

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-05, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:32 p.m. on March 6, 2024 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar. A worksession was conducted at 5:30 p.m. On the agenda was a presentation by Kinney Engineering with questions and answers on the draft Transportation Plan.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS HIGHLAND, SMITH, SCHNEIDER, VENUTI, STARK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL AND CONLEY (EXCUSED)

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE, CITY PLANNER FOSTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

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

HIGHLAND/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Smith noted for the record that 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. He then requested a motion and second to adopt.

A. Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes for February 21, 2024

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

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

REPORTS

A. City Planner's Report PC-24-006

City Planner Foster provided a summary of his staff report to the Commission. He provided further details on the following:

- Ordinance on Short Term Rentals failed;
- Attendance at a training event conducted by the National Flood Insurance Program
 - o This is the first community that he has worked where there are coastal flood plains and no riverine flood plains
 - o Learned quite a bit on management from mapping to development
 - o Title 21 covers development in flood plains
 - o Next time this program training is offered the Associate Planner will attend the training as well as it is very informative.
- Adding the Transportation Plan to the March 20th agenda with a tentative date of April 3rd for the Public Hearing on the document if the Commission determines more time is needed for review;
- A joint worksession with Council is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26th from 3:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. on the Comprehensive Plan process with a presentation by Agnew::Beck;
- The first Public Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan is an Open House and will be conducted on Thursday, March 28th at Islands and Ocean Visitor Center;
- Appeal was filed by Doyon Limited on CUP 23-08, Lighthouse Village Development;
 - o Reminded the Commission not comment or discuss the proceeding to anyone as this may be remanded back to the Commission.

Chair Smith stated that he will not be in attendance for the March 20th meeting, and is unsure if he can attend the joint worksession on March 26, noting that Commissioner Barnwell will be out as well those dates and in order to conduct the meetings they will need to have a quorum present and Commissioner Highland would as the next senior member of the Commission be acting Chair for those meetings.

City Planner Foster will distribute an email to the Commission to verify attendance since Commissioner Conley was absent.

Commissioners Highland, Venuti, Schneider and Stark confirmed that they would attend those meetings. It was noted that a preference for the Commissioner chairing the meeting be present in person although Commissioner Highland has conducted the meeting quite effectively via Zoom before.

City Planner Foster responded to Commissioners questions regarding the following topics:

- purpose of the joint worksession scheduled with Council and what the content will be including documents for review; and
 - o This meeting is or will be a kick off to the start of the many public meetings to be introduced by the consultant, Agnew::Beck and presentation of their development plan.
- Stakeholders listed in the minutes of the Comp Plan Steering Committee last meeting did not include general contractors or building contractors, many of his clients that are actually doing the work and they should be included.

- o The list of stakeholders actually comprises about five to six pages and the minutes do not reflect the entire listing. City Planner Foster will double check to make sure that contractors are included.
- Differences in Flood Plain versus the flooding that was experience out East End Rd near the Bagel Shop that happens repeatedly and how training could impact that issue.
 - o Flood plains in the program is dependent on mapping in the community such as coastal mapping, or as in Soldotna and Kenai with the Kenai River there is riverine mapping and with each of those there is determined base flood elevation and is based on certain events with a 1% chance you will have a flood event. There are other types of flooding in a community such as steep hills and poorly draining soils which we then see flooding but those events cannot be mapped and are not included in the program.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATIONS

A. Staff Report PC-24-010, RNK Subdivision Preliminary Plat

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

City Planner Foster reviewed Staff Report PC-24-010 for the Commission. He provided description and location of the requested action and noted the following items the plat did not meet requirements on:

- shared driveway easement needed the north property boundary identified;
- corrections to plat note regarding reference to the Kenai Peninsula Borough should state City of Homer;
- existing utilities should be shown on the plat;
- a recent recorded document showed a shared easement over existing gravel driveway was not indicated;
- The bluff area exceeds 20% grade and is not indicated on the plat.

There was no applicant present.

Chair Smith opened the public comment period and seeing that there were no members of the public in chambers and those attending via Zoom not indicating they wanted to comment, the Chair closed the public comment period and opened the floor to questions or comments from the Commission.

The Commissioners did not present any questions for the City Planner and the Chair requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPTS STAFF REPORT PC-24-010 AND RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT TO DIVIDE ONE LARGE LOT INTO TWO SMALLER LOTS WITH THE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. STAFF UNDERSTANDS THAT THE UTILITY EASEMENT WOULD BE GRANTED TO THE CITY OF HOMER, AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE CITY VIA THE CITY MANAGER'S SIGNATURE ON THE PLAT.

2. RECOMMEND THE SURVEYOR PROVIDE THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF KNOWN EXISTING MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER AND WATER MAINS, AND OTHER UTILITIES WITHIN THE SUBDIVISION AND IMMEDIATELY ABUTTING THERETO OR A STATEMENT FROM THE CITY INDICATING WHICH SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY IN PLACE AND AVAILABLE TO EACH LOT IN THE SUBDIVISION TO THE PRELIMINARY PLAT.
3. SHOW AREAS OVER 20 PERCENT GRADE (BLUFF).
4. STAFF RECOMMENDS A PLAT NOTE INDICATING THE RECORDING OF DOCUMENT 2024-000356-0, A SHARED EASEMENT OVER THE EXISTING GRAVEL DRIVEWAY.
5. CORRECT THE FLOOD HAZARD NOTICE PLAT NOTE TO REFER TO THE CITY OF HOMER FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR, AND CITY OF HOMER FLOOD PLAIN CODE.
6. THE SURVEYOR HAS PROVIDED A STATEMENT IN THE APPLICATION COVER LETTER THAT THE PROPERTY WILL PROVIDE WATER AND SEWER SERVICES TO THE NEWLY SUBDIVIDED LOT. THESE IMPROVEMENTS WILL NEED TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO RECORDING THE FINAL PLAT OR THE PROPERTY OWNER CAN ENTER INTO AN INSTALLATION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY.

A brief discussion on the number of items in the review that did not meet the requirements, they were considered typical items and caused no concerns to the City Planner and were sufficiently covered by the comments included in the motion recommending approval to the Borough Planning Commission.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Staff Report PC-24-011, Draft City of Homer Transportation Plan

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to Community Development Director Engebretsen.

Community Development Director Engebretsen requested the Commission to map out the meetings that they feel is needed to review and discussed the proposed Transportation Plan. She noted the intent was to have it in the worksession today and now at the regular meeting then have a public hearing at the next regular meeting however, if the Commission feels that one more meeting to review and discuss the plan with a public hearing on April 3rd is quite doable as well. This will help in scheduling staff and other items as well. The Commission can schedule a worksession before the next regular meeting as well. Ms. Engebretsen stated that she was unsure if the budget allowed for more of Kinney Engineering to spend more time but that Leon Galbraith, the new City Engineer and Special Projects Coordinator, previously worked for Kinney Engineering and is qualified to answer questions on this project. She further advocated for the Commission to determine the dates so they can be advertised on the website.

Commissioner Highland requested that they address that after they spoke tonight since they may find out that they do not need another worksession or meeting on the Transportation Plan.

The Commission and Ms. Engebretsen were in consensus on that plan of action.

Ms. Engebretsen directed the Commission to focus specifically on pages 36 through 45 in the Recommendations section of the draft plan noting that these are the things the city would be working on as priorities or tasks going forward. She requested the Commission to make recommendations to Council, so if there were any particular clarifications or items the Commission would like to see that information would be helpful.

Commissioner Highland requested clarification on the following items for her personal understanding of the plan:

- On page 10 of the plan (page 45 of the packet)
 - o Where is Bluff Road?
 - Bluff Road is located right at the edge of city limits as you are heading out of town, it is on the left hand side of the road, after the curve, between the entrance to Moore & Moore business and Dutchboy Landscaping business entrances. They are referring to Non-motorized Transportation infrastructure from Rogers Loop to Bluff Road.
 - o Where is Glenview Street?
 - Glenview is located off the Sterling Highway between Soundview Avenue and Homer Middle School. It has been there well over 15 years and previously named Thomas.
 - o Where is Brown Bear Loop?
 - That is located near the McDonald's; there is infrastructure right at the North West corner of Beluga Lake, near the Bear Viewing businesses.
 - o Under Lampert Loop it is noted as Lambert Lane to Lambert Lane and it should probably be Lampert.
- On page 19 of the plan (page 54 of the packet)
 - o Under City of Homer Port & Harbor, recommended adding industrial
- On page 22 of the plan (page 57 of the packet)
 - o In the second paragraph it states that the Planning Commission reviews the HART criteria every other year and she expressed not having a recollection of the Commission reviewing the criteria.
 - It was reviewed more frequently by the Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission and it was reviewed by the Planning Commission in years past and Ms. Engebretsen explained she wanted to have the Planning Commission get back to a biennial review of the criteria again.
 - Provided clarification on the implementation of the Roads and Trails Plan and five year budget that was created during the former Public Works Director's tenure which allows the city to plan and implement projects.
 - Staff will be bringing this document to the Commission in the coming months.

- Comparing the proposed Transportation Plan to the 2005 Transportation Plan
 - o The proposed new plan did not address streets and street lights
 - o As the area grows will there be discussion on future street plans or will this document just provide the overview?
 - Traffic modeling was done in the 2005 Transportation Plan
 - Proposed Transportation Plan did not include that scope of work
 - Included a 1 percent (1%) of traffic growth to existing numbers
 - Review page 14 of the plan (page 49 of the packet) shows two roads or segments that in 20 years would need to be addressed.
 - o This could be alleviated by construction or use of connecting roads that people could access to stay off the main road.

A discussion was held on addressing issues such as timing for traffic signals to better facilitate the flow of traffic during specific times of the day, week and year; whether a two lane road with a turning lane would be adequate to handle the future expected increase in traffic; the reported traffic count and formula represented in the plan shown on page 12 (page 47 in the packet) requires the city to start planning for larger roads to be able to handle projected capacities.

Ms. Bowie with Kinney Engineering provided information on policies that can be used to address the things the city does not have control over. Planning for large roads can offer a point A to point B when there are limits or you can use smaller roads to connect and make a network which is what the proposed plan talks about, these smaller roads provide a more direct route of travel and provide opportunities for pedestrians and bicycles as well. You then do not have to funnel everyone to one big road.

City Planner Foster and Community Development Director Engebretsen facilitated additional discussion on the following topics:

- Ocean Drive and Homer Spit Road
- Lake Street Intersection at Pioneer project was scrapped for the lack of funding
- Kachemak Drive
- The scattered process to recommend project for the State STIP list
- Identifying projects for the Capital Improvement Plan
- More connectivity in the network of roads over the funneling towards one or two entrances to a location.
- More connectivity within the community with non-motorized infrastructure so there are different ways to visit areas within the community.
- What is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, City Council and the Borough with regard to these objectives in this document as presented to the Commission?
 - o Transportation is one of the elements of the overall Comprehensive Plan so this document is a part of that and provides the policies and projects and it is up to the city and the Commission when discussing the HART program and Capital Improvement Plan to decide what objective to work on, so it acts as a road map.

- It is important that the Commission has the discussion about which of the recommendations that are proposed in the draft plan they support and want to prioritize.
- Commission can develop a strategic plan that is updated every year and include projects or topics such as a truck route that the Commission wants to work on for the year. This will assist staff in developing their budget and work plan.
- Using short, mid and long term verbiage in the plan document would assist in getting the public and others acceptance due to those terms being widely employed, even though they may not have worked quite so well in the previous document.
- Multiple lanes can provide benefits to moving traffic and would benefit Ocean Drive/Homer Spit Road to have a center turn lane.
 - o There is no project currently to provide a center turn lane by the State.
 - o Ocean Drive has 100 foot Right of Way and instead of installing a proper bike lane they moved the crest of the road over a little to create the "Bike Lane"
 - o Only project known is for erosion control on the Homer Spit Road so it doesn't wash out, just basically keeping what is currently there.
- Using terms in years fits better with current existing plans such as the Five year Roads Plan that Public Works has in place.
- The draft Transportation Plan is a 20 year plan.
 - o Interest of the Commission to prioritize in short, mid and long term projects is acknowledged, city lacks control on funding for some of these projects since they are under the State's control
 - o Kachemak Drive was provided as an example of a project that was included for many years in the City Capital Improvement Plan and supported strongly for the STIP and was selected.
- The Transportation Plan will not tell how to solve a problem but will acknowledge there is a problem and that it needs to be addressed and the Community wants to have it addressed as it is shown in the plan.

Commissioner Highland suggested that the Commission review pages 36 through 45 and start working their way through the recommended policies.

Ms. Engebretsen reminded the Commission that Commissioner Barnwell has reviewed and provided his recommendations by Section and Pages. Each Commissioner can submit to the City Planner or herself their recommendations individually and staff can create a spreadsheet rather than line by line as a more efficient review.

Chair Smith called for a ten minute recess at 7:50 p.m. He called the meeting back to order at 8:02 p.m.

Chair Smith suggested the Commission review meetings schedule for the review of the draft Transportation Plan in response to questions posed by Commissioner Venuti on next steps and the suggestions provided by Ms. Engebretsen.

The Commission expressed by consensus the desire to have comments or recommendations submitted to Staff and this will be on the agenda for April 3, 2024 and will allow for participation by Commissioner Conley since Commissioner Barnwell has already provided his review. It was noted that there may not be a quorum for the March 20th meeting, but they can schedule a worksession and regular agenda discussion on April 3rd and the soonest a public hearing could be scheduled would be April 17th but could push it to May 1st which would be a safer date.

The Commission agreed by consensus that they would review the plan draft individually and submit recommendations, concerns or comments to staff for review and discussion at the April 3, 2024 regular meeting and worksession and then conduct the Public Hearing on May 1, 2024

A brief discussion evolved on speed limit on East End Road being reduced to 35 to allow safer egress for the Cottonwood Horse Park and Jack Gist Park users and that the city can advocate for a reduction to the state but has limited if any control over the speed limit unless they are granted a temporary reduction similar to the Homer Spit Road.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Planning Commission Annual Calendar
- B. City Manager's Report for City Council February 26, 2024

Chair Smith noted the items under Informational Materials.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBERS

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Highland commented that she would like to have the City Manager speak to the Commission regarding visioning, with all the changes occurring she would like to get his perspective and guidance on their roles as the Commission. She also commented on the deliberations process and why she is in favor of doing them in the public, having the discussion with the developers present so they hear what the Commission is thinking

Commissioner Venuti stated it was a good meeting and expressed his appreciation for the staff and their work.

Commissioner Stark expressed his appreciation for Community development Director Engebretsen and City Planner Foster for all they work that they do and acknowledged it was never easy trying to satisfy everyone but they appreciate all the work that they do. He expressed thanks to the Clerk for hanging in with them always, the Commission and requested the Chair if he could provide his debrief on the Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Chair Smith stated that Commissioner Stark should provide his report at this time.

Commissioner Stark provided a brief report on the Chamber of Commerce meeting noting that Doyon Limited made a presentation on their proposed project and announced that they filed their appeal of the Commission decision. Mr. Stark started to provide additional details on the comments made by the representative for Doyon and was stopped by Staff whom reminded him that since they filed the appeal no details could be discussed as it would be considered ex parte and will also need to be declared if the item is remanded back to the Commission.

Commissioner Schneider commented on the information stated by Doyon was within the confines of a public meeting so was unsure how this could be considered ex parte.

Staff explained how as a Commission if the action is remanded back to them, not all Commissioners were present so did not have firsthand knowledge, so Commissioner Stark should disclose he attended the meeting and what was disclosed, it is not information was specifically told to Commissioner Stark, but to the group in attendance at the Luncheon, however he was the only member of the Commission present at the time. This keeps everything as transparent as possible in the proceedings.

Commissioner Schneider expressed his appreciation for the explanation on that and with the Transportation Plan and how it fits, what the Commissioners roles are and commented that he was excited to start the conversation and looks forward to the process.

Chair Smith inquired if the City Planner wanted to cancel the March 20th meeting or is there other items for the Commission to address for the agenda.

City Planner Foster noted that there will be three public hearing items that cannot be postponed.

Chair Smith acknowledged that and stated it was a good meeting, expressed his thanks to all present and adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.** A worksession will be held at 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. 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: March 20, 2024