

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA**

**REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, February 17, 2011
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 Kerlake at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Present and constituting a quorum were Chairman Madar, Commissioners Bower, Campbell, Kircher and Preslar. Commissioners Kerlake and Weir were not in attendance. Also present were Sandra Garley, Community Development Director, and Ron Anderson, Recording Secretary. A quorum was established.

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

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

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 17, 2010 were approved with corrections.

F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

There were no persons to be heard for this meeting.

G. PUBLIC HEARING:

There were no public hearings scheduled for this meeting.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Review draft of F Fairgrounds Zoning District.

Mrs. Garley briefly introduced the draft F Fairground District proposal and explained what work had been accomplished in preparing the final proposal. Changes suggested during the previous Planning and Zoning Commission meeting were included and highlighted. Mrs. Garley also indicated that there had been a work session with Mr. Ritari and staff to allow maximum input from the Alaska State Fair. There were also two subsequent meetings with Alaska State Fair staff and Community Development staff to

complete work on this draft zoning proposal and present it to the Commission.

Brief initial comments from each Commissioner were heard.

Discussion focused on:

- Motorized racing should be a permitted use
- RallyCross should be permitted year round. This was a non-spectator sport and had been held on numerous occasions in the past with absolutely no incidents or complaints.
- A way is needed to ensure the impact of noise on the surrounding community is reduced.
- Fireworks outside of normal Fair Time.

COMMISSION MADAR moved, seconded by COMMISSION BOWER to have motorized sporting events be changed from a conditional use to a permitted use and time limitations be addressed.

Commissioner Madar opened the meeting for discussion on the motion.

Commissioner Preslar indicated that noise may still be an issue. It was felt that perhaps it would still be necessary for conditions to be considered for both issues; allowing the full Commission to consider a Conditional Use permit seemed to be the better approach.

Commissioner Madar indicated that past Commissioner Hemming had accomplished considerable work on these issues. He also stated that motorized sporting events were popular but did acknowledge these events could generate noise.

Commission Bower indicated that during fair time, most residents made allowances for both traffic and some increased noise levels. If these events were to occur on a more regular basis, a limit on time would help reduce complaints that might be received.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval]: The Motion Failed [four opposed, one in favor, Madar].

COMMISSIONER PRESLAR moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BOWER to forward the final draft of the F Fairground District to the Palmer City Council for consideration.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval]: Carried Unanimously.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Annual Review of Accessory Dwelling Units.

Mr. Anderson presented the Annual Review of Accessory Dwelling Units. Palmer Municipal Code requires that a yearly report on the number of Accessory Dwelling Units constructed or modified during the last calendar year be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission. A New form was presented along with a summary. There had been no applications during the 2010 calendar year to either modify or construct an Accessory Dwelling Unit. The report was accepted by the Commission.

2. Review of Proposed Annexation by unanimous consent of property owners of Lot 12 and the South ½ of lot 11, Block 1, Bailey Heights Subdivision as submitted by Ronald J. Herring.

Mrs. Garley introduced the annexation application. She explained that the Church had hoped to combine the two lots in question to allow for expansion of their building and parking lot. She also indicated that a representative for the Church was present at the meeting and would be able to answer any questions the Commissioners might have.

Mrs. Garley further explained that staff had been in contact with the State of Alaska, local Boundary Commission to discuss this application. The problems driving this action had been explained to the Local Boundary Commission and they had been helpful. They provided all the needed form and applications as well as guidance on how best to proceed. The Local Boundary Commission also indicated that they would consider this application if the City chose to proceed.

COMMISSIONER PRESLAR moved, seconded by COMMISSIONER BOWER, to present the Annexation request as presented by Ronald J. Herring to the City Council for consideration.

Commissioner Madar opened the meeting for discussion on the motion.

Commissioner Madar felt that this was definitely worth pursuing. It would benefit the Church and perhaps the community as well.

Commissioner Bower also felt that this was worth pursuing. He indicated his support for this annexation.

Commissioner Kircher mentioned this would not add to the tax base for the City and the City would have to provide utilities for this property. He expressed concern that the Local Boundary Commission had refused to consider annexation of such small tracts of land in past.

Mrs. Garley stated that staff had visited with the Chair several times and the indication was that if the City was to proceed with the annexation process, because of the

difficulties facing the property owners, the Commission would accept the application. Recent changes to state statutes allow for a modified application process which is designed to streamline this type of application. The Local Boundary Commission has provided staff with a copy of these procedures and a blank application for the City to present. The Chair has indicated a reluctant acceptance in this case, because there is really no other alternative for the Church.

Commissioner Kircher asked for the location of the property.

Mrs. Garley explained that the property was contiguous to both the City and the Church property. In fact the Church owned both properties.

Commissioner Kircher asked why not annex an entire 'block' of properties?

Mrs. Garley explained that unanimous consent from all the property owners would then be required and this also presented problems. This would also require the more detailed application process and associated paperwork.

Commissioner Madar asked staff if the Borough would not simply re-plat the two properties.

Mrs. Garley explained that Borough Code prohibited the re-platting of any properties that crossed a road service area boundary, a fire service area boundary or any other such Borough boundary. If allowed, this re-plat would place the properties in two service areas and be in direct violation of Borough code.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval] Carried Unanimously.

3. Board of Economic Development Report

Mrs. Garley mentioned that no formal staff report had been prepared for the meeting. She did discuss the joint meeting of the Board of Economic Development and City Council. The City Council had asked the city staff to simplify the final version of the Economic Goals and Objectives. The goals remain the same as from the Comprehensive Plan, with a few additions. One of these issues was the development of the Airport, while the second issue dealt specifically with housing. Additionally, the Board was asked to look at statutes that deal with sales tax to recommend any improvements.

4. Schedule of 2011 Meeting Attendance for Commissioners at the Board of Economic Development Meetings.

Mrs. Garley explained that the current work underway by the Board of Economic Development was being concluded. Once completed, the Board hoped to reschedule meetings to just once a quarter. She thought that monthly meetings would last until June and, after that, the Board would meet quarterly.

Commissioner Madar opened this part of the meeting by asking for volunteers to attend the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Economic Development.

Commissioner Bower volunteered to attend the March 7th meeting.

Commissioner Madar volunteered to attend the April 4th meeting.

Commissioner Campbell volunteered to attend the May 2nd meeting.

Commissioner Preslar volunteered to attend the June 6th meeting.

Commissioner Madar asked staff if there was a way for a Planning and Zoning Commissioner to become a 'full member' of the Board of Economic Development. When he last attended a meeting, he felt like just another member of the audience with little or no say so in what was being considered.

Commissioner Kircher stated that during the last meeting he attended, he was able to fully participate in the meeting, but was not afforded a vote.

Mrs. Garley explained that the Board was in error when a Commissioner was excluded from participating in the last meeting. Mrs. Garley explained that the Board had reviewed the guidelines and now understood that a Planning and Zoning Commissioner was a full member of the Board but was just not a voting member.

5. Presentation of Development Options for Phase II construction for the MTA Arena and Event Center, Located at 1317 Kerry Weiland Way, Palmer, Alaska.

Mrs. Garley introduced the package and briefly explained the documents that had been provided for each Commissioner for the presentation. It was hoped that the Commission could serve as a 'sounding board' for the proposal. Any and all suggestions the Commission might have would be forwarded to the City Council in support of an option. Mrs. Garley then invited the project representative to present the three options to the Commission.

Mr. Jason Collins, from Wolf Architecture, LLC, introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that all three options had the same basic goals. The first was to increase seating capacity and by so doing, comply with all City Codes and State Fire Codes as well. The Second goal was to provide the necessary facilities for the increased team sports to be held at the facility. He then presented the three proposed alternatives. The three plans required different levels of funding, but also afforded different levels of service.

1. The first option presented was the most expensive, but provided for the greatest increase in capacity, service and utilization. This option's only drawback seemed to be the limited use of the walking track for Seniors. The increase in total seating would be an additional 429 seat capacity. The Commission also considered the short-fall in funding, but hoped that this version could proceed.

Commissioner Madar was concerned that seating capacity might well be a contractual matter. He recalled a seating capacity of 1500 total seats.

Mr. Collins explained that 1500 was the agreed seating, but the City was re-negotiating this figure. Any change in total seating would also have to be approved by the League as well.

Commissioner Bower expressed concern for additional parking requirements. Where would this parking be located?

Mr. Collins indicated that currently, the site has 87 parking spaces with 2 ADA spaces. The end requirement for parking would be 300 total parking spaces with 13 ADA spaces included. This parking would not be paved due to the current budget constraints.

The city has already cleared land and plans on clearing additional land for parking. There may also be the possibility for shared parking with the Palmer Junior Middle School, located just across the street from the arena.

2. The second option struck a balance between reduced cost and improved service. The Commission seemed to prefer the first option, but realized this option warranted serious consideration as well. Total seating increase for this option would be 298. The overall capacity from option one would fall by only approximately 30 seats and in a few specific areas, service would increase.

Commissioner Madar questioned what was being presented in the negotiations.

Mr. Collins explained that any improvements to the arena would have associated costs for code compliance as well as for general construction. Some of the issues are locker rooms, required number of bathrooms and lighting upgrades.

Commissioner Preslar was curious if the facility currently complied with codes.

Mr. Collins stated that the state plumbing inspector was aware of pending new construction. For that reason, temporary exceptions to these codes were allowed.

3. The third option was the most cost effective but also provided for the smallest increase in service. Seating capacity would be reduced by almost 200 seats, and the concession stand and locker rooms were also impacted. The Commission understood that even this reduced package provided for a general increase in services and capacity.

Commissioner Madar asked why access to the bathrooms and concession stands during the summer was an issue.

Mr. Collins replied that the City had asked that these services be provided during that time frame.

Mr. Collins concluded his presentation with a detailed explanation of the spreadsheet and addressed the additional issues of drainage for the property and light trespass issues that additional lighting might present.

The Planning and Zoning Commission felt that any of these improvements would greatly benefit the City of Palmer and provide much needed recreation and additional resources for the Community as well. The expansion could be used for graduations, trade shows and other such activities.

The Commission expressed its support of the expansion in whatever version that was finally adopted and thanked Mr. Collins for his presentation. The Commission was looking forward to the future expansion of this valuable asset.

J. PLAT REVIEWS:

There were no plat reviews for this meeting.

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments during this meeting.

L. STAFF REPORT:

1. Discuss the Proposed Joint Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council to be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Garley started the staff report with a discussion of the joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission scheduled for March 15, 2011. She explained that the general format for the meeting would be similar to working as a "committee of the whole" which allows for greater exchange of information and freedom of dialog.

One item that would be on the agenda would be the gravel ordinances. Mrs. Garley offered to e-mail or mail each Commissioner a copy to allow each of them a chance to become familiar with the ordinance and be better prepared to discuss it during the meeting.

A second item on the agenda was the annexation strategy. She hoped the City Council would present a list of changes needed for this program. Animal care and the types of Zoning Districts we currently have or may need would probably be among the list of items to be worked. It was hoped that the City Council would also provide a priority list to allow work to begin.

Commissioner Madar mentioned that he liked the way the last agenda for the joint

meeting was conducted. He also wondered if the Central Business District would be on the agenda.

Mrs. Garley indicated that she would ask to if it was on the agenda. She also reminded the Commissioners that if they would like to have an item included on the agenda, provide that information to staff to allow that item to be added. This information would be needed by February 24, 2011.

2. Commissioner Attendance Report.

Commissioner Kircher wondered if this was a 'report card' for the Commission? He asked this question with a smile.

Mrs. Garley explained that part of what staff does for the Commission is to compile and submit a yearly report to the City Council on achievements and actions taken by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This includes Conditional Use Permits, Platting Actions and so forth. For the last three years the year-end report had also included Commissioner information. This included contact information, terms of office and general attendance information.

Commissioner Kircher then indicated that his e-mail address was incorrect as listed. He mentioned that he had submitted this information once before. Staff agreed to correct this information.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

COMMISSIONER MADAR expressed a welcome to newly appointed Commissioner Mark Campbell. All other Commissioners in attendance echoed this welcome and expressed their support and all looked forward to working with Commissioner Campbell in the future.

There were no additional comments.

N. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Michael W. Madar, Chairman

Ron Anderson, Recording Secretary