

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2015
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 Kerslake at 7:00 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL:
Present and constituting a quorum were Commissioners:
 William Kerslake, Sr., Chairman
 Michael Kircher, Vice Chairman
 Dan Lucas
 David Petty
 Douglas Cruthers
Excused absence(s):
 Merry Maxwell
Also present were:
 Sandra S. Garley, Community Development Director
 Kimberly A. McClure, Planning and Code Compliance Technician
 Pam Whitehead, Recording Secretary
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge was led by Commissioner Petty.
- D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved as presented.
- E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):
The minutes of the April 16, 2015 Regular Meeting were approved as amended. The spelling of Elaine McDahlgren last name was corrected (Minutes page 3 of 10).
- F. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:
There were no persons wishing to speak on a topic not on the agenda.
- G. PUBLIC HEARING(S): There were no public hearings.
- H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
1. Review Draft Ordinance 15-00x An Ordinance of the Palmer City Council Amending Palmer Municipal Code Title 17 Zoning Chapter 17.60 to include 17.60.057 Amnesty for Setback Encroachments.

Staff Report: Ms. Garley reported that action on this item was postponed from the previous meeting in order for staff to add language requested by the Commission to require that a nonconforming structure be brought into conformance with the code

should it be destroyed. The added language appears at paragraphs D and E of the proposed ordinance.

Following brief review:

Motion restated for reference [postponed from 4/16/15 meeting]:

Commissioner Kircher moved, seconded by **Commissioner Petty**, to recommend adoption of the proposed ordinance and move it forward to the City Council.

VOTE ON MOTION: Carried Unanimously.

[Kerslake, Kircher, Lucas, Petty, Cruthers]

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **IM 15-012** Planned Unit Development Informal Review for Tax Parcel C8 in Section 4, Township 17 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian – Presentation by John Weaver of Valley Residential Services

Staff Report: Ms. Garley reported that this was first brought before the Commission as a request for a zone change at its previous meeting, which was denied. The applicant did not file an appeal and has instead brought forward a proposal for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) on subject property as suggested during the public hearing discussion. This is an **Informal Review** of the proposed PUD. Information and drawings submitted by the applicant are contained in the packet [pp 25-35]. Should the Commission determine that a PUD makes sense here, the next step would be for the applicant to request a Formal Review which would include a public hearing and to move forward from there.

John Weaver, Valley Residential Services, and **Ron Bateman**, Architect with Lumen Design, outlined the proposed project and presented a site plan and model projects. Mr. Bateman encouraged the Commission to study the narrative describing the proposal in more detail.

Brief questions of the applicant ensued. Ms. Garley explained the PUD process to the audience.

Commissioner Kerslake moved, seconded by **Commissioner Kircher**, to accept this Informal PUD Review and allow a formal application to be submitted.

VOTE ON MOTION: Carried Unanimously.

[Kerslake, Kircher, Lucas, Petty, Cruthers]

2. Review Safe Routes to School Plan.

Staff Report: Ms. Garley directed attention to the Safe Routes to School Plan document on the table for review. Ms. Luanne Urfer of SDG was present to describe the plan and answer questions. No action is expected tonight, but rather to bring back to the next meeting after the Commission has had a chance to review the document and formulate

recommendations.

Luanne Urfer of SDG, Sustainable Design Group, explained there was an additional addendum to the document which is a breakdown of the list of projects of interest. She explained the Safe Routes to School project, which assesses the routes that kids take to school to determine any conflicts or safety issues. It only deals with elementary through middle schools, not high schools, and is funded by DOT. This plan looked at all of the public schools, including charter, that are within Palmer city limits and assesses based on age of the children, some of the routes that they should take, and which ones were appropriate. There was a significant amount of public involvement and feedback from parents as well as the schools.

Further discussion and questions ensued with suggestions for trails away from the highway. The list of routes is not prioritized. As much information as possible was provided in an effort to aid the City in prioritizing as to its particular needs within the community.

Ms. Garley asked the Commission to review and come to the next meeting prepared to make recommendations regarding priority of the 10 projects listed in the document, noting that the City Council would be looking for P&Z comment and recommendations.

Ms. Urfer suggested perhaps a committee be formed in order to track and keep abreast of changes that occur over time. Commissioner Cruthers inquired if the new Parks and Recreation Board might be able to shoulder some of this rather than form a committee. Ms. Garley explained the responsibilities of the new Board and that some of the responsibility may overlap with P&Z. She expects the first meeting of the board to occur sometime in July and will be including the Safe Routes document in the information given them. It is her hope that the new Board and P&Z can meet maybe quarterly and share ideas in insights.

3. **Resolution No. 15-004:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission requesting the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities add a separated trail along the Glenn Highway from Palmer to Sutton to the State Transportation Improvement Program.

Staff Report: Ms. Garley summarized that the MSB Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board has recently passed a resolution with similar language reflecting the desire for the addition of an at-grade paved pathway along the Glenn Highway from Palmer to Sutton to the State Transportation Improvement Program. Although the abandoned railroad right-of-way from Palmer to Sutton has long been contemplated for future development of a pathway, the existing and future erosion associated with the Matanuska River makes development of a paved pathway cost prohibitive, and the proposed paved pathways from Palmer to Sutton would create a vital recreation connection between the two communities.

Commissioner Kircher moved, seconded by **Commissioner Lucas**, to recommend approval of Resolution 15-004 and move forward to the City Council.

Commissioner Kircher spoke in favor in that he thinks it is a great idea; noted the railroad right-of-way would have been the ideal path but it is not financially practical; also, that it is timely in that it's his understanding DOT plans to build a bridge over Moose Creek with tie-ins from both directions, which may mean they would build paths along there also and eventually all the way to Sutton.

Commissioner Lucas fully agreed with the above points; added, however, that he doesn't think we should abandon all hope of at least a single trail along the railroad grade, something that would be a lot less difficult to build and maintain, but agrees that it is certainly not the place for a paved path and that asking for one along the Glenn Highway is appropriate.

Commissioner Cruthers encouraged not to give up hope on a path that goes from Downtown Palmer to the Fairgrounds adjacent to the railroad tracks; that it is much needed and would be a huge improvement during Fair time, to be used for foot traffic as well as bicycles; that yes, it is an excellent idea to run a path to Sutton but we need to finish the tail end of it also.

Commissioner Petty also spoke in favor and agreed with regard to a trail to the Fairgrounds.

VOTE ON MOTION: [Resolution 15-004]: **Carried Unanimously.**
[Kerslake, Kircher, Lucas, Petty, Cruthers]

4. **Resolution No. 15-005:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Approving the Placement of a 60' x 40' Storage Building in the P-Public District, Located on Tract 1G, ARRC 2008 for the Palmer Senior Center.

Staff Report: Ms. Garley directed attention to the information in the packet on the 60' x 40' building being proposed, which will encompass about 2400 sf of warehouse storage. All of the criteria required is being met and in conformance with the City and Borough Comprehensive Plans. Staff recommends approval of placement of the storage building.

Jassen Michael, Bower Construction, representing Mat-Su Senior Services on this project, informed of a change that was just requested today requesting that the building be placed about four feet from the property line, which is revised from what was submitted, and put a fire wall on the East wall so that they can better use the rest of the lot in the future to provide additional housing units for seniors. Pending approval by the Commission, the Building Inspector has approved and the State Fire Marshall has approved all but two minor comments.

Further discussion and questions ensued. It was pointed out Mat-Su Senior Services owns the property on the other side of subject property line which they intend for future construction. **Rachel Greenberg**, Executive Director, Mat-Su Senior Services, answered commissioner questions.

Commissioner Cruthers moved, seconded by **Commissioner Kircher**, to recommend approval of Resolution No. 15-005 and move forward to the City Council.

VOTE ON MOTION [Resolution 15-005]: **Carried Unanimously.**
[Kerslake, Kircher, Lucas, Petty, Cruthers]

5. **Resolution No. 15-006:** A Resolution of the Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Approving the Construction of a 64' x 30' Pole Barn in the P-Public District Located at 1170 W. Arctic Avenue on Tax Parcel C17 in Section 32, Township 18 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian, for the Palmer High School.

Staff Report: Ms. Garley reported that the project is for the construction of a 64' x 30' pole barn for use by Palmer High School, to be located on the northeast side of the high school building. The purpose is to provide additional storage area to meet the growing needs of Palmer High School. Staff feels the School District has a need for the facility, has met the required criteria, and recommends approval.

Commissioner Lucas moved, seconded by **Commissioner Petty**, to recommend approval of Resolution No. 15-006 and move forward to the City Council.

Commission comments were all in favor.

VOTE ON MOTION [Resolution 15-006]: **Carried Unanimously.**
[Kerslake, Kircher, Lucas, Petty, Cruthers]

J. PLAT REVIEWS: There were no plat reviews.

K. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments presented.

L. STAFF REPORT: Ms. Garley reported:

- the Parks and Recreation Board is getting organized and should be ready for work soon;
- received an application for a building permit for the new building that will replace the old School Administration Building recently demolished; should be under construction soon;
- City Manager yesterday signed the Large Retail Establishment Permit for the new Fred Meyer Store, which has been sent for review and signature; project is moving forward.

M. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Cruthers inquired if there was any discussion as to who will lease the old Fred Meyer building. Ms. Garley said they haven't revealed it yet.

Commissioner Lucas had no additional comments.

Commissioner Petty had no additional comments.

Commissioner Kircher reminded of the Master Gardeners Plant Sale from 9:00 to 3:00 at the Pavillion in Downtown Palmer. Get there early.

Chairman Kerslake expressed recognition of the meaning of Memorial Day coming up; commented on the overall vitality that we're seeing in Palmer, that there is a lot of revitalization happening Downtown, that our community is growing and it's P&Z's job to keep pushing it in the right direction.

Ms. Garley added that for those who have been in Palmer for a long time remember the Old Morgue. It is now called The Annex and encouraged everyone to visit – it's beautifully remodeled, has meeting rooms, office space for rent by the month or by the day.

N. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

William Kerslake, Sr., Chairman

Kimberly A. McClure
Planning and Code Compliance Technician