

Session 17-07, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Don Stead at 6:33 p.m. on June 7, 2017 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

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

ABSENT: NONE

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD
PLANNING TECHNICIAN BROWN

The Advisory Planning Commission met for a worksession at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. The update of the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4 was on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Stead called for a motion to approve the agenda.

ABRAHAMSON/BRADLEY – 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 17, 2017 meeting

Chair Stead requested a motion to approve the consent agenda.

BOS/BRADLEY – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report PL 17-53, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of his report. There was some discussion about Mr. Abboud's trip to New York for the American Planning Association National Conference.

Commissioner Bos agreed to attend the July 24 City Council Meeting and Commissioner Bradley agreed to attend the August 14 City Council Meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Staff Report PL 17-54, Vacation of a portion of the Greatland Street Right-of-Way

Chair Stead read the title into the record. City Planner Abboud summarized the report including the location of the preliminary plat. He explained that this vacation petition vacates additional Right-of-Way, creating frontage onto Ohlson Lane.

Chair Stead opened the public hearing.

Kenton Bloom, city resident and project surveyor, signed in and said he is available to answer questions of the commission. He explained that the reason for requesting the Right-of-Way vacation in two parts was so they could get the neighbors on board with a plan that addresses drainage.

BOS/VENUTI - MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 17-54, VACATION OF A PORTION OF THE GREATLAND STREET RIGHT OF WAY WITH STAFF RECOMMENDATION THAT THE NORTHEAST HALF OF OHLSON LANE FROM CENTERLINE SHALL BE 30 FEET WIDE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report PL 17-55, Vacation of a portion of the Starboard Way Right-of-Way

Chair Stead read the title into record. City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

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

Commissioner Highland questioned whether a wetlands permit would be necessary. City Planner Abboud explained that the delineation by the Army Corps of Engineers is shown on the preliminary plat and that a permit would be necessary prior to development within the delineated area.

Commissioner Highland verbalized for the record that the commission received a letter from a neighbor who has concerns about the development of the cul-de-sac within the wetlands. Commissioner Bos commented that it may not be appropriate to bring up a letter during the public hearing. Commissioner Venuti pointed out that the letter is included in the packet and is therefore part of the permanent record. He also commented that it is good to see infill in this neighborhood. Chair Stead pointed out the possible misspelling of “Starbord Way” on the plat. Commissioner Bradley commented that the cul-de-sac presents a larger area of right-of-way dedication within the wetlands than is currently there.

BOS/VENUTI – MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 17-55, VACATION OF A PORTION OF THE STARBOARD WAY RIGHT OF WAY.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Staff Report PL 17-56, Mariner Village Subdivision Fraley Replat Preliminary Plat

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report.

BOS/BRADLEY – MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PL 17-56, MARINER VILLAGE SUBDIVISION FRALEY REPLAT PRELIMINARY PLAT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report 17-57, Foothills Subdivision Sunset View Estates Addition No. 3 Preliminary Plat

City Planner Abboud reviewed the staff report. He explained that the preliminary plat includes establishing just a few lots, out of the greater area of the subdivision, and creating road corridor easements for future road connections.

Commissioner Highland asked City Planner Abboud where the access for lot A-1 is located. City Planner Abboud said the access is onto Soundview Avenue. Chair Stead asked City Planner Abboud to clarify the reason for establishing a road easement instead of dedicating Right-of-Way. City Planner Abboud explained the conflict between City and Kenai Peninsula Borough code as outlined in the “analysis” portion of the staff report.

BOS/ABRAHAMSON – MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 17-57, FOOTHILLS SUBDIVISION SUNSET VIEW ESTATES ADDITION NO. 3 PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS 1-5.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Staff Report PL 17-58, Comprehensive Plan Update, Chapter 4 Land Use

Chair Stead read the title into the record and opened discussion. City Planner Abboud advised that the discussions of the work session should be summarized and that any changes to the Comprehensive Plan should be discussed for the record.

City Planner Abboud stated the Commission determined Goal 1 Objective A can be eliminated because implementation strategies 1-3 have been largely accomplished through zoning code since this plan was written and the other aspects of the objective, such as guiding growth to protect community character and the quality of the environment, are found elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

VENUTI/BOS – MOVED TO REMOVE “OBJECTIVE A” FROM GOAL 1, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Commissioner Venuti commented that discussion of this objective was lengthy during the work session.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud stated that the commission decided the Land Use Recommendations Map, found on page 4-7, should be moved to the appendix section of the plan.

City Planner Abboud stated that the commission determined Goal 1 Objective D can be eliminated because it attempts to plan for infrastructure where it is not practical and is therefore not a very useful objective. Infrastructure development should be focused on infill, responding to market demands, and guided by the Water/Sewer Master Plan, which identifies feasible areas for expansion of those systems.

HIGHLAND/BOS – MOVED TO REMOVE “OBJECTIVE D” FROM GOAL 1, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud stated that the commission decided Implementation Strategies 5 & 6 of Goal 1 Objective E are no longer relevant and can be eliminated.

Commissioner Highland commented that the following phrase from Goal 1 Objective A should be included at the end of the first paragraph of Goal 2: "Growth will need to be guided to meet Homer's concerns about protecting community character and the quality of the environment."

Several Commissioners and City Planner Abboud discussed the wording of the title of Goal 2 Objective B. The pros and cons of various phrases to replace the term "environmental functions" was discussed and it was decided to replace the word "Establish" with "Continue to review and refine."

Commissioner Abrahamson commented on Implementation Strategy 1 of Objective D, Goal 2. She wishes to amend it as follows: "...Build on examples set by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, **Natural Resources Conservation Service and Homer Soil and Water Conservation District.**"

City Planner Abboud stated the Commission had discussed eliminating Implementation Strategy 6 of Objective B, Goal 3 because it will be very difficult to carry out. Although it may benefit the City for projects outside City limits to comply with Homer's community design standards, the cost to seek compliance will be too high.

VENUTI/BOS – MOVED TO REMOVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 6 FROM OBJECTIVE B, GOAL 3, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Commissioner Abrahamson commented that DOT has recently announced a new community engagement strategy. Commissioner Bos agreed that it is a "tall order" to expect projects outside of city limits to comply with City design standards. City Planner Abboud suggested the City can continue to participate in outside-agency or regional programs such as the Scenic Byways Program.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud stated that the Commission discussed eliminating "Objective C: Work with the KPB to determine the costs and benefits of shifting some or all platting authority to the City of Homer" from Goal 3, Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan. The main reason for eliminating this objective is the City does not have the capacity for such a large increase in its budget.

BOS/BRADLEY – MOVED TO REMOVE "OBJECTIVE C" FROM GOAL 3, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud stated that the Commission agreed to eliminate Implementation Strategies 2 and 3 of Objective A, Goal 4 because they were accomplished with the update of the City parking code and the adoption of the Town Center Zoning District.

City Planner Abboud commented that Implementation 5 of Objective A, Goal 4 is out of date. The Commission held discussion and decided to amend it to read, "...Develop an attractive, business friendly commercial streetscape for Pioneer Avenue ~~and ensure the Town Square/City Hall project is designed to benefit Pioneer Avenue~~ and Old Town businesses."

City Planner Abboud stated that the Commission discussed the elimination of "Objective C: Encourage complementary commercial activity between the CBD and Homer Spit that benefits both in the appropriate locations and builds upon their geographic strengths" from Goal 4, Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan. This objective is addressed by the Spit Plan. Additionally, implementation strategies 1,2 and 4 have been accomplished through the establishment of the Marine Industrial/Marine Commercial districts and the Spit Plan adoption, while implementation strategy 3 is addressed in Transportation Chapter 5.

ABRAHAMSON/HIGHLAND – MOVED TO REMOVE "OBJECTIVE C" FROM GOAL 4, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Commissioner Venuti asked the group why there isn't more paid parking on the Spit. A general conversation about parking on the spit ensued.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud stated that "Objective D: Introduce new commercial districts to better encourage and accommodate commercial land uses in appropriate locations, and allow new types of commercial activities to take place" of Goal 4 was discussed during the work session. He stated that the Commission talked about eliminating this objective because the implementation strategies are addressed in other sections of code and a neighborhood commercial district on West Hill Road was previously proposed and failed.

BOS/ABRAHAMSON – MOVED TO REMOVE "OBJECTIVE D" FROM GOAL 4, CHAPTER 4 OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Several of the Commissioners discussed Objective A, under Goal 5.

HIGHLAND/BOS – MOVED TO REMOVE “OBJECTIVE A” OF GOAL 5, CHAPTER 4 OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ROLE CALL VOTE: 6 NO, 0 YES.

Motion failed.

City Planner Abboud introduced the June 7, 2017 Draft Future Land Use Map. He stated this map depicts a staff suggestion to rezone a portion of the Central Business District to General Commercial 1 in the vicinity of Lake Street and Heath Street.

Chair Stead asked City Planner Abboud if there was a big need for more commercial land. City Planner Abboud responded by saying there have been multiple inquiries for places to do outdoor sales, outdoor storage, and auto oriented activities, but the General Commercial 1 land is very limited and the lots that are available are too small.

Vice Chair Bos asked City Planner Abboud if he has spoken with any specific businesses who support the rezone. City Planner Abboud stated that he has not because it is not appropriate for him to do so without the support of the Commission. Further, he is bringing this up to the Commission now to get feedback and to find out if it is a concept that the Commission supports him in pursuing.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND – MOVED TO DIRECT THE CITY PLANNER TO INVESTIGATE REZONING A PORTION OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL 1 DISTRICT AS DISPLAYED IN THE JUNE 7, 2017 DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

City Planner Abboud reviewed the implementation strategies that have been accomplished since 2010 as depicted in the amended Land Use Implementation Table (page 97 & 98 of the packet).

The Commission discussed the Green Infrastructure Map found in Appendix D, page D3. The Commission wishes to seek an updated version of this map through Homer Soil and Water Conservation District.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager’s Report, May 30, 2017 City Council Meeting
- B. KPB Notice of decisions: Vacation of a 30 foot wide portion of Greatland Street

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF STAFF

City Planner Abboud and Planning Technician Brown had no comments.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Venuti commented that it was nice to do some planning, so often the Commission is reactive.

Commissioner Bos commented that the US Coast Guard is searching for a new location for a large cutter and that this gives the Homer Port and Harbor good reason for a harbor expansion.

Commissioner Abrahamson said she recently attended a FEMA resiliency training.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 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.

Travis Brown, Planning Technician

Approved: _____