

Session 18-05, a Regular Meeting of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Don Stead at 6:30 p.m. on March 7, 2018 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS STEAD, BENTZ, BERNARD, HIGHLAND, BANKS, BOS, AND VENUTI

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD  
DEPUTY CITY CLERK SMITH

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Stead requested a motion to approve the agenda.

BENTZ/BOS -SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **Public Comment**

### **Reconsideration**

### **Adoption of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of minutes of February 21, 2018

Chair Stead requested a motion to approve the consent agenda.

HIGHLAND/BOS –SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

### **REPORTS**

A. Staff Report 18-13, City Planner's report

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report and noted that two Ordinances were introduced at the City Council Meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup>. One regarding Marijuana Retail Facilities in the Marine Commercial District and one to disband the Cannabis Advisory Commission. Both of these Ordinances have a Public Hearing and Second Reading at the March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 City Council Meeting. He also mentioned that a Resolution to re-instate the Transportation Advisory Commission failed.

City Planner Abboud stated that 10 people attended the Comprehensive Plan Open House and that the public seemed very responsive.

City Planner Abboud explained that they will be short staffed for the next three weeks due to Travis Brown being on vacation.

City Council Meeting attendance is as follows:

March 12: Mandy Bernard

March 27<sup>th</sup>: Franco Venuti

April 9<sup>th</sup>: Tom Bos

Chair Stead called a recess at 6:36pm to review the laydowns provided for the Public Hearing. The meeting was called back to order at 6:45pm.

Commissioner Highland inquired about Mr. Griswold's comments in the staff report on page 12 and 13 about GC1. She asked if the Commission needed to respond to Mr. Griswold or if the Planning Department has responded.

City Planner Abboud stated that he responded to Mr. Griswold, he just provided the comments in the packet for informational purposes.

**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 18-14, Conditional Use Permit 2018-02 for a reduced front building setback at 302 E Pioneer Ave.

City Planner Abboud summarized his report and recommended an additional finding #11. That the proposed activity will enhance the aesthetic environment of the community, providing gracious human scale entry ways and public ways, orienting the entry way toward the street.

City Planner Abboud addressed Mr. Griswold's comments on the Conditional Use Permit and stated that this process is outlined in Homer City Code and is the best way to process this setback request, at this time. City Planner Abboud addressed Mr. Griswold's safety concerns about snow removal and drainage. He stated that safety is a very valid concern, but Mr. Griswold did not provide any specific examples about how this proposal could hamper snow removal and drainage. City Planner Abboud mentioned initially being concerned with the line of sight for pedestrians and cars pulling onto the highway but after evaluating the property, he found no apparent safety issues. However, he encouraged the Commission to bring forward any issues they may foresee.

Derek Reynolds, co-applicant, commented that he moved into the Homer area in 2004 and started Cycle Logical in 2006. They are very excited to move into town and have had a lot of encouragement from the public, especially about the building they are moving into. The building has been vacant for a long time and has been a "bit of an eye sore". He explained that the rose bushes that once surrounded the building went out as far as the new entry is proposed to go. They expect that the traffic pattern should not change greatly and that the line of sight would not greatly be affected. He expects that the roof itself will help contain snow and the gutter system they will have in place, will help improve the drainage in this area. Mr. Reynolds mentioned a study that was conducted in San Francisco which found that orienting buildings to the street had a large impact on making the city more pedestrian friendly.

Catriona Reynolds, co-applicant, commented that they reached out to their surrounding neighbors and everyone was very encouraging and excited to see the building's finished product. She explained that before they bought the building, there was trash and rose bushes that extended past their proposed addition to the building, so she feels that any arguments for snow removal or line of sight are invalid. She explained that this building feels like "the missing piece" in this section of town and they hope to greatly impact the city as a whole by encouraging people to ride their bikes instead of using motor vehicles, which in turn will make their vehicular traffic much less. Everyone has been so positive about their remodel so far and they hope that they can progress, because a busy bike season is coming up in a matter of weeks.

Chair Stead opened the Public Hearing.

Marc Romano, city resident, spoke in support of CUP 2018-02. He stated if he had been asked about 302. E. Pioneer Avenue a year ago, his recommendation would have been to remove the building because it was not doing anything to improve the central business district of our community. Today, the building has been improved greatly by the applicant. This business will bring both residents and non-residents/tourists to this area and it will benefit all the adjacent businesses. Personally he feels that a business that fronts to the street is more approachable, and would work really well with this business that is promoting non-motorized use of the central business district. As a city resident, he has a vision for Homer that he thinks most of the

community shares. He wants it to be vibrant, approachable, and aesthetic, particularly in the central business district and he believes these improvements to this building will add to that aesthetic.

Jason Herreman, city resident, spoke in support of CUP 2018-02 and thanked the Homer Advisory Planning Commission for their time. Upon coming to the city in 2012, 302 E. Pioneer Avenue was quite the derelict building. He is glad to see the improvements that the applicant has already made and looks forward to the completion of the project. From what he has heard from the City Planner and the applicants, he does not believe that the addition will cause any problems in this area and the improvements that have already been made have improved the overall appearance and usage of the area. He believes that it would be compatible with what most people would like to see in this area as far as walkability and friendliness.

Wes Schocht, city resident, spoke in support of CUP 2018-02. He really appreciated the applicants buying and renovating this old historic building and believes that a bicycle shop is a commodity that the city needs. He explained that biking is his preferred way of transportation, so he wanted to come out to show support and he hopes they are able to move along with the project.

There were no additional public comments. Chair Stead closed the Public Hearing and opened up the floor for questions.

Commissioner Venuti inquired if this project needed fire marshal approval, since it will be a commercial establishment.

Mr. Reynolds responded that the Interim Fire Chief has received their application and they are just waiting to hear back from him.

Commissioner Banks inquired if there was already a precedent set about using a Conditional Use Permit to reduce a setback.

City Planner Abboud responded that they have used Conditional Use Permits to reduce setbacks for years. There are a couple specific cases that he would have to look up and bring back at a later time.

Commissioner Banks asked if there are other setback reductions or encroachments along Pioneer.

City Planner Abboud responded that there are.

Commissioner Banks asked if they needed a Conditional Use Permit to have the boardwalk extend all the way to the sidewalk.

City Planner Abboud explained that they would only need a Conditional Use Permit for a structure being built in that area and that they don't need one for a boardwalk or pathway.

Chair Stead requested a motion.

BENTZ/VENUTI-MOVED TO APPROVE THE STAFF REPORT PL 18-14 AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 2018-02 WITH FINDINGS 1-10, CONDITION 1, AND AN ADDITIONAL FINDING #11 THAT THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY WILL ENHANCE THE AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE COMMUNITY, PROVIDING GRACIOUS HUMAN SCALE ENTRY WAYS AND PUBLIC WAYS ORIENTING THE ENTRY WAY TOWARD THE STREET.

There was a brief discussion in support of the renovations the applicants have done to the property thus far.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION.UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

## **PLAT CONSIDERATION**

## **PENDING BUSINESS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

## **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

A. City Manager's Reports for the February 26, 2018 City Council Meeting

## **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

## **COMMENTS OF THE STAFF**

## **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Highland inquired if there was anything that the Commission can do about Sue Post's comments about the building across the street from the bookstore.

City Planner Abboud responded that he will look into it.

Commissioner Bos stated that this was a good meeting. The building looks very nice and he is sure that it will continue to improve. He wishes that we could do more improvements like this along Pioneer Avenue to help bring people into the city. He also wanted to mention that the roof

over the entry way at the Pier One theatre on the spit has “blown back”. He hopes that someone is able to fix it before it causes any significant damage.

Commissioner Bernard commented that she really appreciates seeing revitalization on Pioneer Avenue. It’s really nice to see some activity happening in downtown Homer.

Commissioner Bentz was excited to see in the City Managers Report that the city is looking at Pittman Robertson funding for improving trails and wildlife viewing. She believes that it is underutilized and is a great opportunity. She also encourages everyone to attend the Kachemak Bay Science Conference at Islands and Oceans Visitor Center.

Commissioner Venuti asked if they needed to send a letter addressing Mr. Griswold’s comments.

City Planner Abboud responded that he believes that this meeting was good enough. There will be minutes and a recording in response to his comments.

Commissioner Banks stated that this was an interesting meeting. He believes that it’s a great project and that it will continue to improve the area. He cautioned the commission to always be objective when applying this criteria, rather than subjective, because we can lose sight of what we are supposed to be evaluating. Although the City Planner said it is not our place to decide issues of law, it is our place to see if something fits inside the boundaries of code, and in this case, it looked like it fit within the standards.

Chair Stead commented that it was a good meeting and he appreciates all the work the planner did for this particular meeting. There is a lot of background associated with code and it is always enlightening to go through it. He stated that he will be missing the next planning meeting.

Commissioner Bernard stated that she will also be missing the next planning meeting.

Commissioner Venuti asked City Planner Abboud what the next step for the Comprehensive Plan was.

City Planner Abboud responded that there will be a Public Hearing in April where he will bring the public comments forward to the Commission.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. There is a worksession scheduled at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

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HAYLEY SMITH, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

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