

Session 13-01, a Regular Meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Roberts at 5:32 p.m. on February 19, 2013 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Highland, Roberts, Smith, Venuti, Walker

STAFF: Public Works Director Meyer
Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

RECONSIDERATION

No items were scheduled for reconsideration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting Synopsis of November 20, 2012

The Synopsis was approved by consensus of the Committee.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS

Public Works Director Meyer updated the Committee on transportation oriented projects. The spit trail project is moving forward with cruise ship funds for improvements that will go from the Sterling Highway around back side of the Small Boat Harbor over to the Deep Water Dock and DOT funds to extend the spit trail from where it stops now near the fishing hole out along the top of the Small Boat Harbor to Fish Dock Road then back out to the Sterling Highway and around to the End of the Road Park. Improvements will include paving the parking area at End of the Road Park, also a restroom there and one at the Deep Water Dock. They hope to start construction this summer and finish up by spring of next year. This will expand the walkability of the spit tremendously as the spit trail is heavily used. Crittenden Road improvement district has been created and construction bid will be going out soon. Today we learned that Waddell Street petition has adequate support to schedule a neighborhood meeting and move on to the objection period. If it goes well it can be included with Crittenden contract.

Councilmember Roberts commented that our Mayor and staff are in Juneau lobbying for us for transportation issues on our CIP list.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no public hearings scheduled.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Road Grades and Steep Slopes

Mr. Walker commented regarding issues he has as a neighboring resident to the Canyon Trails Subdivision with run off into an inadequate sized culvert near his house. During the development he was unable to get approved copies of plans for the development. It is a steep slope that failed for four years and was finally fixed this past summer. He expressed concern about stabilizing open slopes in a timely manner. It is a problem for the City in allowing development of these slopes when the culverts freeze every winter. There have been some significant events in the last 11 years that have cause issues with erosion and we need to figure out how to build roads right and if side slopes go on forever, maybe not build roads there. Maybe 100 to 150 foot rights of way should be required on the slopes that can be seeded and protected right away or bigger lots so you can find a different route to get to the lots at the end of the road.

Mr. Smith commented that larger culverts won't solve an icing problem, it is a maintenance concern. Culverts are sized to handle the flow for a 100 year storm in the area they cover, it is a hydrological calculation.

Public Works Director Meyer commented regarding the Canyon Trails Subdivision. That particular area was an unusual situation. Mr. Meyer isn't aware of any changes to the City's regulations regarding road development. There are options for things like thaw pipe, or thaw wire, but energy costs are involved to for those options. Public Works has been focused on getting a second steamer truck to improve response times to frozen culverts. When cutting into a slope there is a potential for ground water to surface after things begin to freeze and glaciare on the slope or in the ditch line below it. He doesn't know how to stop it from happening, other than cutting of water uphill, but that is easier said than done.

Mr. Walker suggested enforcing the regulations the City has and increasing culvert size as three foot culverts around town don't freeze as often as two foot culverts.

Mr. Smith noted that the City has a rigorous set of requirements for steep slope development, separate from regular road development. It's very thorough and gives the Public Works Director some authority to make decisions on a case by case basis. This committee spent quite a bit of time dealing with this in the past.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Waddell Way Street Improvements Proposal

Public Works Director Meyer reviewed the proposal drawings that were included in the packet. He explained that the property in question has been put up for sale and there is a potential buyer who is interested in developing the property, but expressed concern as the proposed right of way outlined in the Transportation Plan goes through the property where cabins are located and comes out across from Grubstake. In discussion with the potential buyer it became apparent that the cabins are an important component of the property. Mr. Meyer wanted to have input from the committee regarding the options for the right of way. The Design Criteria manual says streets should be brought together in an intersection, not a

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
FEBRUARY 19, 2013

lot of alternating intersections going up a street. Another issue is if Grubstake is going to be utilized as an east west corridor, then Waddell Way should connect to it. If it isn't an issue, there are other options to look at.

The committee extensively discussed some history of the development of the Transportation Plan and options of Waddell Way coming out across from Grubstake, as outlined in the Transportation Plan, and the alternate options of it coming out across from Bonanza or a location midway between Grubstake and Bonanza.

Discussion points included:

- Making Grubstake or Bonanza a thoroughfare doesn't seem like a good option as it routes traffic through the residential neighborhoods
- When developing the Transportation Plan they found you can't always get a modeled extension without affecting a neighborhood.
- Moving it to Bonanza saves having to go through the cabins, but it precludes doing a through modeled extension, which was the purpose of the modeled extension program.
- The model extension program is to provide access that allows traffic to get off the main arterials.
- Hazel Avenue is already developed with large parking lots on both sides and good access for doing errands.
- The middle option would make it difficult to have a safe traffic area, having three different roads entering on to Heath Street.
- Using the Bonanza connection precludes one of the two options that were approved by Council in the Transportation Plan.
- It is important to consider the east west movement of traffic flow.
- The middle option comes out at the steepest point on Heath Street, but levels out near the intersections of Bonanza and Grubstake.
- In twenty years this east west corridor will be beneficial. The Committee has talked about the traffic challenges that already exist in the City.
- Using the Grubstake access raises another issue of the extension on through Grubstake to make the connection.
- Hazel Avenue is also listed in the Transportation Plan as an option for a portion of the east west corridor.

The potential buyers of the property were in the audience and Chair Roberts invited one of them to briefly share feedback they may have.

Bill Williams, city resident, commented on behalf of the group. He engaged the Committee in clarification of some of the points of their discussion. Mr. Williams then provided an overview of their plan for the property and their intent to fully utilize the cabins. He expressed that developing Waddell Way across from Grubstake will inhibit them from moving forward with their plans.

Chair Roberts asked if anyone wished to propose a motion for an east west corridor of Hazel or Grubstake.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO USE HAZEL AVENUE.

Mrs. Venuti commented that using Grubstake would impact the neighborhood where there are lots of residences with children and animals. Hazel already has parking lots and good access.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
FEBRUARY 19, 2013

VOTE: YES: VENUTI, HIGHLAND, WALKER, SMITH, ROBERTS

Motion carried.

Chair Roberts asked if there is a motion for the north, south, or middle route for Waddell Way entering Heath Street.

VENUTI/SMITH MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE SOUTH ROUTE. (across from Grubstake)

Mrs. Venuti commented that the northern route is too far up and the middle option would be extremely dangerous for the people coming out of Bonanza or Grubstake.

Mr. Smith questions whether the elevation would allow for a safe option at Bonanza, and Mr. Walker agreed with concerns regarding elevation.

Public Works Director Meyer noted the slope between Grubstake and Bonanza increase but the grades at the intersection of Bonanza are the safest.

Chair Roberts commented that if recommending using Hazel as the connection, she doesn't think there is any difference between turning left at Bonanza or at Grubstake.

VOTE: YES: SMITH
NO: WALKER, VENUTI, HIGHLAND, ROBERTS

Motion failed.

HIGHLAND/WALKER MOVED TO USE THE NORTH ROUTE ACROSS FROM BONANZA FOR THE EAST WEST HEATH STREET TO LAKE STREET.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES: ROBERTS, VENUTI, HIGHLAND, WALKER
NO: SMITH

Motion carried.

Chair Roberts stated that the Transportation Committee recommends to Council that Hazel would be the east west corridor and Waddell Way would come in at Bonanza.

B. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen Re: Consideration of Telephonic Participation by Committee Members

Supporting comments included that in the age of telecommunication all of the laydowns and so forth can be made available to anyone with an internet connection or satellite telephone. The Council respects the need to call in. If there are only three members present it would be helpful to have another member who could participate on the phone.

Other comments were that it isn't always easy for staff to implement. It is appropriate at the Council level where they are making binding decisions, but as an advisory committee it isn't as necessary. It is challenging to conduct business when members are telephonic, including

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SYNOPSIS
FEBRUARY 19, 2013

calls dropping and referencing visual aids, like their work with the maps tonight. Staff added that if laydown materials were presented during a meeting, it wouldn't be feasible to stop the meeting to for time to scan and email information to members participating on the phone. Point was also raised that three members of this committee is a quorum.

HIGHLAND/WALKER MOVED TO ALLOW TELEPHONIC PARTICIPATION BY TRANSPORTAION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH A LIMIT OF ONE TIME PER YEAR.

VOTE: YES: HIGHLAND, WALKER
NO: SMITH, ROBERTS VENUTI

Motion failed.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Bob Philips commented that they have been working on the proposal for the property near Waddell Way and worked with Planning Staff for quite a while before the transportation issue came up. Their design was to start building this summer and finish by winter. Waiting three months for a decision kills the project. He had a thought that of using both plans to make one proposed route would be a better situation.

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Public Works Director Meyer commented that going to the Council with this is the quickest way to make a decision. He appreciates the committee's decision making process, it was very valuable.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER/CHAIR

Chair Roberts asked to include the steep slope development requirements as an information item in their next packet. She appreciates the way this group works together and has good discussion.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Smith commented that Anna Bosin works for State DOT and has the information on Lake Street and intersection project. He hopes to get her to come for the May meeting.

Ms. Highland welcomed Kevin to the group and this was one of the most difficult decision making meetings they have had.

ADJOURN

There being no more business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____