

Session 16-11, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Stead at 6:30 p.m. on July 20, 2016 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

Approval of Agenda

Chair Stead 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 June 15, 2016

Chair Stead called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

STROOZAS/HIGHLAND SO MOVED

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Presentations

Reports

A. Staff Report PL 16-36, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report.

Commissioner Venuti suggested there be a ribbon cutting ceremony on the new east/west corridor at Grubstake.

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 16-37, Conditional Use Permit 16-03 Soccer Association of Homer

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Daniel Zatz with the Soccer Association of Homer said he is here to answer questions the Commission might have about the project. He commented briefly they are working with the City and Borough to finalize the lease on the property and hope to begin excavation in August. Their goal is to have the structure up and ready to use by mid-October.

Chair Stead opened the public hearing. There were no comments so he closed the hearing and opened the floor to questions.

In response to questions Mr. Zatz explained the structure will have R25 insulation, be heated with forced air, and they are working to get the natural gas line brought in. They haven't completed their fundraising and have about \$120,000 to go, but they have enough to get started with the excavation, put up the building and floor, and maybe lighting. They hope to have the funding completed to finish up heat and bathrooms soon. Mr. Zatz reviewed some of the funding that has come in and said it's very heartwarming to see how many people in the community want to make this happen. He also responded that the building is less than 12,000 square feet because a larger size would trigger more requirements and raise the cost, but hopefully there can be a larger building in the future. The size will be suitable for other events besides sports, but the primary use will be sporting activities for all age groups. He thinks there will probably be time available for other uses that won't harm the building, and the hope is there will be something cool going on there at all times. They estimate the cost to be \$200 per day for the facility to be open and there will be a fee to play at the building to cover the daily costs.

VENUTI/BOS MOVED TO APPROVE CUP 16-03 AND STAFF REPORT PL 16-37 WITH FINDINGS 1-10 AND CONDITIONS 1-3.

Commissioners commented that this is an exciting project that will be a real asset to our community.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report PL 16-38 Towers and Tall Structures Ordinance

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Chair Stead opened the public hearing. There were no comments and the hearing was closed.

There were no questions from the Commission.

STROOZAS/VENUTI MOVED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION FORWARDS THE DRAFT ORDINANCE 16-XX REGARDING TOWERS AND TALL STRUCTURES TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Plat Consideration

A. Staff Report PL 16-40, Commerce Park 2016 Preliminary Plat

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

There was no applicant presentation and no public comment.

Chair Stead asked if the flag had been modified on one of the drawings. City Planner Abboud explained the drawing on page 52 is the current configuration. On page 50 is the notice that went out showing the panhandle to the southwest and it was moved to the east.

BRADLEY/BOS MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF REPORT PL 16-40 AND THE COMMERCE PARK 2016 PRELIMINARY PLAT REPLAT WITH STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Pending Business

A. Staff Report PL 16-31, Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 6 Parks & Recreation

City Planner reviewed the staff report.

Commissioner comments and questions included:

- The CUP they approved tonight for the indoor recreation facility helps move forward with goal 5 to offer year-round opportunities to the community.
- Line 25 on page 57 reads 4.73 FTE's are budgeted. Question was raised if 4.73 is correct.
 - City Planner Abboud noted that Parks and Recreation has their regular staff and seasonal hires. He will follow up and confirm the number.
- Question was raised if line 26 *There is also a desire to better coordinate all efforts through a combined parks and recreation program* is an appropriate comp plan statement or if it's editorializing.
 - City Planner Abboud explained that is a community and an internal conversation. If the demand is to grow the program then we need a structure to grow it. Currently Parks Maintenance is part of Public Works and Community Recreation is part of Administration. There would be benefit to a department that is all encompassing.
- Line 66 *Partner with other organizations to continue providing programs and facilities* is almost the same as line 48 *Expand and promote adopt a park program..*
 - Others didn't see it as the same and City Planner Abboud said generally they are similar and perhaps they could be expanded a little more for clarification.
- Line 50 number 3 in the in the implementation strategies to establish the park endowment fund and possibly partner with the Homer Foundation is a really good idea.

The Commission agreed overall that staff has done a great job and commended Rick and Julie for their work.

B. Staff Report 16-32, Homer Accelerated Water Sewer Program (HAWSP)

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report, highlighted areas of the HAWSP, and touched on the process for initiating a special assessment district. He explained the City Council directed the Commission to develop recommendations for HAWSP regarding:

- How the City should apply the debt service ratio;
- When the debt service ratio should be calculated;
- When pending HAWSP projects should be inputted into the debt service ratio calculation;
- A process for keeping track of and prioritizing special assessment district requests that occur while a moratorium on new districts is in effect;
- A process for lifting and implementing a moratorium on water and sewer special assessment district projects.

Commissioner Highland asked who is in charge of the program now and if this is causing people not to develop property in town. City Planner Abboud explained that several departments play a role in the process including the Clerk's office, Public Works, and Finance. He isn't sure if this prohibits anything because we aren't doing new subdivisions with the fund. However if someone has a bigger lot and the water and sewer lines are installed, they are able to subdivide in to smaller lots down to 10,000 square feet. In areas like Mission Road, there aren't a lot of customers, but if there were denser developments, it would increase the customer base.

Commissioner Highland commented the criteria listed at the bottom of page 81 need to be improved on and clarified.

City Planner Abboud suggested at some point they will need to come up with a staff recommendation that would include him, Public Works, Finance, and possibly some others to evaluate and determine when the debt service ratio should be calculated, and when to evaluate projects and get them in the system to keep the debt ratio going. A set of criteria could be established to rank the projects, and decide who would evaluate the projects. One part the Planning Commission could weigh in about is how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan because the future land use map shows areas we would like to see go more dense.

Commissioner Stroozas commented he's surprised this would come to the Planning Commission because it's more of an accounting issue. That aside, with the work they have done to protect the Bridge Creek Watershed area, now we should bring water and sewer in to those areas that don't have it and increase the density.

Commissioner Highland is also surprised this has been put before them. In her estimation, the departments this effects need to meet, because they have dealt with it. That group could come up with a recommendation and then we would try to put it into the comp plan. She could see the Commission playing that part.

Chair Stead commented having worked from a utilities perspective this is an odd way of doing business. He's used to cost causer/cost payer, not equal shares and once the debt is incurred by the city for the project, that debt should be re-allocated without a CPI because the debt already exists. He isn't sure it's their job to redefine how this program works; it's more of a finance and engineering collusion to figure it out.

The Commission agreed it would be a good idea to have a worksession with the Finance Director and Public Works Director.

City Planner Abboud reviewed some of the history of the program noting the initial cost to property owner was 50% of the project cost. Now it's becoming cost prohibitive to extend the system.

Chair Stead read from the plan that the intent is to improve health and welfare of the citizens by connecting residences to city water and/or sewer, thereby increasing the number of users on the system, increasing property values, and improving quality of life. Using the funds for maintaining the system doesn't increase the number of users or property values. He questions how using the funds to perform maintenance on the system meets the intent of the program.

There was discussion that using the program to help pay for the water treatment plant wasn't the right way to use the funds. It's a great system, but is too expensive and impacting the debt ratio.

New Business

- A. 2017 Capital Improvement Plan Review

The Commission discussed briefly that they had discussed the Capital Improvement Plan during their worksession. All the Commissioners individually stated their top two CIP projects were the Ice Plant Upgrades and the Large Vessel Haul Out and Repair Facility.

STROOZAS/BOS MOVED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE ICE PLANT PROJECT AND LARGE VESSEL HAUL OUT AS THEIR UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY CITY COUNCIL.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Informational Materials

- A. City Manager's Report – June 22, 2016
- B. KPB Ordinance reducing the number of commissioners on the KPB Planning Commission

Comments of the Audience

Syverine Abrahamson commented that she's been a resident in the area for over 30 years. She heard there was a vacancy on the Commission and was here observing tonight to see if it's something she would be interested in. Her job is the coastal training program doing community collaborative planning and providing trainings and workshops. Her background is in geo-science, a lot of GIS and remote sensing and things like that. She grew up in the area, Homer is her home town, she works in the city and is very involved in some of the challenges the city will face like storm water management, coastal erosion, flooding, and transportation issues.

Comments of Staff

City Planner Abboud commented he will keep working on agendas along with all the other interesting things he gets to do. He's excited about the marijuana meeting; he has quite a memo for the meeting that includes an estimate of how much revenue the city would collect if we started some sort of retail taxation.

Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen commented about the upcoming candidacy filing period for City Council and Mayor.

Comments of the Commission

Commissioner Highland commented she heard on the radio about an eco-district. There is a town that made the whole town an eco-district which means they took in the environmental concerns of the whole city for every decision that got made. She'll be bringing it up again.

Commissioner Bradley thanked everyone. She thinks all the CIP projects are great and it's always interesting going through the selection process.

Commissioner Bos commented it was a good discussion about the CIP projects. He thinks they made the two right choices and he'll be waiting to find out what comes of their input.

Commissioner Venuti commented it was an interesting meeting. He commented about the Borough ordinance that was included in the informational material. He explained it reduces the membership of the Borough Planning Commission from 11 to 9 members. The Borough Planning Commission opposed it unanimously and the Cities of Seldovia, Soldotna, Kenai, and Seward presented resolutions in opposition. The change impacts Homer in that there would be one seat for a member from Homer or from Seldovia to represent both communities. He thinks it's important that we maintain representation from all parts of the Borough because each city has their own challenges specific to their communities. It will be discussed further at the Assembly meeting on Tuesday.

Tom Stroozas reported that Jorge is leaving the Chamber of Commerce in a few weeks and encouraged everyone who's worked with him to stop by and wish him well. They have found a replacement and he's encouraged that people in the community will like this person. Hopefully they will be able to come and start training with Jorge before he leaves.

Chair Stead said it was a good meeting and he's glad they dug into some of these things tonight. It was interesting to watch the discussion on the Capital Improvement Plan. We all have our pet projects, but agreed that there were better projects, and he appreciated that they came together in their choices.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 3, 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: _____