

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008
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, Cordero, and Kircher. 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 presented.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 17, 2008 were approved as corrected.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD: None.

G. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS:

1. Palmer Commercial Center, Committee of the Whole (Action may be taken by the Commission following Committee of the Whole).

Commissioner Silva arrived at 7:08 p.m.

COMMISSIONER CORDERO moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER MADAR to enter the Committee of the Whole at 7:13 p.m.; the Commission exited the Committee of the Whole at 8:50 p.m.

Chairman Brown and Commissioner Silva requested, based on the input received from the property owners in Palmer Commercial Center tonight, staff review Chapter 17.58 Business Park and make recommendations for changes to landscaping; fencing; and residential or caretaker use. Commissioner Silva also requested a definition of junk and stuff. The Commission also requested staff continue to research the use of Eklutna Street as an egress and ingress to Mountain Ranch Estates. Ms. Garley advised that the recommendations for changes to Chapter 17.58 would be available for further discussion at the July 17, 2008 meeting; the recommendations will be mailed out to the property owners in Palmer Commercial Center and again, they will be invited to attend the meeting.

In response to several items addressed by the property owners, Ms. Garley will inquire as to the lack of street drain cleaning and the cutting of the small trees along City Circle by the City's Public Works Department.

The Commission took a break from 8:50 p. to 8:58 p.m.

H. PUBLIC HEARING: None.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Continuation of discussion on Public Hearing Process.

Ms. Garley advised of her discussion with Michael Gatti, city attorney; his feelings were that he was comfortable with the Planning Commission's desire to develop their own procedures as to how many minutes people were given to speak; he agreed that limiting the applicant to three minutes was not adequate to allow the Commission to receive all the information necessary to make an informed decision. The Commission should rely on the Chairman to control the speaking times permitted.

Chairman Brown requested the following revisions to the handout:

1. Item 3: Insert a sentence to read "An extension may be granted at the discretion of the chair for closing comments." before the sentence reading "Following the applicant's presentation, the Commission may ask questions of the applicant(s)."

2. Item 8: which reads "When everyone wishing to testify has had an opportunity to speak, the public hearing will be closed by the Chair. No further public comment is accepted after the public hearing has been closed." Insert a sentence reading "The applicant will have the opportunity for rebuttal." The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Kircher suggested revising the wording to the passive tense to state "When everyone wishing to testify has had the opportunity to speak, the Chair will close the public hearing." Item 9: revise it to read "A motion must be seconded."

Chairman Brown asked for confirmation the public hearing handout will be included in conditional use permit or rezone application packets and that it will also be available at all the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. Once the changes are made, Ms. Garley will send the changes to Mr. Gatti for his review and comment. Following his review, the Commission may make a motion to adopt the procedures. Once that has been done, Ms. Garley will then forward the procedures to the City Council in ordinance format.

J. NEW BUSINESS: None.

K. PLAT REVIEWS: None.

L. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

M. STAFF REPORT:

Ms. Garley advised;

- she has obtained a larger version of the map for the trails plan and will obtain a better copy when the Commission begins its discussions; the copy will be in a format that will allow the Borough to work with the information as it is formulated;
- FAA property will not be a part of the trails plan if FAA confirms it cannot be included; and
- a new version of the zoning map will be brought back to the Commission, probably in August, due to a number of questions that have recently arisen regarding the boundaries of the zoning districts and how they are currently depicted.

N. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Cordero was pleased to see so many people come forward to speak about the Palmer Commercial Center; he enjoyed the movie about the road to Juneau.

Commissioner Silva advised her chair is broken; complimented Ms. Garley on her ready knowledge of the city codes; she is excited to be a part of the revisions to Chapter 17.58 and believes it will be very positive process for the city and its residents; also reminded everyone of the Colony Days events coming up.

Commissioner Madar expressed his pleasure at the way the meeting went tonight and the input by the community; stated it was very positive. He thanked Ms. Garley for her efforts on the road at the end of Eklutna and finding out how it became a connector to the business district; provided comments regarding landscaping at the business park; also enjoyed the movie on the road to Juneau.

Commissioner Kircher requested a copy of the movie on the road to Juneau; there will be a garden and art festival at the fairgrounds in June; he will be giving a presentation on storing food for emergencies. He also advised the Eklutna natives are installing a fishwheel on the Matanuska River; it may be possible to see it from the Mat-River Park. The comfort station at Mat-River Park has been restored and upgraded.

Chairman Brown addressed his published comments to the Mayor at the City Council meeting regarding the skateboard park and lack of public hearings; thanked everyone for coming to the Juneau road presentation. The MEA ratepayers will be putting on a program regarding renewable energy and you on June 12th at the Depot. He has been asked by the Mayor to sit on the Economic Development Commission along with Brad Hanson from the City Council. The Democratic state convention will be over on the 24rd of May following a reception with keynote speaker John Dean; there will be a book signing, cocktail party and a banquet; tickets are available for \$50.

Commissioner Silva advised that Pat Gamble, the CEO for the Alaska Railroad, was the keynote speaker at the joint Chamber meeting with Wasilla; he commented on his vision for the future of a commuter rail in the valley and the need to create a transportation authority. Noted the projected cost is \$35/day to commute to Anchorage. She inquired of the date of the joint meeting with the City Council; Ms. Garley advised that it won't be until August 12th.

O. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Kevin Brown, Chairman

Sandra Garley, Community Development Director