

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

A special meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on October 18, 2005, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Comprising a quorum of the Council, the following were present:

Ken Erbey	John Combs
Jim Wood	Brad Hanson
Larry Hill [at 7:07 p.m.]	Tony Pippel
Kathrine Vanover	

Also in attendance were the following:

Dan Contini, Acting City Manager  
Jack Snodgrass, City Attorney  
Pam Whitehead, Recording Secretary

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Hanson.

**D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Mary Ann Cockle** spoke regarding the Large Retail Establishment ordinance. She referred to her previous email regarding a Taco Bell picture from a seaside community in California of about 6,000 people, which she felt had interesting manner the design fit within the community. She reminded council of the 1560 signatures collected specifically against Wal-Mart and against large retail establishments in general. In addressing the LRE ordinance, she offered the following:

- 17.08.247 – minimum footprint of 20,000 square feet is stated, but no maximum;
- 17.32.025(D) – traffic impacts – recommended a public hearing regarding the traffic impact analysis;
- 17.32.025(C) – traffic impact mitigation – if a road is unacceptable, relaxation should not be considered;
- 17.32.025(D) – landscaping and screening – (2a) minimum of 3 feet is a shrub, not a tree; taller height requirement, at least 5 feet; (4) place a height requirement on evergreen trees; does not desire to see shrubs where there should be trees;
- 17.32.025(L) – community space – would like to see the 3% square footage increased to 5%;
- 17.32.025(M) – delivery and loading spaces – requested that documentation be kept in order to verify compliance;

17.32.025(N) – aesthetic characteristics – requested the development of a design manual to prescribe in detail aesthetic characteristics.

Lastly, Ms. Cockle pointed out that penalties do not exist for noncompliance and asked that the penalties be added to the code.

**Kelly Sidebottom** stated that the primary goals in Palmer should be continued support of core area business growth and to attract business types which support tourism. She pointed out that Palmer has been referred to a Norman Rockwell painting. She stated that there should be a size limitation of no more than 100,000 square feet per large retail establishment to protect against big box affects. Ms. Sidebottom stated that language does not exist to protect against the development of a distribution super center, which would bring with it 24-hour trucking. She stated that when all costs are added, LREs represent a loss to the community. She voiced her desire to see the LRE code "beefed up" to protect Palmer and encouraged the council to continue to cherish the charm and keep Palmer a place where tourists desire to visit.

**Evie McNamee**, who works at Alaska's Finest, a local tourist shop with a fairly large local customer base, described how they have asked customers to sign a petition and comment sheet regarding Wal-Mart. She read a few of the comments; noted that not all are from Palmer – a good many are from relatives who have come to visit Palmer residents. Some of the comments included: "Wal-Mart puts local businesses out; preserve what you have." "This is a great town, as is, and I love to come here year after year after year." "When Wal-Mart came to Ketchikan, over 50% of local businesses closed because of lower prices which have now risen. Our town is now more of a ghost town." "Kodiak – Wal-Mart does nothing for us and the help is awful – prices keep going up." She pointed out that they continue to hear these types of comments – not only from residents but from the relatives who visit.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**Item 1** – Review and Discussion of Palmer Municipal Code Sections: Large Retail Establishment (17.08.247), Prohibited Uses (17.28.040), Standards for a Large Retail Establishment Permit (17.32.025), Procedures for a Large Retail Establishment Permit (17.32.026) and Large Retail Establishments (17.68.065) (Action may be taken by the Council following the Committee of the Whole)

MOVED BY:	Vanover	To enter into the Committee of the Whole
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

*Clerk's note: The council entered into the Committee of the Whole at 7:20 p.m. and exited at 9:10 p.m.*

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the city administration to prepare amendments to the Large Retail Establishment ordinance as per the discussion and present as soon as possible to the Planning & Zoning Commission to start the process for a text amendment
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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## F. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

**Council Member Hanson** stated that he welcomes public input because the comments are valuable to the process. He stated that the council has been elected as leaders with respect to administration and described the leadership element is equally as important.

**Council Member Pippel** echoed Council Member Hanson's comments and congratulated him on his re-election. He also congratulated Council Member Hill on his election as the newest member to the council and stated that he looks forward to working with him. He recognized Council Member Carrington for his eight years of service and stated that he will be missed. He apologized for his absences and announced the good news that although he got was put through the medical mill, he has been given another 20-year warranty; said that after 35 years of systematically abusing his body, he hasn't done any mortal damage to it yet, but now needs to clean up his act; emphasized that it is good to be home.

**Council Member Wood** apologized to Council Member Hanson for having spoken out of turn during the discussion; stated that he sometimes becomes over-exuberant in his support for public input and begged the council's indulgence.

**Council Member Vanover** expressed appreciation of the audience comments and stated that the comments were very instructive and helpful. She corrected a statement made, pointing out that she does not consider herself a "politician" but is always mindful that she is an "elected" official.

**Mayor Combs** commented on the public hearing process and stated that the council continues to do a good job in its consideration of comments made by members of the public.

## G. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

**APPROVED THIS 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2005.**

/s/

John C. Combs, Mayor

/s/

Janette M. Bower, City Clerk