

Session 20-13, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Smith at 6:34 p.m. on October 7, 2020 at Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, SMITH, PETSKA-RUBALCAVA, BARNWELL, VENUTI AND BENTZ

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER DAVIS (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBODD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Planning Commission had a worksession at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting on a presentation and discussion regarding Landslides hazard study and coastal erosion hazard study project updates presented by Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) geologists Barret Salisbury, Jaci Overbeck and Rich Buzard.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the agenda.

HIGHLAND/BENTZ – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of the September 2, 2020 Planning Commission Regular Meeting
- B. Preliminary Plat Time Extension Requests:
 - a. Stream Hill Park 2018 Replat Preliminary Plat
 - b. Barnett's South Slope Sub. Quiet Creek Park Preliminary Plat
- C. Decisions and Findings for Conditional Use Permit 20-14 to allow a second mobile home at 541 Bonanza Avenue

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Commissioner Highland requested Item C be moved to New Business Item A.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI – MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDED CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith was disconnected from the meeting at 6:38 pm Vice Chair Petska Rubalcava proceeded to conduct the meeting in his absence.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

- A. Low Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer Project Overview from Carey Meyer, City Engineer

Carey Meyer, City Engineer provided an overview of the various projects, benefits and where Green Infrastructure has been used in the City. He then responded to questions from the Commission regarding cost savings and benefits to using and implementing green infrastructure on projects with regards to storm drainage and the impending urbanization of the city as time passes. He noted the report contents and spoke about Bio swales and as sidewalks and more roads get paved impedes the natural process that the City has in reducing the wet areas and which adds to the hazards presented to Kachemak Bay with runoff.

Commissioner Barnwell requested additional input from Mr. Meyer on why there would be such a dramatic savings in infrastructure referring to page 25 of the packet it is mentioned that the City will stands to save over \$20 million dollars by adopting LID infrastructure as opposed to traditional infrastructure.

Mr. Meyer responded that traditionally cities have built storm drain systems sized to accept and convey peak run off from a development that occurs in the community, this can be quite expensive more importantly the community is expected to have in place water quality treatment along with conveying the water to Kachemak Bay. When that runoff can be retained even for a short period, filtering out some of the contaminants from impermeable surfaces such as parking lots is desired. Traditional infrastructure, pipes and sedimentation basins are costly and when a project allows retainage and in effect treatment on site of that storm runoff the size of the pipe, amount of land and size of the water quality treatment improvement at the bottom of every drainage basin becomes less expensive. He continued by explaining the research in the main trunk lines that would be associated with each drainage basin and some of the small laterals, then focused on the main trunk lines in the drainage basins that were identified in the city. He further added that the cost in order of magnitude would be about \$50 million to build a traditional

storm drainage system and if they can incorporate green infrastructure throughout the city that the cost could be lowered to a rough order of magnitude of \$20 million.

Commissioner Bentz complimented the details included in the report and inquired about Storm Water Master Plan and the development of a citywide plan or next steps.

Mr. Meyer responded that with the limited funding they were unable to go to the desired level but they do need to establish how much green infrastructure will required in developing the community so that it can be considered when developing the storm water master plan, noting the drainage basins around the city. He noted all the plans that have been developed and that they do need a storm water plan, but agreed that a green infrastructure plan would be developed at the same time.

Mr. Meyer responded that the Commission should consider the relation of all the plans when developing the Storm Water Master Plan and believes them to be all inter-related and that this Commission should be involved in the development. He further added that this should be considered by Council when consideration or review of the capital budget.

Commissioner Highland noted on page 5 of the report item C line 5 in the first paragraph should reflect Group C not Group B. She then inquired about Page 6 of the report regarding Steep Slopes and compared to the existing regulations should the Commission revisit the existing regulations to make adjustments.

Mr. Meyer provided an explanation that steep slopes would not be developed as other areas and believes that consideration of storm runoff and the brief presentation that was provided today on slope stability and bluff erosion during the worksession there should be further consideration on controls for development in those areas. He would like to see the Commission have a worksession on Green Infrastructure and Storm Water Master Plans.

REPORTS

A. Staff Report 20-62, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud provided a summary review of Staff Report 20-62 for the Commission.

Commissioner Venuti commented on the importance to submit the written reports but that there should be someone attending the meetings as well to report what the Commission is working on.

Commissioner Bentz requested clarification on the DGGS projects and the phasing process.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification on the process and project and timelines.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

A. Staff Report 20-63, Conditional Use Permit 20-15 for reconstruction of a restaurant building at 106 W Bunnell Avenue

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title into the record.

City Planner Abboud asked if everyone was able to review the laydown.

Chair Smith called for a recess at 7:20 p.m. to allow the Commission time to review materials provided as laydowns. He called the meeting back to order at 7:30 p.m.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary review of Staff Report 20-63 highlighting the following:

- Location is Central Business District in Old Town
- Complete tear down of the building
- Review of the Comprehensive Plan to continue design and style
- The second story is to be a prep kitchen
- Parking was calculated as 16 and 10 are currently onsite but requirement can be accomplished with offsite parking agreement
- Consideration can be made to reduce the requirement since there are other options available to provide the parking and the Commission is asked to adopt either Finding 1 or Condition 2

Commissioner Venuti declared that if the applicant is Beachy Construction he had a conflict of interest.

BENTZ/HIGHLAND MOVED THAT COMMISSIONER VENUTI HAD A CONFLICT.

Discussion ensued on clarifying the level and type of conflict that Commissioner Venuti had clarifying that he had a business relationship with Beachy Construction, and does not have an interest in this project but is paid over \$1500.

VOTE. YES. HIGHLAND, PETSKA-RUBALCAVA, BENTZ, BARNWELL, SMITH

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti left the meeting by muting his mic and departing the room.

City Planner Abboud then addressed the issues outlined in the comments submitted by Mr. Griswold.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification on infill referenced in Mr. Griswold's comments.

City Planner Abboud then reviewed concerns from the additional comments received regarding dust, screening the parking lot, noise, paving the rear parking lot, venting and landscaping.

Melody Livingston, Wild Honey Bistro, questioned the requirement to screen the parking lot and requested clarification on the type of screening that would be required. She presented her design concept noting that the back door was a Fire Marshall requirement and the rear porch would be consistent with the neighboring business. She is available for questions.

Chair Smith opened the Public Hearing.

Adrienne Sweeney, property/business owner, commented in support of the project noting the existing use of the rear parking, discussion she has had with the applicant regarding the parking agreement and recommended the Commission approve Finding 1 for reduced parking requirement noting the availability of nearby parking options.

Susan Miller, resident/property owner, commented on the proposed project and appreciated the ongoing improvement in the area. She expressed concerns with dust with increased use of the rear parking lot, they are not opposed to the project but want to protect their property and the use of their property.

Chair Smith closed the Public Hearing. He then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Chair Smith requested a motion as there were no questions from the Commission.

There was a brief discussion by the Commission on process to amending the findings and conditions or approving the staff report and findings with conditions and then make amendments.

BENTZ/HIGHLAND MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 20-63 AND APPROVE CUP 20-15 WITH FINDINGS 1-11 AND CONDITIONS 1, 3, AND 4.

Discussion ensued clarifying that the Commission is reducing the parking requirement to 10 spaces and the 6 additional spaces would be accommodated by public parking, and whether the motion should be amended.

Further discussion on amending the motion to included Condition 5

HIGHLAND/BENTZ MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ADD CONDITION FIVE, SCREEN THE REAR PARKING AREA ALONG THE NORTH LOT LINE PER HCC 21.55.020 (A)(4)(f)

Discussion on the amendment ensued regarding the updates to city code that require the screening be implemented now versus before. Further discussion on an adequate height to screen parking and loading or service areas. This serves as a dual purpose since it would prevent some dust from affecting the neighboring properties.

A point of order was made regarding procedural process and at this time the Commission could not question the applicant.

Further discussion ensued on the screening requirement and height of screening landscape and the Commissioners expressed that the applicant could work it out with Planning Staff the landscape requirement.

VOTE.(Amendment). YES. BARNWELL, BENTZ, HIGHLAND, PETSKA-RUBALCAVA, SMITH

Chair Smith called for the vote on the main motion as amended.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Venuti was invited back to the meeting.

PLAT CONSIDERATION

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Decisions and Findings for Conditional Use Permit 20-14 to allow a second mobile home at 541 Bonanza Avenue.

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and invited City Planner Abboud to provide some clarification on changes.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification on Finding two to make sure it was tied to the criteria and wanted to make sure the Commission reviewed the document and does not have anything to amend.

Chair Smith requested a motion to adopt the Decisions and Findings as written.

BENTZ/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT THE DECISIONS AND FINDINGS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 20-14 TO ALLOW A SECOND MOBILE HOME AT 541 BONANZA AVE AND ATTACHED FINDING TWO.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager's Report for the August 24th City Council Meetings

Commissioner Bentz commented on the Water Level Sensor at the Harbor.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

City Planner Abboud commented that they will start working on the issues surrounding the medical district and hopefully they can get started working on things like green infrastructure.

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented on the successful city election and announced the opening of absentee in person voting for the general election on Tuesday October 20th

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Barnwell commented on the worksession with DGGs which he found fascinating and really good work he will be following that closely and hopes that it stays connected to the Planning Commission. He agreed with Commissioner Bentz on a worksession on green infrastructure and storm water planning with Mr. Meyer.

Commissioner Highland commented on the presentations and wanted the information shared with Homer Soil & Water Conservation. She expressed appreciation for staff's efforts and hard work.

Commissioner Bentz appreciated having worksessions on these types of topics and issues that are beyond the daily business of the Commission and would look forward to a worksession with Mr. Meyer on green infrastructure and AKWA grant funding outcomes and next steps for storm water master plan next steps and an exploration into funding sources beyond the CIP might be a good thing for the Commission to look at as well.

Commissioner Venuti commented on an interesting meeting and is pleased to see the development in Old Town and provided some historical information on the start of the Bunnell building. He was sorry he could not participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava apologized for the disruption earlier in the meeting. She expressed appreciation for both presentations and is excited about green infrastructure and noted that it is not all large scale. She would really be interested in seeing what the public outreach on that could look like on the individual small scale, for existing lots right now and would love to get involved with that.

Chair Smith commented that presentation during the work session probably could have gone for three or four hours, fabulous information, he appreciated all the hard work and looking forward to additional information from DGGS and on Green Infrastructure.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held virtually by Zoom Webinar from the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____