

Session 21-19, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:31 p.m. on September 1, 2021 at Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS VENUTI, SMITH, BENTZ, HIGHLAND, AND CHIAPPONE

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS BARNWELL AND CONLEY (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Smith requested a motion to approve the agenda.

HIGHLAND/BENTZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of August 18, 2021

Chair Smith read the Consent Agenda into the record and requested a motion of approval.

HIGHLAND/BENTZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Chair Smith requested clarification on removing Item A under Plat Considerations since it has been pulled by the applicant.

Commissioner Bentz called for a point of order noting that that action should have commenced during the agenda approval.

A brief discussion ensued noting that removal of the item could be addressed as it came up on the agenda.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS / VISITORS

REPORTS

A. Staff Report 21-53, City Planner's Report

Chair Smith introduced the item and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud spoke to his written staff report, highlighting the following:

Welcomed back Commissioner Bentz

Excused and unexcused absences are not calendar but appointment terms, so July 1st through June 30th

Economic Development Commission had a worksession on August 31st and there will be a Wayfinding and Streetscape presentation in October to the Commission.

Tim Dillion with KPEDD will be making a presentation to City Council on September 13th or the EDC on the 14th regarding the opportunities that could be available and you can attend by Zoom.

Requested a Commissioner to volunteer to make the report to City Council for the September 13th meeting.

Commissioner Highland volunteered for the September 13th meeting. There were no volunteers for the September 27th Council meeting.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification on who the speaker will be for the Council meeting and EDC.

Commissioner Venuti stated that the agenda was already closed when the final decision was issued on the Appeal of Planning Commission Decision on Zoning Permit 1020-782 and he requested that the discussion of using connexes as building structures be on the September 15th agenda.

City Planner Abboud responded that it was his intent to bring that item back plus a few other items he was working on but he deferred to Deputy City Clerk Krause on the status of that issue.

Deputy City Clerk Krause reported receiving documents filed by Mr. Griswold and so she did not believe that it would be addressed by the Planning Department's agenda deadline.

B. Public Works Campus Task Force Report

It was noted that the Task Force provided a final report at the last meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLAT CONSIDERATION

A. Staff Report 21-55, Terra Bella Subdivision Preliminary Plat

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

City Planner Abboud reported that this item was requested to be pulled from the agenda to consider the comments from the public and requested this to be on the October 9, 2021 agenda. He confirmed that this item will be properly noticed and property owners notified so that they can comment on any proposed changes.

Chair Smith confirmed with the Clerk that a motion was not required to pull the item from the agenda.

B. Staff Report 21-56, REVISED West Hill Subdivision – Harness Addition Preliminary Plat

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his staff report to the Commission.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary review of Staff Report 21-56 to the Commission. He noted that there was a steep ravine on the western edge of Lot 4 A and requested a thirty foot drainage easement.

There was no applicant present.

There were no questions from the Commission on this item.

There was a misunderstanding from an applicant on the next Plat Consideration that it was appropriate for them to comment at this time during the agenda. Chair Smith extended his apologies to the Commission he was under the impression that they were commenting as a member of the public.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

BENTZ/HIGHLAND MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 21-56 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE REVISED WEST HILL SUBDIVISION – HARNESS ADDITION PRELIMINARY PLAT TO CHANGE LOT LINES BETWEEN THREE PROPERTIES WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. SHOW STEEP RAVINE AREA ALONG THE WESTERN AREA OF LOT 4A
2. DEDICATE A 30 FOOT DRAINAGE EASEMENT ALONG THE WESTERN LOT LINE OF LOT 4A FOR A BRANCH OF BIDARKI CREEK.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

C. Staff Report 21-57, Bunnell's Subdivision Haigh 2021 Replat Preliminary Plat

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and invited City Planner Abboud to provide his report.

City Planner Abboud provided a summary of Staff Report 21-57 for the Commission.

Chair Smith invited the Applicant to make a presentation or speak to their application.

Ruby Haigh, applicant, expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to speak to the commission. She did not have any questions but hoped that the Commission approved this action tonight.

Commissioner Venuti questioned how Swatzell started and stopped and how it evolved into a street that stopped and started like it does.

City Planner Abboud responded that he did not have the total history on that since he has only been in town for 13 years and this was one method to begin correcting the problem and that hopefully over time they can gather rights of way to have the street go through.

There was no public comment.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 21-57 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF BUNNELL'S SUBDIVISION HAIGH 2021 PRELIMINARY PLAT TO MODIFY LOT LINES BETWEEN TWO LOTS WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. INCLUDE PLAT NOTE STATING PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD CONTACT THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRIOR TO ANY ON-SITE DEVELOPMENT OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO OBTAIN THE MOST CURRENT WETLAND DESIGNATION (IF ANY). PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL REQUIRED LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PERMITS.
2. DEDICATE 30 FOOT RIGHT OF WAY (SWATZELL STREET) FOR A FULL 60 FOOT RIGHT OF WAY
3. DEDICATE A 15 FOOT UTILITY EASEMENT FRONTING THE NEW 30 FOOT DEDICATION
4. DEDICATE 15 FOOT DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ON THE CREEK OVER LOT 50A

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. City Manager Report for August 23, 2021 City Council Meeting

Chair Smith commented on the valuable information regarding COVID response and questioned how that affects the Commission and meeting via Zoom.

City Planner Abboud responded that it would be taken care of when they address the bylaws and that conducting the hybrid meetings as they are with the Chambers available for those that cannot connect and following CDC guidelines using that room as they are, is still an option.

- B. Kenai Peninsula Borough Notice of Decisions
- C. Planning Commission Calendar

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause expressed her apologies for not having the correct process outlined in the Commission's working agenda on amending the agenda regarding the removal of the Preliminary Plat and that it was a good meeting overall.

City Planner Abboud commented that they will have a few more items on the agenda since he will be present to work on the packet.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Bentz commented that reviewing the informational materials and the October tasks with a potential overview on floodplain or other hazard regulations to connect between the Comprehensive Plan and current regulations she would be interested in looking at wetland values and mitigation strategies and planning tools that they have and curious if they could get a guest speaker from the floodplain management and the river center manager in Kenai at the borough level as a potential speaker.

Commissioner Highland welcomed Commissioner Bentz back to the Commission and noted it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Chiappone expressed appreciation for Commissioner Venuti questioning how Swatzell Street ended up isolated like it is and appreciated the logic to get the right of ways cleared now so that it would be one less step in the future. He appreciated learning something new at each meeting.

Commissioner Venuti expressed appreciation for the brief meeting and expecting a bit of a report from the City Planner on his trip to the conference and if he learned any new tricks that they could benefit from.

City Planner Abboud provided a brief report on his experience and the amount of development and money that was available; the state of Arizona put the clamps on vacation rentals and they cannot be prohibited anywhere in the state. Another issue was affordable housing and there was an economy of scale and one especially for homeless veterans using tiny homes that met code which has been very successful and was supported by a non-profit. Still looking for solutions on the issue of affordable housing is being experienced all over. He provided comment on the area where he stayed in Paradise

Valley, there was no convenient food place within 3.5 miles and it was not walkable. Arizona had total different opinion on response to COVID. He will try to think of other things and provide them in his report for the next meeting.

Chair Smith commented that he was glad that the City Planner had a good trip. He questioned the use of the Transportation Plan and evaluating community needs and knowing what is in place and the Commission's responsibility to it so he would appreciate an overview or worksession on that topic and then the question of how to evaluate what streets or connections do they require. He would appreciate additional training on the subject. He then asked about the preliminary plats always referencing checking with the Corps of Engineers and that discussion would be better suited for another meeting.

City Planner Abboud responded to the question regarding Corps of Engineers note being put on all preliminary plats and provided examples of when he worked for the City of Bethel, Alaska. He noted that he always requires the applicant to check prior to development that way they also get a heads up on any issues that may be relevant before doing the work and creating plans.

Commissioner Bentz commented on her experience planning around or in wetlands, especially dumping or filling and changing the waterways of the US and navigable waters. That might be a good topic for the October agenda.

ADJOURN

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m. Next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. A worksession is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.



RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: Sept. 15, 2021