

Session 17-06, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Don Stead at 6:32 p.m. on May 17, 2017 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, BRADLEY, STEAD, AND VENUTI

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS BOS, ABRAHAMSON (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Advisory Planning Commission met for a worksession at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. The update of the Comprehensive Plan was on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Stead called for a motion to approve the agenda.

BRADLEY/HIGHLAND - SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. 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 the minutes of May 3, 2017 meeting

Chair Stead requested a motion to approve the consent agenda.

BRADLEY/HIGHLAND - SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report PL 17-50, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of his report. He noted the following:

- Expansion of Hickerson Cemetery has been awarded

- Noted that there was not really anything to report to Council for the May 30th meeting and asked if Commissioner Highland would change and attend the June 21st meeting where there will be something to report on that the Commission is doing.
 - o Commissioner Highland agreed to the change.
- Provided a summary of his experience at the Conference in New York City
 - o He has determined that he should be presenting at these conferences instead of attending
 - o Loosening the design requirements, smaller footprints, real estate law for Planners
 - o How to handle complaints of encroachment by neighbors with building structures
 - o Very busy Port town and interesting how people are concerned on the appearance, 8 million people means 24 million meals a day, mounds of garbage, piles of laundry
 - o Rising water, Hurricane Sandy, Sustainability, rebuilding on the barrier island
 - o The importance of the tax revenue to running the local governments
- Affordable Housing Options
 - o Some options mentioned are reducing lot sizes
 - Some would argue that these would be more valuable
 - o Row Housing, High Rises
 - Europe has been doing it since forever
 - o KPB is working on their Comprehensive Plan
 - Keep Rural as rural
 - How the Borough policies affect the city
 - No Standards right outside city limits pays and provides the services
 - Not sure what the solution would be or look like

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Staff Report PL 17-51, Sterling Hwy/Main Street AKDOT Right of Way Acquisition Preliminary Plat

Chair Stead read the title into the record. City Planner Abboud summarized the report that this is the preliminary plat for the land needed to construct the intersection of Sterling Highway and Main Street Traffic light. It was noticed extensively and there is no one present.

Staff Recommendations: Move to Approve the Preliminary Plat

There was no applicant present. Chair Stead inquired if the needed land was purchased.

City Planner Abboud stated he believed it was he did note that the only issue is the NAPA parcel may need a variance since the property owner did not cause this issue.

Chair Stead asked if Commissioner Highland would like to make a motion.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI - MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 17-51, STERLING HIGHWAY/MAIN STREET AKDOT RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION PRELIMINARY PLAT.

There was a brief discussion on the State of Alaska reimbursing the property owners. Commissioner Bradley commented on having a second traffic light in town and that it would be interested to see how they will deal with the NAPA corner.

VOTE. YES. HIGHLAND, BRADLEY, STEAD, VENUTI.

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud commented that they have doubled the amount of traffic lights since he started working for the city.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Staff Report PL 17-52, Comprehensive Plan Update, Chapter 4, Land Use

Chair Stead read the title into the record and opened discussion by acknowledging where the commission left off from the worksession prior to the meeting.

Discussion ensued on Chapter 4 Land Use on page 37 of the packet and noted that the Commission wanted to include a statement dealing with junk. The discussion contained the following points:

- Steep slopes, building standards refinement
- Fill standards
- Including Woodard Creek Plan in the Comprehensive Plan
 - o Not a city plan, speaks to essentially locking the land down
 - o More of a park development plan
 - o Advocating with the State to be more sensitive to the creek
 - o Mostly private land
 - o This is considered green infrastructure
- Remove Overlay
- Referenced Appendix D - Infrastructure Map
 - o Only informational purposes
 - o Unless regulations are to be implemented it will be informational only
- Debate on the detriment to the land versus the hydrology and green infrastructure and use of fill materials
 - o Need additional information

Chair Stead requested clarification on Commissioner Highland's comment on "it's a big deal" and referred to Objective A, under Goal 2 on page 4-11 of the plan (page 37 of the packet) or the Implementation Strategies

Additional comments on Woodard Creek were made by Commissioner Highland and City Planner Abboud that evolved into discussing critical habitat and the effects on the surrounding area.

Chair Stead requested clarification from Commissioner Highland when referring to "this thing". City Planner Abboud commented he is hearing a restriction. Commissioner Highland stated that she would like Homer to learn from actions and mistakes learned elsewhere so they do not continue doing the same thing. City Planner Abboud cited that others may advocate for engineering your way out of a problem and the whole regional bigger picture and concentrate population in one area to save nature in another. There is going to be a trade off somewhere.

Ensuing discussion contained points on doing something now to stop the non-reactive nature of doing nothing and establishing policy and regulations occurred between Commissioner Highland and City Planner Abboud.

Commissioner Venuti advocated for the commission to study Appendix D and come back for continued discussion at the June 7, 2017 regular meeting.

City Planner Abboud reviewed the implementation strategies under Objective B and concluded that they have done most of these items. Chair Stead agreed that many of these have been tackled. City Planner Abboud stated that a statement such as, "continue to review developmental standards and lessons learned" can be included.

A brief discussion on setbacks for streams and wetlands; establishing rules and laws regarding property; dealing with the economics that is Homer, and working on infill the existing neighborhoods, removing the density that is in rural residential and establishing a minimum like 1 acre lots. City Planner Abboud approached the map and pointed out various areas to use for containment. He noted that they crossed a line by allowing accessory buildings.

Commissioner Highland wanted to keep line 339-352 she advocated keeping them since they are not strong enough in her opinion.

Chair Stead restated that Objective B verbiage “to continue to evaluate the science to continue to refine, define and improve the implementation strategies” to explain he stated that this will allow them to scientifically prove that changes are for best.

City Planner Abboud used Park City Utah as an example where the municipality bought the land and designated trails and recreational aspects to development.

Commissioner Venuti suggested changing verbiage in line 356, “Homer is encouraged to continue practices that bring about Objective B.”

The Commissioners briefly discussed including language in the plan on green infrastructure, in Objective C requiring developers to include details about environmental reviewing Appendix D would help the commission to discuss this with substantive meaning.

Chair Stead stated he has some issues with requiring developers to include details about environmental features, what exactly is an environmental feature. Additional comments on what is an environmental feature, is more definition required was questioned.

He appreciates what the City Planner Abboud stated on impacts from one developer does not impact a future developer.

Commissioner Highland advocated that because of examples of land use issues in the past and present they can project how it will affect land use in the future.

Chair Stead again noted the time and that they will not be finishing this tonight or get past Goal 2, City Planner Abboud agreed and requested the commission to try to think of the policies and referenced New York City and how it was planned. He stated that there is a good example of being conscience of the wetlands, etc. Homer is pretty good with the Critical Habitat.

Commissioner Venuti reminded those present that they wait for the full commission and that it would have more value to have everyone at the table.

Chair Stead stated that they would have Goal 2, Objective C, D, E and read Appendix D and keep going then hopefully finish the last meeting in June.

City Planner Abboud stated that condensed thought is needed and wanted to have in the end a palatable policy that is acceptable to the Homer community. He confirmed that the Appendix D (map) will be included in the packet.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager's Report, May 8, 2017 City Council Meeting
- B. KPB Notice of decision for a Utility Easement vacation on the interior lot line between lots 16 & 19 of Barnett's South Slope Subdivision DEC 17 T6S R13W S.M.
- C. KPB Notice of Decision for Wintergreen Subdivision Raymond Addition Preliminary Plat

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF STAFF

City Planner Abboud had no comments.

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented that it was entertaining as always.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Venuti had no comments.

Commissioner Bradley thanked Commissioner Highland for the element of environmental awareness it provided food for thought for the next meeting. Thank you everyone.

Commissioner Highland thanked everyone for their patience.

Chair Stead noted that it was a difficult process to plan the future, especially when they have so many concerns.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. There is a worksession at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

Renee Krause, CMC, Deputy City Clerk

Approved: _____