

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, February 16, 2012
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 Madar at 7:01 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Present and constituting a quorum were Chairman Madar, Commissioners Campbell, Kircher, and Kerslake. Commissioner Prosser joined the meeting at 7:32 and Commissioner Pack was absent. Also present were Sandra Garley, Community Development Director, and Ron Anderson, Recording Secretary.

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

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A suggestion was made to move the 'Persons to be Heard' scheduled for this meeting to after 'Unfinished Business' to allow the representative from Wolf Architecture additional time to arrive. The agenda was approved as amended.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

1. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 19, 2012 were approved as submitted.

F. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Consideration of Resolution 12-001 recommending Council approve the Parks, Trails and Recreational Fields Master Plan as prepared by Pros Consulting, LLC, as part of the Palmer Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Madar asked for a staff report.

Mrs. Garley presented the staff report. The City of Palmer Parks, Trails and Recreational Fields Master Plan was developed for the City by Pros Consulting. This study was funded by a grant from the Mat-Su Health Foundation and the Palmer Economic Development Authority with some matching funds from the City. This report is being presented to the Commission for review and possible comments or suggestions for improvement. This plan along with the Commission's recommendations will next be forwarded to the Palmer City Council for their consideration and possible adoption.

Commissioner Madar asked what the desire of the Commission was.

Commissioner Kerlake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kircher** to enter into the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission entered into the Committee of the Whole at 7:05 p.m.

Six previous studies were mentioned that may contain useful language for consideration. These were:

- The Palmer Urban Revitalization Plan;
- The University of Washington Report;
- The Glenn Highway Scenic By-way Corridor Plan;
- The Palmer Landscape Ordinance Guide;
- The Parks, Arts, Recreation, Culture and Sports Group Report (PARCS); and
- Programs for Progress.

These plans addressed different aspects of future development for the City of Palmer. Not all of these plans were adopted by the City. It was hoped that some of the more pertinent ideas from these reports could be used as a reference in the new Master Plan.

The Master Plan included a proposed Parks Director and a trail coordinator as well as a slight increase in sales tax. These positions are necessary for the proper management of the Parks and Trails within Palmer. Currently the City of Palmer does not have a Parks and Recreation Department. Today it is handled as 'extra duties as assigned' and would be better handled with full time staff. This added cost is necessary and would be phased in over a ten year period of time.

This Master Plan could also serve to update the sections of the Palmer Comprehensive Plan that dealt with Parks and Recreation. This might prove to be an alternative method to revise the Comprehensive Plan by sections, instead of attempting to re-write the entire Comprehensive Plan.

The entire Commission felt that this was a well developed report and the City would benefit from additional parks and trails for recreation in Palmer.

Commissioner Kerlake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kircher** to leave the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission left the Committee of the Whole at 7:43 p.m.

Commissioner Kircher made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kerlake**, to move the City of Palmer Parks, Trails and Recreational Fields Master Plan to the Palmer City Council and recommend adoption of the plan.

Commissioner Madar requested a vote on the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval of original motion]:

Campbell	Kerslake	Kircher	Madar	Pack	Prosser	Vacant
Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent	Y	--

VOTE ON MOTION: the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kircher made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kerslake**, to amend the original motion to include passing Planning and Zoning Commission 12-001 and forwarding that Resolution as well to the Palmer City Council.

Commissioner Madar requested a vote on the amended motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval of amended motion]:

Campbell	Kerslake	Kircher	Madar	Pack	Prosser	Vacant
Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent	Y	--

VOTE ON MOTION: the motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of Resolution 12-002 Recommending Council Adoption of the 2012 Official Zoning Map.

Commissioner Madar asked for a staff report.

Mrs. Garley stated that this new zoning map contains all of the zoning changes approved by the Commission and the City Council since September of 2007. Additionally, the new zoning map makes an attempt to incorporate the traditional colors as used nationally and recommended by the American Planning Association.

This new zoning map also included three airport districts and the fairground district that had been previously added to the Palmer Municipal Code.

Commissioner Kerslake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Prosser** to approve Planning and Zoning Resolution 12-002 and forward both the resolution and the proposed revised zoning map to City Council and recommend that Council adopt the new Zoning Map.

The Commission felt that this map was very readable and appreciated the fact that it also reflected all of the most recent zoning changes.

Commissioner Madar requested a vote on the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval of original motion]:

Campbell	Kerslake	Kircher	Madar	Pack	Prosser	Vacant
Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent	Y	--

VOTE ON MOTION: the motion passed unanimously.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of a proposed revision to the Palmer Municipal Code, Title 14, Signs, dealing with temporary banners.

Commissioner Madar asked for a staff report.

Mrs. Garley stated that this draft was brought to this meeting, hopefully for final approval. Staff has made an effort to address each of the concerns raised in past meetings and has attempted to include all of the corrections in this draft version. The draft is formatted in the format for revisions that the City Council uses; deleted sections are indicated by a strike-through and new text that is included is underlined for ease of reading.

Commissioner Kircher made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kerslake**, to move the proposed revision to the Palmer Municipal Code, Title 14, Signs, dealing with temporary banners to the Palmer City Council and recommend adoption.

Commissioner Madar asked what the desire of the Commission was.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Prosser** to enter into the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission entered into the Committee of the Whole at 7:50 p.m.

There were three points raised for clarification:

- 1) Temporary banners for school registration;
- 2) Number of wall signs permitted for a corner business; and
- 3) Flags other than State or National flags.

After a brief discussion, it was determined, by the Commission, that these concerns were adequately addressed or provided for in the revised standard. It was mentioned that this was the fourth consideration of this section of the code by the Commission and the members were satisfied that the main issues had been properly addressed.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kerslake** to leave the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission left the Committee of the Whole at 7:59 p.m.

Commissioner Madar requested a vote on the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval of original motion]:

Campbell	Kerslake	Kircher	Madar	Pack	Prosser	Vacant
Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent	Y	--

VOTE ON MOTION: the motion passed unanimously.

H. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

At this point in the meeting, a presentation by a representative from Wolf Architecture was to be heard. The representative was unable to attend the meeting. This presentation will hopefully be presented at a later Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review of Section 8.36.025, Noise, of the Palmer Municipal Code for possible revisions or improvement.

Commissioner Madar asked for a staff report.

Mrs. Garley reported that on page 45 of the packet, there was a copy of the code that deals specifically with 'noise'. This section of code, 8.36.025, also lists certain activities that require a permit if conducted after the hour of 10:00 PM or before the hour of 6:00 AM. This period of time is regarded as 'quiet time' by the Palmer Municipal Code.

Subsection C of this section states that heavy equipment used during snow removal, emergency utility equipment or Ambulances are exempt from this restriction. This allows the City to remove snow from city streets, utility companies to respond to outages and emergency services to respond to accidents.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Kircher** to discuss this section of the Palmer Municipal Code and consider possible revisions or corrections.

Mrs. Garley added that this section might be improved by amending the wording pertaining to snow removal.

Commissioner Kerslake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Campbell** to enter into the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission entered into the Committee of the Whole at 8:05 p.m.

The Commission recognized the problem of noise but also, due to recent snow fall, understood that snow removal is driven both by snow and by operating hours of stores. There were four areas of concern:

- Snow removal could be conducted in a manner to minimize noise exposure for the neighboring residential neighborhood.
- The snow dump area for stores should be complied with.
- Delivery trucks, for both pick-up and delivery of trailers during 'quiet hours'.
- Design consideration for sound barriers to help buffer similar problems.

The Commission indicated that the City should first ask businesses to comply with the quiet hours and work within the spirit of that section of code.

Commissioner Kerlake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Campbell** to leave the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission left the Committee of the Whole at 8:20 p.m.

Commissioner Kerlake directed staff, seconded by **Commissioner Prosser** to send a compliance letter to Carrs-Safeway asking that they use their designated snow dump area during snow removal and that they make every effort to comply with the spirit of 'quiet hours' as contained in the Palmer Municipal Code.

2. Review of Section 17.32.025, Large Retail Establishment, of the Palmer Municipal Code for possible revisions or improvement.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Prosser** to enter into the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission entered into the Committee of the Whole at 8:22 p.m.

During the discussion, the Commission selected three sections of Municipal Code '17.32.025 Standards for a large retail establishment permit' for consideration:

1. Section D, Landscaping, subsection 4; screening by use of a earthen berm or wooden fence.

Commissioner Campbell wished to have the R-1 reference included in subsection D-4 replaced. The current code does not include R-1 but does include the phrase 'residential zone'. A better way to improve this situation is to add wording that would require soundproofing or screening for along any adjacent properties with a existing residential dwelling.

This section should require the architect or engineer to design adequate methods to ensure the standard is met.

2. Section M, delivery and loading spaces.

Carrs-Safeway appears to allow delivery trucks to leave their trailers for long periods of time at the loading dock. This is contrary to current code. This can also be addressed in the compliance letter to that company.

The 'R-zoned property' reference could be changed to read 'residential dwellings' and the phrase 'may' probably should read 'shall'.

3. Section N, subsection 6; screening of mechanical equipment

The Commission suggested that should read 'Roof or ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened to mitigate noise and views from the property line. This would be specific enough to address this issue.

Commissioner Kerlake made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Campbell** to leave the Committee of the Whole.

The Commission left the Committee of the Whole at 8:43 p.m.

Commissioner Madar directed staff to develop a draft revision for the Palmer Municipal Code section that pertains to Large Retail Establishments for consideration at the next regularly scheduled Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.

3. Discuss two options for Title 17 revisions dealing with use of singular and plural nouns.

Commissioner Madar asked for a Staff Report.

Mrs. Garley reported that during the City Council's deliberations establishing the F-Fairgrounds zoning district, Council members were concerned that some uses listed were in the singular form while other were in the plural form.

PMC Title 17, Zoning, is currently not consistent in the use of plural verses singular in the lists of permitted and conditional use. The following table is a summary of current usage in the Code.

Zoning District	Permitted Uses listed		Conditional Uses listed	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
R1 Single family	2	4	1	3
R2 Low Density Residential	2	7	2	3
R3 Medium Density Residential	2	7	2	4
R4 High Density Residential	2	9	2	4
R1E Residential Estate	1	4	0	8
CL Commercial Limited	12	10	0	6
CG Commercial General	21	8	3	2
AG Agricultural	1	5	2	9
I-Industrial	24	4	7	4
P-Public	0	3	1	9
AC Airport Commercial	2	5	n/a	n/a
AI Airport Industrial	4	6	n/a	n/a
AM Airport Mixed Use	3	5	n/a	n/a
BP Business Park	7	37	0	6

A review of records in the Community Development Department files did not surface any case files, appeals, or decisions (Memos to the File) dealing with a concern raised by using plural rather than singular nouns in interpreting the lists of permitted and conditional uses.

There are two options to rectify this inconsistency:

Option 1:

Amend the lists for all districts to the singular form;

Option 2:

"Amend the General Provision section of the Title, 17.04 to include a new paragraph, 17.04.035, to read" Permitted and conditional uses in this title may be listed in the singular or plural form. Plural references include the singular form and the singular references include the plural form."

Commissioner Kircher made a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Campbell** to recommend adoption of option #2 "Amend the General Provision section of the Title, 17.04 to include a new paragraph, 17.04.035, to read" Permitted and conditional uses in this title may be listed in the singular or plural form. Plural references include the singular form and the singular references include the plural form" and to move this recommendation to the Palmer City Council for consideration and possible adoption of the revision.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON MOTION [recommending approval of original motion]:

Campbell	Kerslake	Kircher	Madar	Pack	Prosser	Vacant
Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent	Y	--

VOTE ON MOTION: the motion passed unanimously.

J. PLAT REVIEWS:

1. There were no Plat Reviews presented for consideration during this meeting.

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. There were no Public Comments presented during this meeting.

L. STAFF REPORT:

Mrs. Garley reported that there were three items included in tonight's Staff Report. Copies of these items have been distributed for your information.

1. The first item is draft of a postcard or flyer to invite the neighborhood families to attend a planning session for the long awaited Wilson Park located in Brittany Estates. This type

of meeting is sometimes referred to as a charrette. This meeting will be held on Friday, March 30, 2012 at the First Baptist Church located at 1150 E. Helen Drive, Palmer, AK. This initial meeting is to gather input from citizens as to the design and execution of this park.

There will be a second working meeting held at the same location on Saturday morning, March 31, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The City has partnered with the National Parks Service (NPS) in this effort. The NPS can then provide free design services from the American Association of Landscape Architects. This meeting will include members of the NPS and landscape architect, Eric Morely.

This meeting is to compile all of the information gathered from the previous meeting and develop it into a working format for presentation and final approval by the public. This final meeting will be held that afternoon at 2:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church. Once a final design has been established, this plan will be presented to the City Council for implementation.

2. The second item is for a second meeting that is to be held on Thursday, March 8, 2012. This meeting will be held in the Palmer Depot and will start at 6:00 p.m. This meeting is meant to gather input from local residents on how best to develop the 'Downtown Palmer Master Plan'.

Mr. Robert Banghart will assist in this effort. Mr. Banghart currently works for the Alaska State Museum and has experience in facilitating projects similar to this. He worked on the Development of the State Library, Archives and Museum building located in Juneau as well as several projects in Sitka.

3. The last item for your consideration is the compiled list of goals the City Council has developed. There are 18 goals on this list that pertain directly to the Community Development Department. If you would, please review this list over the next month and then it can be discussed at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Campbell thanked the Commission for their consideration of proposed revisions to various sections of the Palmer Municipal Code. Commissioner Campbell had no additional comments.

Commissioner Kerlake had no comments for the Commission.

Commissioner Kircher asked if there was a reason the Planning and Zoning Commission was not being invited to the annual City Christmas Party.

Commissioner Prosser had no comments for the Commission.

Commissioner Madar had no comments for the Commission.

N. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Michael W. Madar, Chairman

Ron Anderson, Recording Secretary