

Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012
MINUTES

In those matters coming before the Cordova Planning Commission at 6:15 p.m.; Tuesday, February 14, 2011, in the City Hall Conference Room, 602 Railroad Road Cordova, Alaska, are as follows:

- A. Call to order –**
- B. Roll Call** Present for roll call were Chairman Tom Bailer, Greg LoForte, John Greenwood, Roy Srb, Tom McGann and Scott Pegau.
Also present were City Planner Samantha Greenwood and Assistant Planner Faith Wheeler-Jeppson.
There were 5 people in the audience.
- C. Approval of Agenda**
M/Greenwood S/Pegau
Upon voice vote, motion passed, 6-0
- D. Approval of Consent Calendar**
None
- E. Record Absences**
Commissioner David Reggiani was excused from the February 14th 2012 Regular Planning Commission meeting.
- F. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**
None
- G. Correspondence**
Letter from James Mykland
Letter from Ron Goodrich
- H. Communication by and Petitions from Visitors**
- 1. Guest Speakers**
 - 2. Audience comments regarding items in the agenda**
 - 3. Chairpersons and Representatives of Boards and Commissions**
- I. Planners Report**
Samantha Greenwood ~ Back at the December Meeting there were some requests for information and Faith gathered that up. I'll talk to you guys later at Pending Agenda trying for a Worksession for Chapter 18 before the end of this month; Holly is supposed to get me the rewrites tonight. I'm hoping to have the Chugach lease to City Council for approval. We're finally coming on to the point where we're going to try to lease the Chugach lot on the Ocean Dock Fill where the ship haul out is. We've also been working with Samson to possibly shift them over towards the Ferry Terminal Office. The City did get the Declaration for Disaster from the snow event. We declared as a City, but the Governor has now declared. Currently it is only for Public Assistant which is City Infrastructure and State. Upcoming projects are "Poop the Scoop" with NVE (Native Village of Eyak). The Baler, were talking about some different options. And then the South Fill extension and sidewalks and trying to come up with a more unified plan across that whole South Fill/Harbor area.
- Tom McGann ~ The first item on page 3, if you could just give us a little more information.
Faith Wheeler-Jeppson ~ Right now, the information on the training has been given to the City Manager.
Samantha Greenwood ~ I think it's a position that would have to be created because it's not currently on the books.
- J. New Business**
- I.) Variance request by Diana Riedel from the setback requirements for 305 Observation Avenue.**
M/Pegau S/Greenwood "I move that the request by Diana Riedel, for a Variance from front yard setback requirements located at 305 Observation Avenue in the Medium Density Residential Zoning District (MDR) be approved based upon the findings and special conditions as contained in the staff report."

Scott Pegau ~ I see that lot a lot because I walk past it all the time. I've gone up and gone downhill and with a piece of paper, I can't see putting anything other than a really tiny cottage on there without a Variance. When I was going through the conditions I think that there is definitely physical circumstances, the width of the lot is not sufficient to build a single family home on without a Variance. So when I went through it, it looked like it met all of the criteria for the Variance request.

John Greenwood ~ After looking at the four things I agree that it has met those criteria, but looking at things further, looking at the drawings I have some questions and some doubts as to the application if it can actually be done that way. I was just curious if Diana has talked to a Contractor or a concrete person?

Diana Riedel ~ I just got a quote from Eagle, according to my plans its thirty two feet by sixteen inches, it's like a sea wall. So it comes out then drops down four feet. And that would address the retaining wall issues and it would be the insulated concrete forms.

John Greenwood ~ That was one of my main questions there. For now that answers all of my questions.

Tom McGann ~ I have concerns about the explanations on page ten, but I won't go there. I have nothing against a lined drawing, but I don't consider these elevations. They are something between a plan and a perspective and not dimensioned. I guess my first concern is the front and the back of the lot the legal description is Observation Avenue that would mean that that is the front of the house, so the ten foot setback to the west is undersized. I also have a concern about the south side, the Code requires you to have two ten foot by twenty foot parking spaces, so this sixteen feet is inadequate. I don't have a problem with the zero lot line, I have John's same concern about the thirty foot unbraced twenty foot high concrete wall, I don't think that's doable, I'm not a structural engineer but I really don't think that's doable. And I'll leave it at that.

Greg LoForte ~ My feeling is when I read and look at it is, the question of the parking lot and the location of the parking lot was a questionable issue, I wasn't sure how that was going to work. I did feel in the overall looking at it that there was an existing house on the road. That's was another question I had is the lot line on the road? How far is the road from the lot line?

Samantha Greenwood ~ There is about eight feet of 'right-of-way' between the lot line and the road.

Greg LoForte ~ Okay so there is eight feet from the lot line to the edge of the road, when I looked at it it didn't show the road on the drawing. My feeling is that with the questions about the parking, that's an engineering problem. But just for the Variance there was a house on this piece of property before, that extended way in past the existing property line. That house was removed and we're being asked to put another house with a zero lot line, so my conclusion was to grant it. Because of the fact that there was another house that further sat onto this right-of-way.

Roy Srb ~ From the drawings its really kind of hard, I'm having a difficult time trying to actually envision the footprint of the house and trying to marry it up with the variety of drawings that we've gotten. Going through and looking at the test as to whether this should even be considered for a Variance. My take is a little bit different in that there really isn't anything wrong with the property, it's putting too big of a house on the property itself, necessitating the variance and I don't know if that's grounds to grant a variance. In the case of the snow and looking at what's going on in that neighborhood, a lot of the snow that the City had even pushed had to now be cleared off of Railroad Avenue down below. There is absolutely no space there and even the orientation of the roof creates a concern. I see that she's going to have the gable facing the road which is probably proper to keep the snow off of the lower road. But, I don't believe the house design itself, the size of the house is suited to the size of the property with considerations to the lot line. I would speak against the motion.

Tom Bailer ~ I guess I want to look at the application review criteria there. In number one it says that there are "Exceptional physical circumstances or conditions that apply to the property or to its intended use or development which do not apply generally to other properties in the same land use district." So when you say the same land use district, what does that encompass? That's not the Ski Hill, Forest Heights Subdivision?

Faith Wheeler-Jeppson ~ It's all of the Medium Density Residential Zone District.

Tom Bailer ~ Because I would make a point that the Ski Hill lots have the same issue, Wilson's Subdivision Forest Heights has a couple lots there that have the same issue. You have to make the house fit the lot, not the lot fit the house and there are lots up there that are going to have the same issues and people are going to have to make the adjustments. There are also two other lots, Bill (Bill Black) and Ross (Ross Mullins) they are right there too. **"Strict application of the provisions of this title would result I practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship."** Well I don't think that adjusting your house plan is an unnecessary hardship, it's something that we all have to do. You can change the size, work it around. If you couldn't build on it at all I would consider it an unnecessary hardship, but I don't think that's the case. **"Granting of the variance will not result in material damage or prejudice to other properties in the vicinity nor be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare."** I could make a case as to the crowding of that road and a heavy snow year like we've gotten could make an issue for the right-of-way for emergency traffic. **"That the granting of the variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan."** It's not but I don't think it's a build at any cost kind of attitude. On suggested findings on number two there it states that **"If the applicant is required to meet setbacks the structure would be moved west on the lot ten feet, this would place the building site elevation approximately five feet lower than if there was a zero lot line and terrain becomes more difficult."** Five feet of building is a minimal issue, you're not incurring a terrific cost there. **"This area is an older part of town and many of the houses do not meet current set back requirements nor provide off street parking. The zero lot line request is on the street/front of the property the structure will not be adjacent to an adjoining neighbor's structures."** I don't believe there are any zero lot lines down there, there are issues with parking and I think as Roy said anytime we've got an opportunity to correct these issues I think we should. I'm going to vote no against this, I think more effort needs to be done in the planning and getting a house that will fit this lot.

Scott Pegau ~ I keep looking at this and I'm going, okay, its 832 square feet, two stories 1600 square feet and you're asking to push, she's already against the back lot line so she can't move the whole house any direction all she can do is change the shape of the house to fit the lot.

Tom Bailer ~ Let me make myself clear, I would not have a problem with the back lot line, you're getting away from the road. My big issue with being close to the road is snow build up, traffic. The back lot line is not as critical. I guess that's what I'm looking at, If I can explain myself as a Commissioner I would not have a problem giving the variance if we squeezed close to this line because we're not interfering with traffic, snow plowing or anything like that. This drops down and there is a road down here, I don't think it would be an issue. Again, make the house fit the lot.

Diana Riedel ~ First of all, I think I just gave you a new piece of paper and the house is 26 foot by 32 foot and we're going with a one foot thick wall. The actual inside dimensions are 24 foot by 30 foot, for three stories is like 2,140 or 2,160 square foot but with the stairs being up to code (4 feet wide) I'm losing a ton of house with the stairs. I don't know if I can move the house any closer to the cliff I have small children and animals and the whole point of placing the house as close to the preexisting retaining wall was to create no gaps from the road to the house which right now is sixteen feet. It was mostly concerning safety of the children and animals that I put it like that and kept the house off the cliff. I'm trying to budget myself so it's not too big of a house, I don't think for my family size it's too big. I'm trying to make it as small as I can and still have a comfortable living area.

Sandy Van Dyck ~ I know that snow is an issue, we haven't moved into our house but there is so much snow that it's up against the windows on the bottom floor of our house, maybe it's because the adjusting where your building. I know it's an exceptional snow year; it's rather phenomenal that the snow is almost shoving into our house from where they're dumping. It does seem a little problematic, though our renters have never complained.

Yea: Pegau, LoForte

Nay: Greenwood, McGann, Srb, Bailer

Absent: Reggiani

Upon Voice Vote: Motion Failed 4-2

2.) Recommendation of Land Disposal Maps to City Council

M/Srb S/Greenwood "I move to approve Resolution 12-01 a resolution of the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Cordova, Alaska, recommending Land Disposal Maps to the City of Cordova's City Council."

Samantha Greenwood ~ So when we passed the City Land Disposal Maps in November, we said that we would update the maps every year so now it's time to update the maps. So the only difference between what we put forward in November is that I changed Lot 6, South Fill Development Park from Available to Sale Pending because we don't really have a category for something that's possibly going out for proposals so I just changed it to Sale Pending. I didn't want to put it as Not Available because it really isn't "Not Available".

Tom McGann ~ I guess I wonder what's wrong with its "Available"?

Samantha Greenwood ~ Okay I can change that back to "Available".

Samantha Greenwood ~ The other one started long before I came, but I ended up wrapping it up. Its Lot 13, Block 13, Original Townsite and that prior to this map was available it's now Private Ownership.

Samantha Greenwood ~ And Lots 1-4, Block 42, Original Townsite it now listed as "Sale Pending".

Jason Borer ~ Just a quick comment, I was there at the meeting when we got the pallet of choices and it seemed to me that Council was quite taken aback by having to make a decision basically in minutes without having some sort of measure to weigh the different ones. There were so many different people with so many different ideas that I remember Council looking pretty much 'jaw dropped' at this. And I think that the request was to come up with a better ranking of when they come in on a recommendation.

Tom Bailer ~ I guess what I'm driving at is rather than saying 'your proposal is better than his proposal' that they are both good proposals; here are the pros and cons to Council.

Roy Srb ~ I have a quick question while you have the map up, what is this right here (Lot 11, Block 43, OT).

Yea: Pegau, LoForte, Greenwood, McGann, Srb, Bailer

Nay: None

Absent: Reggiani

Upon Voice Vote: Motion Passed 6-0

K. OLD BUSINESS

None

L. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

None

M. PENDING CALENDAR

Regular Meeting rescheduled for 3/06/2012 at 6pm.

Worksession scheduled for 2/28/2012 at 6pm.

Kate Alexander and Angie Kelly will have a brief discussion on Odiak Pond at the 3/06/2012 meeting.

Water lines and where does the responsibility begin with property owner.

Samson Tug and Barge update

Comprehensive Plan

N. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Moe Zamarron ~ In Public Works we make a lot of requests to the State for funds, whether its loans or grants. One of the things that they really like to see are Comprehensive Plans, I'm not really sure overall what the Planning Boards participation is in that. But I would hope that sometime soon we can get it updated.

O. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Scott Pegau ~ No

John Greenwood ~ No

Tom McGann ~ I hope Diana does puts in another request for something, I'd like to see her build there.

Greg LoForte ~ No

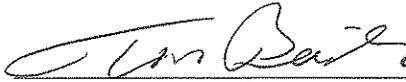
Roy Srb ~ I agree with Tom, if she can just sharpen her pencil little bit and find a way to make that fit.

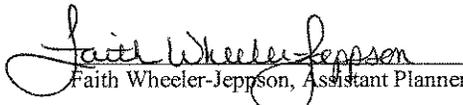
Tom Bailer ~ I concur with that, it's one of our tough jobs to tell somebody no but we have a whole community that we have to think about.

P. ADJOURNMENT

M/Greenwood S/Srb

Motion to adjourn at 7:20 pm

 5-8-12
Thomas Bailer, Chairman Date

 4/23/2012
Faith Wheeler-Jeppson, Assistant Planner Date