

Session 20-03, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Venuti at 6:30 p.m. on February 5, 2020 at Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS VENUTI, PETSKA-RUBALCAVA, HIGHLAND, SMITH

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BENTZ (EXCUSED), DAVIS (EXCUSED), BOS

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
DEPUTY CITY PLANNER ENGBRETSSEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Commission met in a worksession at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting. On the agenda was a presentation from Derotha Ferraro, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, Lane Chesley former Board member and Advisor on the issue of the Medical District and Glen Radtke, Facilities Director with South Peninsula Hospital on the Hospital, Services, Demographics for the Southern Peninsula, Facilities owned and leased, the number of emergency visits by Ambulances and Air and the average number of visits in an eight hour day. The benefits to creation of a Medical or Health Care District and offered some recommendations and/or considerations during the creation of the district.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Venuti called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

SMITH/HIGHLAND – 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. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2020
- B. Decisions & Findings Document for CUP 20-03, to allow townhouse developments at 436 & 450 Soundview Ave.

Chair Venuti requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

HIGHLAND/SMITH – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report 20-10, City Planner's Report

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 20-10 and commented further on the following:

- Council rescinded the moratorium on Water and Sewer Special Assessment Districts
- HAWSP will be on the agenda at the next meeting
- The Nomar rezone has been approved
- The Sign Ordinance is developing into something larger and they may need to revamp the whole code.

Commissioner Attendance at Council – Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava will attend the March 9, 2020 Council meeting; and Commissioner Smith will attend the Council meeting March 23, 2020.

Commissioner Highland requested that they add a discussion on clear cutting or limiting the removal of mature trees by developers.

There was a brief discussion on speaking with someone who is more knowledgeable on landscaping and vegetation.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

A. Staff Report 20-11, Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 20-04 to allow a 7,200 square foot equipment storage building at 3385 East End Road

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

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 20-11 and highlighted the following:

- Impervious coverage
- Lot size of 12.5 acres
- Parking

- Requirement to screen the green areas adjacent to East End Road

Buck Jones, applicant, East Road Services commented on the building that was constructed a few years ago by Steiner's North Star Construction and while the building accommodates some of their needs it does not cover the increasing need of storage for storing and keeping equipment and materials out of the weather. He noted that there is space along East End Road to plant spruce trees to comply with the screening requirements.

Chair Venuti opened the public hearing and seeing no one in the audience to offer testimony he closed the public hearing and opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

City Planner Abboud responding to a request for clarification on the Conditional Use numbering confirmed that it should reflect 20—04.

SMITH/PETSKA-RUBALCAVA - MOVE TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 20-11 AND APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 20-04 WITH FINDINGS 1-10 AND CONDITION 1 AS FOLLOWS: SCREENING SHALL BE REQUIRED ON EXISTING GREEN AREAS OF THE LOT ADJACENT TO EAST END ROAD PER HCC 21.27.040(f) SCREENING MAY CONSIST OF WALLS, FENCES, LANDSCAPED BERMS, EVERGREEN PLANTINGS OR ANY COMBINATION THEREOF.

There was a brief discussion on dates reflected in the report from the Corps of Engineers and that a recommendation to the Applicant to contact the Corps about correction can be made by the Planning staff.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PLAT CONSIDERATION

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. Staff Report 20-12, Amending the Homer Planning Commission Policies & Procedures Manual to form specific procedures for deliberations of quasi-judicial actions.

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

City Planner Abboud noted the updates to the Procedures and Policies Manual and that a motion is requested.

HIGHLAND/SMITH MOVE TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL AS AMENDED AND FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL AT THE NEXT AVAILABLE MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. Staff Report 20-13, Medical District Planning

Chair Venuti introduced the item by reading the title into the record.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed Staff Report 20-13 and noted that they have received several comments on the district and copies were provided. She further stated that based on the outcome of tonight's meeting she is prepared to mail out approximately 300 notices for a Neighborhood Meeting for the next worksession. Ms. Engebretsen provided a brief outline on how she envisions the Neighborhood meeting to be conducted. Since there are no Public Hearing scheduled for the next meeting the public can comment on the record at the regular meeting.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen then requested the Commission to review the proposed draft map and fielded comments from the Commissioners on the following:

- Boundaries/District to exclude the lots along Fairview from Swatzell to Main Street since they are smaller and residential in nature
- Keeping the lots in the district would actually increase the value to the lots
- Some lots have been improved and some are ripe for development but those lots would still remain Residential Office
- property owners being able to opt out of the district
- building heights would be later on the agenda
- waiting to see how the public reacted before changing the boundaries of the proposed district
- Property owners are not going to be interested in attending multiple meetings
- Consideration of the public comments received from the Neighborhood Meeting
- Notice will be mailed out when a Public Hearing will be conducted on the final proposed district
- Recommendation to have clean lines for the boundaries and not having a lone parcel

The Commission agreed by consensus on the draft medical district map as presented.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen provided guidance on the parking issue in response to Commissioner Highland's question on land with regards to the parking issue at the hospital.

Commissioner Smith expressed concerns on allowing hostel, noting that he was fine with B & B's and having facilities available nearby for families of patients to stay close but was concerned with how the general public would view them.

A general discussion ensued on the differences between hostel, B & B and rooming house and that currently were permitted outright in Residential Office. Similar experiences were shared on facilities offered by Providence in Anchorage.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed the definition of hostel for the Commission.

Concerns were expressed that if hostels were allowed then that may encourage people to jump on the Air B & B bandwagon and the intent to provide for the medical aspect would be negated.

SMITH/HIGHLAND MOVED TO STRIKE THE TERM "HOSTEL" FROM LINE 25 OF THE DRAFT ORDINANCE.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen continued her review of the recommended permitted uses noting the following:

- retail would be allowed as an accessory use to the principle permitted use
- more than one building containing a permitted principle use on a lot, which is what triggers the most conditional use permits
- parking lots and mobile food services
- allowing small restaurants and/or cafés would be difficult due to Land Use conflicts with the residential aspects but having a Coffee Shop in the building such as Homer Medical would be allowed since it is assumed that it is providing for those personnel and clients
- towers would be addressed in another section at a future meeting
- if they were going to regulate chickens more than what is currently regulated they should address that city-wide not by district.

City Planner Abboud questioned eliminating the more than one building. Ms. Engebretsen responded that Line 56 would allow more than one building.

Hearing no further questions from the Commissioners she proceeded to review the conditionally permitted uses noting the following:

- requiring group care homes to be conditionally permitted while nursing homes, convalescent homes, homes for the aged and assisted living homes which are similar facilities are permitted outright
- Shelter for the homeless

A brief discussion ensued on the applicability of Homeless Shelters being appropriate in a professional/residential district, being allowed in two other districts, demographic requiring a homeless shelter may require medical services.

The Commission agreed by consensus to remove shelters for the homeless as a conditional permitted use.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen then focused on the Building Height, noting that it was not the appropriate area to address this but requested input from the Commission on allowing buildings over 35 feet.

A brief discussion on changing the parameters to allow a building over 35 feet and not inclusive of the roof design, present what a five story building would look like, and the requirement of Fire Marshall review and approval.

There was consensus among the Commission on planning for the future to allow as a conditional use buildings over 35 feet.

Discussion ensued on limiting helipads/heliport and consideration of allowing Heliports in the General Commercial Two district. There are concerns on the industrial aspects with the storage of fuels, etc. There is recognition that helicopter traffic will increase over time and it is appropriate in the area of the airport which would require a zoning change.

Next the Commission discussed the landscaping and/or screening requirements shown on line 111 of the draft ordinance requiring new non-residential construction be screened from existing residential single family or duplex dwellings and obscuring the view of a parking lot from those dwellings. Deputy City Planner Engebretsen noted that it would not apply if a residential dwelling was built next to an existing commercial facility.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen then noted that the site development standards were almost identical to the Residential Office District with the following exception:

- Parking Lots with a minimum of 24 spaces will be required to have 10% landscaped area in dividers, islands or buffers adjacent or within the parking lot

There was a brief discussion on the existing code reflected on page 73 of the packet will still apply regarding Site Development Standards – Landscaping requirements.

Deputy City Planner Engebretsen reviewed the following comments made in Mr. Lund's letter that was provided as a laydown.

- The traffic study was recommended by the Commission when the Transportation Plan was updated. Mr. Lund approved that recommendation.
- He did not approve of the landscaping requirements believing that they were too minimal
- Mr. Lund supported allowing taller buildings
- The apparently approve of the boundaries as proposed.
- He would prefer to see Danview area as residential office.
- The city is working on a traffic calming manual and sidewalks would be preferred but as a consideration for the future and the needs grow the Commission can discuss that issue.
- Since this area is the emergency route it may not be a consideration to reduce the speed limit or put speed tables, etc.

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

A. City Manager Report for January 13, 2019 City Council Meeting

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Petska-Rubalcava announced that she would be absent for the March 18, 2020 meeting.

Commissioner Smith commented that it was a good meeting and he appreciated all the work that was done for the medical district. He further stated that for him with this type of development, it brings the question forward, "Is our Transportation Plan sufficient?" At some point in the near future they need to address some issues if they develop a medical district, Main Street has to change. They will need to pay attention to some things. If the medical district does promote large use resources, buildings and facilities, and things like that, then Bartlett will not be sufficient and Main Street will become more dangerous. In the future they will have to really evaluate the Transportation Plan.

Chair Venuti commented that he had nothing further to add and agreed it was an interesting meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. There is a Neighborhood Meeting for the Medical District in lieu of a worksession scheduled at 5:30 p.m. prior to the meeting.

RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____