

CALL TO ORDER

Session 23-16, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on October 4, 2023 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar. A worksession was held at 5:30 p.m. On the agenda was a presentation and discussion facilitated by Economic Development Manager Engebretsen and Public Works Director Keiser on the Transportation Plan Draft Update and Updated Public Works Road Financial Plan.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, BARNWELL, SMITH, SCHNEIDER AND VENUTI

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS STARK AND CONLEY (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER FOSTER, DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Smith requested a motion and second to approve the agenda.

SCHNEIDER/VENUTI MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA The public may speak to the Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit).

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA All items on the consent agenda are considered routine and non- controversial by the Planning Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business. No Motion is necessary

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes of September 6, 2023

VENUTI/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report 23-054, City Planner's Report

City Planner Foster reviewed Memorandum PC 23-054 for the Commission. He spoke to the following items:

- Council discussed at depth the recommendations from the Commission and postponed Ordinance 23-21(S)(A) to the October 23, 2023 Council meeting so that those recommendations from the Planning Commission could be reflected in the Homer City Code language;
- There is still time for the Commission to comment on the Transportation Plan through October 10th. All comments will be forwarded to the Consultant to be consolidated, he will be communicating with Ms. Engebretsen and Ms. Keiser when the plan is ready for review by the Planning Commission. A worksession and public hearing would be conducted at the Commission level. All comments will be submitted to City Council when the document is presented for adoption. City Council will also hold a public hearing. He is tentatively looking at January for the Commission.
- Economic Development Commission is working on a Vision and Mission Statement and they are looking forward to participating in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite and public outreach
- The next regular meeting is on a Monday and the Worksession will be a joint worksession with City Council. The worksession will be starting at 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., currently there are no pending business items or permit applications filed for the regular meeting so it may be canceled. He will be discussing this possibility with the Chair. City Planner Foster noted that the Commission scheduled the Monday meeting last year when they approved their meeting schedule due to the Alaska Day Holiday falling on Wednesday. The joint worksession is something that Council wanted to get back to doing with the Advisory Bodies they conducted the first one with the Port & Harbor in April. He will be working with the City Clerk.

City Planner Foster responded to questions regarding the following:

- Packet materials and agenda and when that would be distributed to the Commission
- Council is meeting with just the Planning Commission

Commissioner Venuti expressed that Information in the City Manager's Report regarding Council having a Resolution to award the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update on October 9th and that this was something that was thrust upon the Planning Commission without any input from the Commission. This has evolved from beyond this chamber and they will meet with the City Council on October 16th and he believed that this issue should be on that meeting's agenda and City Council should not approve a resolution until the Commission has discussed it with City Council. He insisted that Council requires the Commission's input.

City Planner Foster responded that this project has been worked on for over one year, it was a Council directive to Staff to develop the RFP and RFQ which was presented to City Council last October; City Council gave Staff the green light to proceed with the RFQ/RFP process. Staff issued the Request for Qualifications then selected the qualified firms to submit their proposal in response to the Request for Proposals. The most qualified firm was selected, while there was a bump in the road on part of the funding, that is all figured out

now and the next step is to get it awarded. He further explained that the Commission is not being cut out of the process, once the contract is awarded the Consultant will be presenting and working with the Commission to develop the comprehensive plan. City Planner Foster reiterated that the process up until now was Council and Staff, further noting that he has never taken a contract award to a Commission. City Planner Foster stated that it would be unconventional to bring it before the Commission at this stage. City Council can certainly remand it to the Commission before they approve the Resolution to award for their comments, but it has never been done before and would be quite unusual to have a commission weigh in on a contract award.

Chair Smith provided information he received from Deputy City Clerk Krause on the Procurement Policy when he expressed his concerns to her and expressed his support that this was not the time that the Commission should be involved in the process. He further noted his confusion prior to receiving the information from the Clerk and believes that it is not within the Commission's purview to make those decisions.

City Planner Foster provided more details that once the contract was negotiated and awarded, there may even be a steering committee with the possibility of one commissioner sitting on that committee, a very robust public outreach in developing the plan January through May 2024, and that it will fall under the Planning Commission purview to hold public hearings and worksessions and that the Commissioners should keep that in mind when they discuss the meeting schedule for 2024. He reiterated that the Commission will have lots to do with the two projects referring to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.

Commissioner Barnwell stated that there were two issues to address: One is the process which is what Commissioner Venuti was referencing, from the very beginning of the process did not include the Planning Commission as far as developing a scope for a comprehensive plan and the nature of the comprehensive plan to his understanding, was done in isolation, not public, and by only a few members of Council, not the whole Council. He expressed that he had no desire to be involved in contract negotiations citing his prior experience and involvement during his career as a consultant. He related that Councilmember Aderhold expressed she felt the Commission should have been included in the beginning of the process. He recited the involvement of the Anchorage planning commission being very involved in the process when he was employed with the municipality. He agreed with Commissioner Venuti that this was being thrust upon the Commission and they have not been included and expressed taking issue with that as well.

Chair Smith stated that most if not all the members of the commission share that opinion and have requested numerous times over the last 18 months or more wanting to schedule a visioning type meeting and staff has been too busy to make that happen. He noted that there have been additional reasons as well and issued a covering statement that City Planner Foster his representing the process that is in place and it did not originate from him, disagreements do not lie with the City Planner.

Deputy City Clerk Krause stated after hearing Commissioner Barnwell's comments that the procurement policy is what staff and council follows when issuing the RFQ/RFP and changes to the process would need to be addressed there as the Commission is not listed anywhere in the procurement policy as being included in the development process.

Commissioner Barnwell responded that he did not believe the Commission should be involved in scoping or developing the contract, but believed that it is more of visioning aspect and developing the need of the comprehensive plan and why they need the comprehensive plan. He does not want to be involved in the RF or contract process.

Commissioner Highland inquired as to the status of hiring additional planning staff.

City Planner Foster stated that he is still in the process and as soon as there are any prospects he will bring that information forward to the Commission.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Staff Report PC-23-057, Thomas Court Subdivision Preliminary Plat Revised

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster.

City Planner Foster reviewed Staff Report PC-23-057 for the Commission commenting on the following:

- This was a revised submission that was previously reviewed by the Commission
- The right of way has been removed
- layouts utilize a panhandle layout that allow for water and sewer services
- meeting with the surveyor and public works regarding the options the surveyor had
- this still must go through the Borough Public Hearing process
- Subdivision agreement with the City of Homer is required
- Public Works comments noted the subdivision agreement, driveway within the access easement

Chair Smith asked for questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Highland called a point of order noting that this was not the appropriate time for the commission to ask questions.

There was no applicant present.

There was no comments from the public present.

There were no questions from the Commission.

VENUTI/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PC-23-057 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT TO DIVIDE LOT 1 E SUBDIVISION LOT 1-E SUBDIVISION OF TRACT 1 JAMES WADDELL BOUNDARY SURVEY HM 63-495 INTO THREE LOTS WITH COMMENTS 1 AND 2:

1. THE PROPERTY OWNER WILL NEED TO ENTER INTO A SUBDIVISION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY ACCORDING TO HOMER CITY CODE 22.10.040 (a) AND 22.10.050 IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS.
2. EXCEPTIONS TO THE LOT DIMENSIONS PER KPB 20.30.190 WILL NEED TO BE REQUESTED AND APPROVED BY THE KPB PLANNING COMMISSION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2023 Commission Annual Calendar
- B. City Manager's Report September 11, 2023 Council Meeting
- C. City Manager's Report September 25, 2023 Council Meeting

Chair Smith noted the informational materials in the packet.

City Planner Foster commented on bringing a draft of the 2024 meeting dates for the next meeting, Economic Development Manager Engebretsen will be a panelist on the What is Driving Change in Homer on October 12, 2023 at the Homer Library and encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

Chair Smith inquired if the City Planner had any information on the area where the mud flow occurred.

City Planner Foster recommended questions be forwarded to Public Works Director Keiser.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE Members of the audience may address the Commission on any subject. (3 min limit)

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented on the upcoming meeting on October 16th and that for the November 1st meeting the City Clerk or Zach Pettit the newer clerk for that meeting.

City Planner Foster had no additional comments.

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBERS

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Highland explained her request to have Commissioners that were present make the motion was due to Zoom freezing up and having boss-of-the-world-itis. She stated that she liked having a meeting move right along, which is why she would leap in with motions. Ms. Highland further suggested that the Commissioners when make a motion, read exactly what the fabulous clerk has written for them so you get it completely straight and gets you where you want to go and it is a great way to do it. She suggested that a Commissioner can be appointed at the beginning of each meeting by the chair so it is not the same person for each meeting, but again that is my boss-of-the-world-itis talking. It was a nice short meeting.

Commissioner Barnwell echoed his sentiments of a good meeting and expressed his thanks to staff for their work. He then expressed his appreciation to the Chair for what he does and how he comports himself during a meeting with his calm demeanor, especially since he has chaired a meeting. He was agreeable to Commissioner

Highland's request for people to step up and make motions as it should not be dependent on her to make every motion. He opined that there was good discussion and little heated at times but a good meeting.

Commissioner Venuti commented that it was a good meeting. He further expressed that the transportation worksession was interesting, thanking the Chair for bringing forward the alternate truck route issue believing it was something that needed to be resolved. Mr. Venuti further commented that he realizes that it is sensitive land south of Beluga Lake but when he thinks about growing up in Boston and a greater part of the city of Boston is built on land that is filled in bay lands. He acknowledged that all the restrictions and EPA were probably not around back when they filled in that land. But nevertheless, the city has to figure out a solution for heavy traffic going through town because I think Pioneer Avenue would be a nice walkable place if there were tandem dump trucks going down the road at 40 miles per hour.

Chair Smith expressed his appreciation for all the work done on the transportation plan and the City Planner doing all he has done flying solo and seeing Commissioner Highland cringe when he mention those wetlands, he acknowledged the delicate balance on this topic but there is a continuing desire to relive the traffic on Pioneer Avenue and it has been determined that Kachemak Drive is not going to do it. Ms. Smith encouraged the Commissioners to review drafts documents when they get them and are provided opportunities to submit input.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m. The Regular Meeting on October 16, 2023 was canceled. A Joint Worksession with Council will be held at 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. A Worksession will be conducted at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar. Meetings will adjourn promptly at 9:30 p.m. An extension is allowed by a vote of the Commission.



RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: 