property owner adjacent to this project, commented the work the applicant has done has been great and he is generally supportive of the improvements they propose. He is concerned about the amount water catchment from the rooflines and how the water will be funneled on the property. While it doesn't trigger engineering, as a property owner below, it seems that most the water directed from the roof just sinks. The water catchment concerns him because it seems the water is hitting something and dropping on the properties below. He has talked to the applicant about the French drain that would move water to the east side. There seems to have been a rather large ditch on the north end of the property that turns into a semi shallow swale. He doesn't know what it's doing or where the drainage ends up, but it appears with the fill and lay of the land they are directing water off the property. He isn't comfortable with the water just sitting and leaching downhill eventually, especially with heavy rains and spring melt off. In the work he's doing with his dirt worker on his own property with vegetation and buffer trying to deal with all the water coming off

the hill and piping it someplace that makes sense to everyone is their main concern and focus. He thinks the property owner is willing to work with the neighbors; he would just suggest a little more engineering and water planning.

Maryann Lyda, city resident and neighboring property owner, said she hopes they aren't planning to put the back alleyway through. She doesn't need a speed zone going through there. The land over there by the trees fills up with water every spring and it only takes 2 or 3 days for the water to disappear. There's a lot of water that comes over that hill. ACS had water under their area two years ago and she's had water in her front yard going down that ditch nonstop. Her biggest concern is she doesn't want to see the alley go through.

There were no further public comments and the hearing was closed. Vice Chair Stroozas opened the floor to rebuttal and questions for staff and the applicant.

Troy Jones, president of East Road Services, responded to questions about the drainage and the alley. Mr. Jones said he is very familiar with the subject property and drainage is always a situation in Homer with the slope and water moving down the hill. There won't be any increase in the water on the property, the number of buildings and square footage of roof is decreasing. It is the best practice in the construction business and dirt work to make those settling ponds; it's the same thing that's at the college. Grass is planted in the pond and when water drains into it, it settles back into the soil. He doesn't know when the north ditch was put in, but it's been there quite a while. It's well rooted with alders and grass now, which slows down the movement of the water. He doesn't know if there is a city storm drain in the vicinity that the French drain could dump into, but that might help mitigate some of the water flow.

City Planner Abboud noted the catchment and storm drains on Pioneer aren't sized for anything other than runoff from Pioneer Avenue. The ditch there is a retention structure, and the end of the ditch could be plumbed up to hold a little more. There's no cut, fan, or push that is obvious so he thinks the water goes down and then disperses.

Mr. Jones said he thinks the plan for the alley is to leave it alone and sees no reason to open it up. It isn't creating any issues as its better not to disturb it.

HIGHLAND/ERICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF REPORT PL 16-21 AND CUP 16-02 AT 3936 SVEDLUND STREET FOR MORE THAN ONE BUILDING AND A COMBINED SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MORE THAN 8000 SQUARE FEET WITH STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND FINDINGS.

Commissioner Highland referenced Mr. Mitchell's suggestions in his letter and asked if something should be included to strengthen the drainage requirements. City Planner Abboud said they could add language if they feel it's warranted and can state valid reasoning for it. Mr. Mitchell's recommendations are highly technical and he thinks they could design retention areas that won't require an engineer.

There was some brief discussion regarding the storm water plan. City Planner Abboud commented there is language in code that says you can't create ponding or offsite negligence, noting that

sometimes it's tough to prove as development happens in an area. He thinks what is being recommended is appropriate.

Commissioner Venuti asked Mr. McGuire about about the drainage work on his property and Mr. McGuire gave a brief explanation.

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen reminded the commission that the public hearing was closed and the time for questioning the audience ended.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO ADD CONDITION 5 THAT THE SITE DRAINAGE BE DIRECTED TO RUN OFF TO THE AREAS DESIGNATED ON THE SITE PLAN ON PAGE 17 OF THE PACKET.

There was brief discussion.

VOTE (Amendment): YES: HIGHLAND, ERICKSON, VENUTI, STROOZAS, BRADLEY, BOS

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti asked if they need to add a condition specific to Fire Marshall approval. City Planner Abboud said he will have to get something from the Fire Marshall before he can permit it, so it isn't necessary to add a condition.

VOTE (Main motion): YES: BOS, HIGHLAND, ERICKSON, VENUTI, STROOZAS, BRADLEY

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report PL 16-22 Pratt Museum Zoning Map Amendment

Commissioner Bradley stated she has a conflict of interest as an employee of the Pratt Museum.

HIGHLAND/BOS MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER BRADLEY HAS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: ERICKSON, STROOZAS, BOS, HIGHLAND, VENUTI

Commissioner Bradley left the table.

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Bill Smith and Patrice Krant, members of the Pratt Museum Board addressed the Commission. Mr. Smith explained that Diane Converse, Museum Director, was ill and could not attend tonight. He explained the museum has been working on a plan to improve the facility for a number of years. They need to consolidate into one district before they can apply for their CUP. Mr. Smith spoke briefly of the stages of the development touching on some information specific to the site plan.

Ms. Krant thanked for the staff for their work and recommendations regarding the rezone. She emphasized the importance of the need of the new and more modern building for the purpose of handling and preserving their collections.

Vice Chair Stead opened the public hearing.

Ralph Broches, city resident and neighboring property owner, commented in support of the zoning changes. His only concern would be if it affected his properties zoning, but it does not appear to do that. He is in favor of the new building and agrees that zoning to Commercial Business District is the most appropriate.

Lou Stewart, city resident and neighboring property owner, has properties on the northern boundary. He commented in support of the zoning change to Central Business District for the museums property. He commented briefly about his concerns on the preliminary drawings relating to opening up a driveway onto Spruceview. On page 33 he noted Spruceview is the third street the north boundary and is the one that would impact his lots.

There were no further comments and the hearing was closed.

There was no rebuttal and no questions for staff. City Planner Abboud noted that a CUP will be forthcoming and that will be the time to address the site design.

BOS/HIGHLAND MOVED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPORTS AMENDING THE ZONING MAP TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION OF THE SPLIT ZONED LOT AT 3779 BARTLETT STREET TO COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT FOR THE ENTIRE LOT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: STROOZAS, VENUTI, HIGHLAND, BOS, ERICKSON

Motion carried.

Commissioner Bradley returned to the table.

Plat Consideration

Pending Business

New Business

Informational Materials

- A. City Manager's Report – April 25, 2016
- B. Memo from the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission re: marijuana in the Marine Commercial District

Comments of the Audience

Comments of Staff

Comments of the Commission

Commissioner Highland had no comments.

Commissioner Bradley thanked everyone.

Commissioner Erickson commented the worksession was interesting and she looks forward to more planning for the cemetery and talking about what will make it nicer. As one person commented it has really fallen into disrepair over the years and it's not a comforting place to go. It will be nice to give it some definition moving forward, so she appreciates that conversation.

Commissioner Bos echoed those sentiments about the cemetery. Everywhere he's been, towns have been really proud of their cemeteries and he doesn't get that feeling from the public about our cemetery. He commended Mr. Stroozas on his job chairing the meeting tonight.

Commissioner Venuti updated the Commission on some work by the Borough Planning Commission. He said one common topic they address is material extraction sites, known as gravel pits. The Borough permits the sites and enforces the rules that apply but there is little protection for the neighbors. Whenever there is a gravel pit on the agenda the house is full and most walk away disappointed because the decisions are weighted in favor of the applicant. It's ongoing and the commission is trying to come up with more practical rules. It's easy to see the value in that it's a major investment, creates jobs and produces a needed commodity, so it's an interesting process. A solution is local option zoning and there are four of those zones. We are fortunate that we are in a city where we have zones. Another topic is property owners along the river wanting to put in light penetration ramps so people can fish without damaging the environment. It's interesting work and he enjoys it. He also said they have talked about the great job the Planning Department job does, so they got together and got a gift card for the Planning staff and Deputy City Clerk.

Vice Chair Stroozas commented as a Planning Commission they have the opportunity to plan for the cemetery. It isn't a very nice looking place to go and he liked the idea of working toward something like Soldotna's cemetery. He likes the columbarium for people to do cremations and not have an environmental impact. They take up less space and families still have a place to remember their family members. He announced Saturday the Chamber is hosting the annual clean-up day, the Shorebird Festival is the following week, and then the first cruise ship comes in. He wished success to everyone.

Commissioner Erickson commented that she would like to talk about how the Commission can make better weighted decisions regarding CUP applicants and the neighbors.

Adjourn

HOMER ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 4, 2016

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____