

Session 17-04, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Stead at 6:30 p.m. on February 15, 2017 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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

ABSENT: ARNOLD

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN  
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR MEYER

### **Approval of Agenda**

Chair Stead asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

BOS 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).

Charlie Stewart, city resident and representative of the hockey rink, commented in support of allowing auto sales in the Marine Industrial District. There was an auto sale last year in the hockey rink's parking lot and the company wants to rent the space again this year. The hockey rink didn't realize then that it was an issue and wants to do it the properly this time. It benefits the rink to have them there and also residents who want to buy cars. The lot is large enough to accommodate the company's needs and there are restrooms and office space in the building. He thinks it could be applicable to other sales like RV's at the RV park. He doesn't know if this could be considered and accessory use, but if there was something like that to allow for a short term, not permanent use.

Scott Adams, city resident, commented in support of working something out to allow some permits for short term venues like the auto sale at the hockey rink. The city gives out permits for short time venues and he thinks the city should be open to allowing a special permit. The sale was very low key last time and the rink is a non profit that is trying to raise money.

### **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 February 1, 2017
- B. Staff Report PL 17-18, Greatland Street Extension

Chair Stead requested item B. be moved to new business.

The Commission adopted the consent agenda by consensus.

### **Presentations**

- A. Captain Christi of Salvation Army Church re: Temporary Cold Weather Shelters for the Homeless

Captain Christi commented regarding efforts to address homelessness in our community. She explained what a temporary cold weather shelter might look like if taken on by the faith-based community, sharing concerns that she and other members have that this is a complicated and costly issue for churches to address. Zoning, permitting, and approval of the Fire Marshall makes it a legal operation within the city limits, but churches also have to be compliant within the scope of their own policies and procedures for programming.

She shared information from the Salvation Army's policy and procedure for programming called Protecting the Mission (PTM):

- They have strict guidelines that are intended to keep staff, volunteers, and participants safe while attending any Salvation Army sponsored event.
- They require all staff and volunteers fill out required paperwork and complete a background check.
- Any program they run at their facility must have at least two adults trained and current in their PTM at all times.
- There are strict rules about bathrooms, transportation, separating men from women and children for overnight programs.
- Operating a shelter would require a minimum of four staff members or volunteers.

For operating a temporary shelter at any location that would be willing to participate there are occupancy costs, any costs to upgrade the building to meet the Fire Marshall approval, and costs of storing supplies when the shelter isn't operational. Aside from operation costs she thinks many churches are at a loss as to where to begin to raise money to support a temporary cold weather shelter. These hurdles can be overcome by doing things like amending policies and applying for grants for funding a cold weather shelter, but it's a lot of work for a temporary program that is really just a band-aid to the homeless issue in our community. There is also a concern about how to shelter inebriates, which is one of the biggest obstacles to overcome.

Captain Christi explained that she is part of a homeless action committee that was developed after teens from the Rec Center presented their project, Homeless in Homer, to raise awareness of teen homelessness in Homer. They have been meeting for 18 months and branched into two committees,

one looking at establishing a safe homes network for unaccompanied homeless youth and the other is looking to establish a family resiliency complex with a shelter and transitional housing program. She explained their efforts and goals in working toward developing programs that will help people transition and become self-sufficient.

In response to questions there was discussion about current programs and services in Homer, a community needs assessment the homeless action committee is working on, and current circumstances of temporary shelter including couch surfing and living in cars and tents.

## **Reports**

- A. Staff Report PL 17-15, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff 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 17-16, Hearing Office for Appeals to the Homer Advisory Planning Commission

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

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

BOS/HIGHLAND MOVED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES ORDINANCE 17-07(S) AND RECOMMENDS ADOPTION BY CITY COUNCIL.

There were comments that this will help the process move quicker and may save the city money.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

## **Plat Consideration**

- A. Staff Report PL 17-14, Lloyd Race 2016 Preliminary Plat

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Gary Nelson, project surveyor, commented that he was available to answer questions. He added that they may remove the westerly two lots from this subdivision if they experience problems with approval of septic provisions of code. They are hoping the new line will go down an existing ravine to help improve a bad situation.

There was no public comment.

There was brief discussion clarifying Mr. Nelson's comments that the two westerly lots may be removed from the subdivision if the lots can't meet the code requirement for septic on the lots.

HIGHLAND/BRADLEY MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF REPORT PL 17-14 AND LLOYD RACE 2016 PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There was brief discussion that staff recommendation number two addresses accepting the full right of way as submitted or accepting it as shown in exhibit A.

VENUTI/BOS MOVED TO AMEND TO INCLUDE THE RIGHT OF WAY AS SUBMITTED IN ATTACHED DRAWING EXHIBIT A.

In response to question raised about the dimensions of the right of way in exhibit A Public Works Director Meyer explained the right of way as originally proposed includes some very steep terrain that may be unusable. The triangular area shown in exhibit A provides a uniform and usable right of way line running along the south side without any jogs or breaks in it.

VOTE: (Amendment): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

There was no further discussion on the main motion as amended.

VOTE: (Main motion as amended): NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Chair Stead called for a recess at 7:41 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 7:47 p.m.

### **Pending Business**

#### **New Business**

A. Staff Report PL 17-17, Temporary Cold Weather Shelters for the Homeless

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report, city code provisions, and Anchorage's cold weather plan for the homeless. He said staff is looking for input about how this might materialize.

The Commission included Captain Christi in their discussion and addressed the following points:

1. Allowances for homeless shelter as Conditional Use Permit.
2. Anchorage's plan addresses health and safety and interacts with their zoning code.
3. Concerns with neighborhood characteristics regarding the occupancy of a dwelling versus health, life, and safety concerns for the number of people lodging in a place.

4. An organized concerted effort for a place for the homeless to go, takes it from helping people who need a place for the night to it becoming a shelter.
5. Consider a hostel as a location for a temporary emergency location.
6. The councilmember may see the conditional use permit as a barrier to service and that it fits with many churches' missions. However, there isn't a group that has expressed a willingness to plan a cold weather shelter.
7. Removing the barrier and allowing churches or other organizations to do this, may result in the city defining parameters for a cold weather shelter for the homeless, and then the groups could come forward with a plan.
8. Many churches, while they abut a residential area, have large lots that provide some separation from the residential area.
9. A temporary cold weather shelter could be operated in many different ways, but issues remain regarding cost, staffing, and facilities to provide the services.
10. The homeless action committee is utilizing the community needs assessments that have been done through the hospital and MAPP in their assessment.
11. Weighing whether it is more productive to focus time and energy on a temporary service or putting the time and effort to work out logistics of something permanent.
12. The conditional use process allows neighbors to weigh in.

Recommendations included:

1. Do an assessment of resources available in the community and see if there are suitable buildings that would fall into the current definition of a rooming house or hostel, without making a new definition.
2. Identify organizations for cost sharing.
3. Provide information MAPP has compiled relating to emergency shelters.
4. Develop a permit process for a cold weather hostel.

B. Staff Report PL 17-13, Auto Sales in Marine Industrial District

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

The Commission discussed the idea of a temporary permit. An intermediate merchant permit and an event permit aren't options because auto sales aren't an allowed use in the district. A conditional use permit for a temporary use might be an option.

At the request of Commissioner Venuti, Mr. Stewart returned to the table and explained the auto sale that took place at the hockey rink last year. The company attempted to use other spaces like the middle school parking lot but were told no. They brought about 50 cars down, parked them in the parking lot at the rink. They sold cars for 10 days and then took two days to get the remaining cars out. They wanted to come back in the fall, but were told not until this issue gets worked out. The company paid the hockey rink \$100 for each car sold and made a donation at the end of the sale. They used sandwich boards for signage. Mr. Stewart said they aren't looking for any special treatment and if there is an easy way this can work, that would be great. As a city resident, he wouldn't want a permanent car lot on the spot, but he recognizes that there isn't a place for locals to buy a new car.

City Planner Abboud explained an accessory use is related to the primary use on the property. Fundraising was suggested and there was brief discussion about some type of event permit or a temporary conditional use permit.

City Planner Abboud acknowledged that the event permit as an interesting idea and might be worth looking at but it needs to be crafted in a way that limits locations and times this can occur. He reminded the commission this isn't about the opportunity to fundraise, it's about the use of land on Marine Industrial.

ABRAHAMSON/BRADLEY MOVED THAT PLANNER INVESTIGATE CUP'S OR MORE EVENT BASED PROCESSES TO ADDRESS THE COMMUNITY NEEDS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED INSTEAD OF GOING FORWARD THIS ORDINANCE AS WRITTEN.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

C. Staff Report PL 17-18, Greatland Street Extension

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

Public Works Director Meyer reviewed the packet information for the proposed Greatland Street Extension and the options, explained Councilmember Erickson brought this forward for Council's consideration, and at the request of the City Manager, options A, B, and C were developed.

He explained the simplest way to extend is option A, going straight up Greatland Street to Pioneer Avenue and the route identified in the Transportation Master Plan that addresses providing interconnectivity within the community and in this case suggests an additional east west corridor from Bartlett across to Hazel. He explained that some recent improvements in the area such as the restrooms at Bartlett and development of Waddell Way, have been done with consideration of this plan for an east west corridor. His recommendation is based on the overall master planning of the community as not to ignore the planning that has been done. City Council has proposed option A, Option B follows the Master Plan, and staff developed option C that completes a portion of what the Master Plan says and leaves the rest for a future time.

He supports following through with the Master Plan. It's hard to imagine Homer in 30 years with a fully developed central business district (CBD), but the recommendations of the plan will be very valuable as the density in the CBD increases to its ultimate capacity. Extending Greatland to Pioneer will create two intersections, the other being Bartlett coming down from the south, that will complicate traffic movement on Pioneer Avenue when the CBD is developed to a higher density. He recognized the cost difference but option A ignores how you get from point A to B through the CBD. The Council introduced the ordinance with option A and thinks several councilmember did so knowing the Planning Commission would review it further.

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Commissioner Venuti asked if option A could be done now and add option B later. Mr. Meyer said it could, but once extended money has been spent on a portion of road that isn't needed, and in the future there will be more development to work around and it will be more costly.

Commissioner Bos asked about sidewalks. Mr. Meyer envisions each of the options would include curb, gutter, sidewalks, streetlights and so forth, similar to the Grubstake (Waddell Way) improvement. Commissioner Bos recognizes the importance of following the Master Plan but because of the current fiscal climate would support option A.

Commissioner Abrahamson understands the need to support the Master Plan but questions if the money isn't there to do it correctly, do we need to do it right now, and if we do, supports the compromise identified in option C.

Commissioner Bradley also questions whether it's necessary to do it now. She has concerns about the traffic impacts of the east west corridor at Bartlett Street. It's already challenging to turn there now.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING ADJOURNMENT TO 9:45 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

Public Works Director Meyer explained that until now the focus has been getting a better pedestrian corridor up through the alignment and not get into the details of the road extension, but now a Councilmember thinks it's important a road be extended up through there.

Other discussion points included locating traffic signals and intersections, turning movements, that Greatland is eligible for the HART program, and whether the improvement is necessary right now.

Commissioner Abrahamson agreed that they should not consider an option that will be contrary to future needs and common sense to traffic flow.

ABRAHAMSON/VENUTI MOVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS OPTION C WITH A PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FROM GREATLAND STRAIGHT TO PIONEER.

Commissioner Bradley agreed and noted that they consider a left hand turn lane on the northern end of Bartlett. Currently people create their own and it's dangerous.

Commissioner Highland noted they hadn't talked much about option C and asked Ms. Abrahamson for further explanation.

Commissioner Abrahamson said the consideration of cost savings by the City Council in pointing out option A is the cheapest, that maybe option C is a compromise where they can do portions that will feed into the Master Plan and be long term planning solutions for the city, rather than a short term

cheaper fix. She thinks the City Council looks to the Planning Commission to provide the expertise and guidance for long-term vision, rather than trying to address issues as they arise. In consideration for the budgetary situation, option C is a good compromise that doesn't compromise the long term Master Plan.

Commissioner Highland expressed her concern that they need more time to consider this.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO POSTPONE TO THE NEXT MEETING.

There was brief discussion.

VOTE: YES: HIGHLAND, ABRAHAMSON, VENUTI, BRADLEY  
NO: BOS, STEAD

Motion carried.

### **Informational Materials**

A. Letter from Nina Faust regarding vehicle use on Bishop's Beach

### **Comments of the Audience**

Scott Adams, city resident, suggested looking at Soldotna's and Anchorage's temporary event permits. Regarding traffic, he'd like to see Homer become a roundabout and forget about lights and traffic crossings, it would work well and save money. He shared concerns about the HART fund and spending money for the road extension when council is looking to attack the program again for the general fund. Maybe they should have been looking at something different over this time. He also commented about the property on spit hat has a bunch of leftover debris and wonder what plans are. If the property owner is done trying to improve it, it needs to be cleaned up.

### **Comments of Staff**

### **Comments of the Commission**

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_