

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2007
7:00 P.M. - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

A. CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chairman Brown at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Present and constituting a quorum were Chairman Brown, Commissioners Madar, Kerslake, Hamming, Cordero, and Kircher. Commissioner Silva was absent. Also present were Sandra Garley, Community Development Director, and Dawn Webster, Recording Secretary.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was led by Commissioner Madar.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as submitted.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 15, 2008 were approved as corrected.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

George Sikat, of Mat-Su Energy, spoke to the planning and zoning issues associated with wind towers. He stated that wind turbines can assist in reducing energy costs for private property and for agricultural uses. Towers can go as high as 250 feet to catch "sweet winds". Not enough wind surveys have been done in this area; more are needed to get definitive information. Mr. Sikat described the wind turbine as a temporary fix to help reduce energy costs. He addressed horizontal, vertical access turbines, and slow turbines; he pointed out several items for consideration regarding vertical access turbines including maintenance and tower height. Mr. Sikat requested consideration be given to "tipping towers" that would lower themselves for service and during times when there is too much wind, or not enough wind to utilize them. Also, his company is working with a grant writer who is researching different funding sources for individuals, small businesses and municipalities to assist in the acquisition of wind generation systems.

Kathy Wells, of the Friends of Mat-Su, spoke to the issue to wind generators. She would like to see any process for authorization of a wind generator include both a public hearing process and minimum lot sizes. Ms. Wells advised she is a member of a team charged with preparing the master plan for towers in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. At the present time, the committee will recommend requiring reviews for any tower over 50 feet. She also suggested using large parcels of land for wind farms. Ms. Wells also like the Commission to

look at solar power.

G. PUBLIC HEARING: None.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Final comments on Public Hearing Procedures.

Ms. Garley stated the requested changes, made at the previous meeting, were incorporated into the current document. If the document is approved as presented tonight, with the Commission's concurrence she will move it forward to the City Council for ratification.

COMMISSIONER MADAR moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER KERSLAKE to move the Public Hearing Procedures document and forward it to the City Council for ratification.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: MCU

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Small Wind Generators – Potential Impacts on Existing Title 17 Zoning Regulations.

Ms. Garley stated Community Development has received three separate inquiries regarding the regulations for erecting a wind tower in the city limits of Palmer; all properties in question were located in residential districts. Ms. Garley advised that construction of a tall structure is not permitted in any residential district and therefore, the Commission will need to look into whether the city wants to address the issue in residential districts; and generally what Palmer's position will be on wind generators in the city in both the residential and industrial areas. Planning and Zoning Commission IM# 08-013 addresses many of the items the Commission needs to explore.

COMMISSIONER KIRCHER moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER MADAR to move into a committee of the whole to discuss wind towers.

VOTE ON MOTION: MCU

The Commission entered into the committee of the whole and 7:25 p.m.

COMMISSIONER MADAR moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER CORDERO to return to session.

VOTE ON MOTION: MCU

The Commission returned to session at 8:22 p.m.

The Commission listened to comments presented by Bill Pippel.

A brief recess was called at 8:25 p.m.; the commission returned to session at 8:36 p.m.

Staff was requested to bring back more information on the following:

- 1) Height of a tower;
- 2) Width of a tower;

- 3) How loud is a wind generator?
- 4) Minimum lot size;
- 5) Setbacks for towers;
- 6) How are other municipalities in Alaska addressing these issues in residential and industrial areas?
- 7) Size required for a family of four;
- 8) Serviceability of towers and cost to maintain;
- 9) Cost per kWh hour and depreciation;
- 10) Full or partial energy replacement costs vs. electrical power; and a
- 11) Cost benefits analysis.

The Commission discussed websites providing more information on wind generators including the following:

Jay's Garage (www.jaylenosgarage.com);
 Mat-Su Energy (george@matsuenergy.com), link to the Learning Center; and
 Home Power Magazine (www.homepower.com), also available in bookstores.

2. Items for discussion at the Joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Ms. Garley advised of the joint meeting date of August 19, 2008, and requested input from the Commissioners on items for the agenda.

The Commissioners requested the following items be submitted to the City Clerk for inclusion on the agenda:

- A. Parking Standards in the Downtown Area
- B. Trails Plan
- C. R-R, Rural Residential District; Transitional District; and Agricultural District
- D. Annexation

J. PLAT REVIEWS: None.

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

L. STAFF REPORT:

Ms. Garley advised of the Alaska State Fair's request for development of demonstration farm at the old Rebarchek Farm.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hamming: No comments.

Commissioner Kerslake: Looks forward to discussion on alternate energy.

Commissioner Madar: No comments.

Commissioner Cordero: Looking forward to more information on alternative energy.

Commissioner Kircher: Invited the Commissioners to come up to his property to see the photovoltaic system he has installed at his property. He also reminded the

Commission of the Garden Show this weekend and the Highland Games in Eagle River next weekend.

Chairman Brown provided an update on the MEA ratepayers meeting; noted that energy efficient systems were on display. Information on the meeting is available on the website.

N. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Kevin Brown, Chairman

Sandra Garley, Community Development Director